MARCH/APRIL 2011 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

# \*THE NAMM SHOW 2011

The music industry's most complete convention coverage

- Breaking Gear Trends
  - Show Floor News PAGE 50
- + 'Best In Show' Report PAGE 54
- The Top 50 Products

Nathan Nguyen of Instrumental Savings on changing the rules of school music retail **PAGE 30** 

> Nathan Nguyen stead of rent

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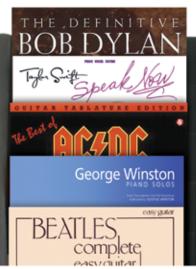
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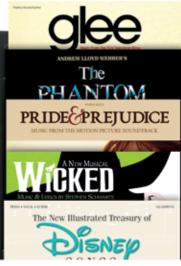
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SINGLE COPY (and back issues, limited supply): \$9.95 to any address, surface mail. Air mail delivery at cost.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include your current MUSIC INC. label showing your old address. MUSIC INC. (ISSN 1050-1681)

Published monthly, except April. Printed in U.S.A. by Maher Publications Inc. 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2932. Periodical Postage Paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSIC INC., P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688



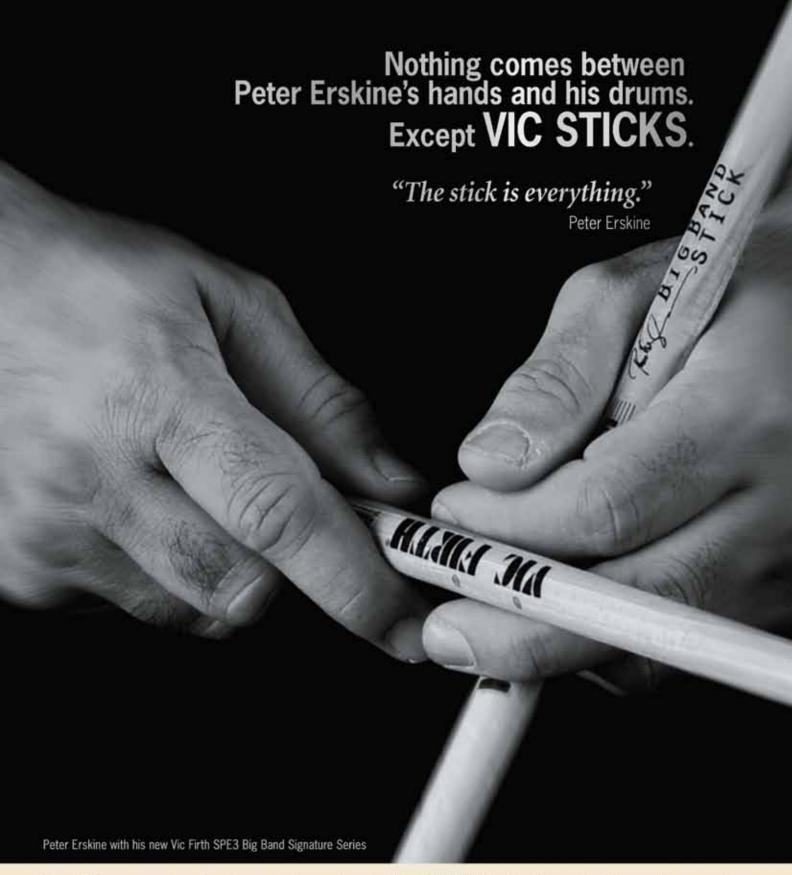
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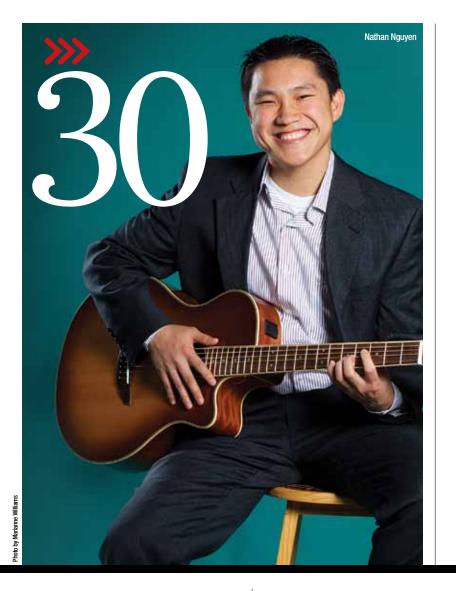


Your sticks are an extension of your hands, so choosing the right stick is critical in creating the music you want. Don't let anything come between you and your drums — except Vic sticks.





## >>> March/April 2011



30 I THE NEW E-TAIL

In 2006, Nathan Nguyen founded Instrumenal Savings, a dealership steeped in 8&0 e-commerce. Five years later, the 25-year-old millionaire's business is booming, and he wants to teach you everything he's learned.





#### THE NAMM SHOW 2011

This year's NAMM convention boasted new attendance records, an increase in retail purchasing and a cautiously optimistic vibe. *Music Inc.* was there to bring you all the highlights.

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GC opens first store with lessons studio

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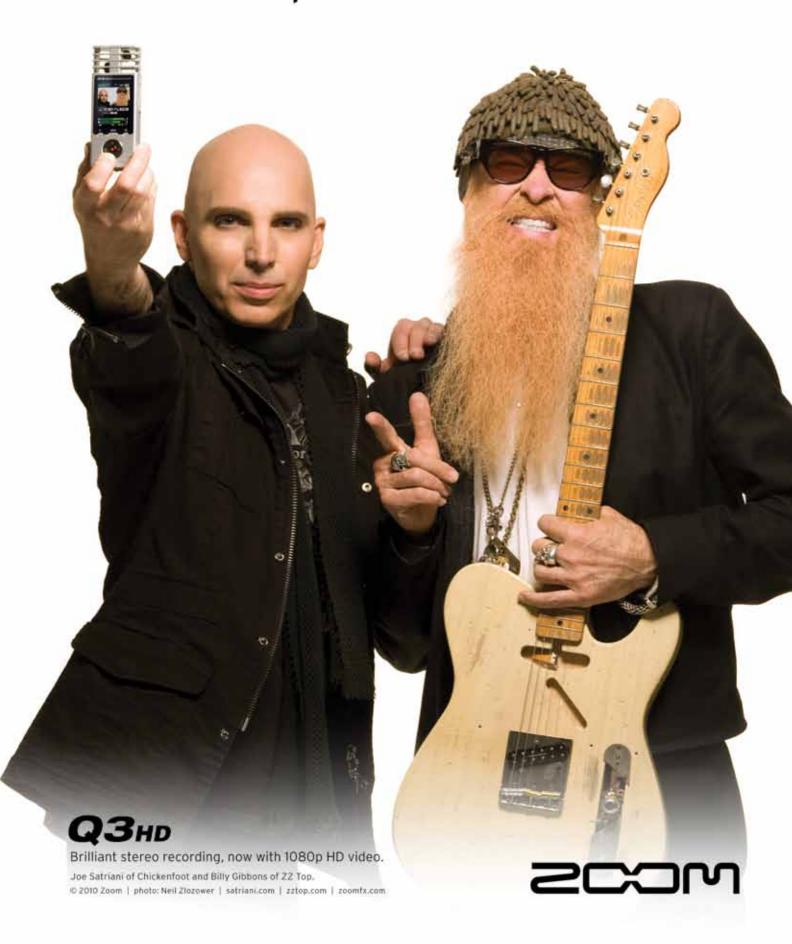


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Hal Leonard distributes MakeMusic

## Flips are for kids.





# PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE I BY FRANK ALKYER

# MEET THE NEW BAND COMPETITORS...ONLINE

ou find the darnedest things with a Google search.

Just ask the parents of any school-aged music student. When they hear what it costs to rent an instrument, or to buy a quality step-up model, the first thing the parents do is go online and Google search for such things as "affordable musical instruments," "cheap saxophones" and "best deals on clarinets."

And that's how *Music Inc.* found Nathan Nguyen, the 25-year-old owner of Instrumental Savings who graces this month's cover. He's a member of the new

crop of online retailers in the band and orchestral market — and every market in the music products industry — who focus mainly on reaching customers online.

We were introduced to Nguyen and Instrumental Savings by accident. Last fall, I was asked to speak to the Music Industry Insights Group, a terrific ideasharing group made up of some of the nation's most influential school music retailers. In preparing for the presentation, I spoke with a variety of suppliers and retailers to help focus on the hot topics of the day, but I also spoke with a few band parents.

I was curious to find out what they thought of buying or renting a musical instrument and how they shopped for their child's first instrument, as well as step-ups for older students. Their answers were expected, but interesting. Step one, they take the teacher's recommendation. Step two, they go on-

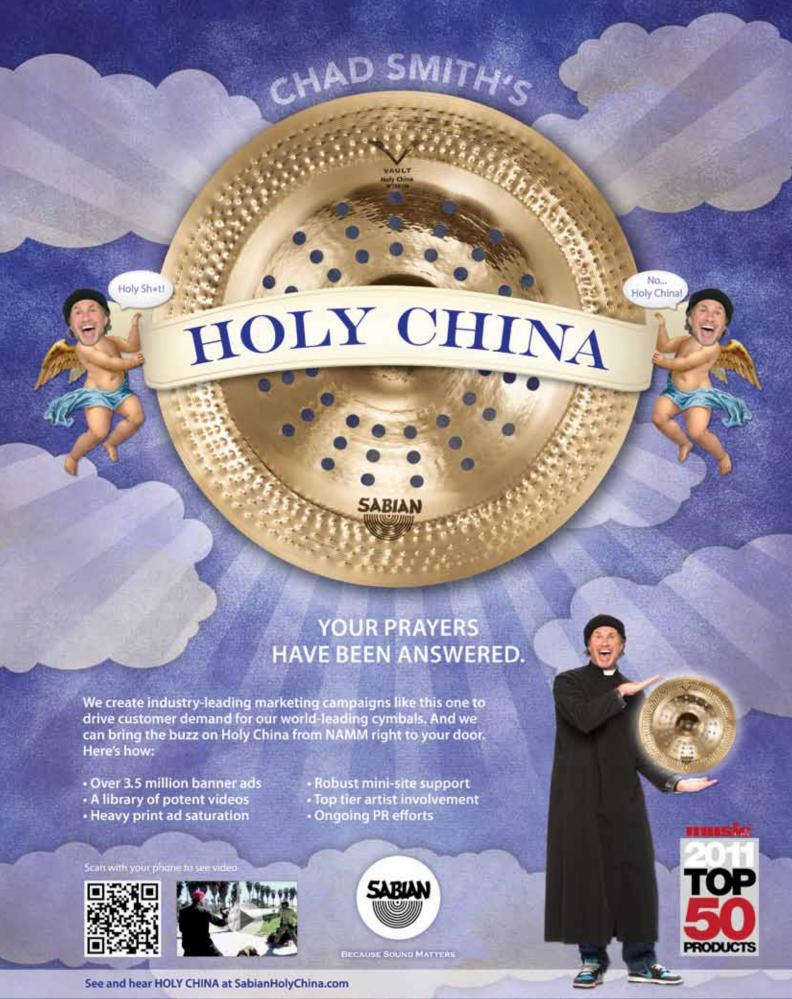
line trying to find something better — or cheaper. They trust the teacher but research and verify everything on the Internet.

So, I started typing in keywords: "inexpensive student clarinets," "cheap student saxophones," "inexpensive beginner trumpets" and so on. In each case, you had the sponsored ads at the top of the list. But just below them, a number of other retailers popped up, many that no one at *Music Inc.* knew of. At the top of that list, and many of these Google searches, was Instrumental Savings.

I did a search for the company's owner, and a video of Nguyen on CNBC popped up with the heading "Spotlight on a Young Millionaire." You can find it on YouTube. It's a 2009 interview with Nguyen — then a 23-year-old. He'd created this online music business in 2006, and three years later, it had an estimated worth of \$3 million. Right then and there, we knew it was a story for *Music Inc.* 

That article begins on page 30, and it's a fascinating read.

When people wonder where the young retailers are in this industry, check online — even in what the industry considers to be a very traditional B&O market. But online retail isn't just a youth movement. Do a little searching on your own. You'll find everything from a 70-year-old one-man shop on the East Coast to a middle-aged entrepreneur in the South to some well-known retailers under new names. All of it begs the question: What does it take to be a successful music retailer today? Obviously, a strong online component has to be in the mix. MI





#### Quit Complaining, Take Action!

ust responding with my two cents to the article "Trademark Nightmare" in the January 2011 issue. Most of us are aware of all of the knock-off or counterfeit guitars coming from China. It is a shame that this is taking over our industry. Most of the major guitar manufacturers are having their guitars cloned in China and stamped "made in the U.S.A." I am not sure why our government can't put a stop to this, but what do I know.

I believe the U.S. guitar companies should grow a backbone. Stop doing business with China until they honor the trademarks and patents. There are other countries that would probably love the business. I understand that this process could and would be difficult, but it must be done. If I have an unhappy customer, he or she will stop doing business with me, and until the U.S. guitar companies do the same with China, this will not stop. Quit complaining, and take action.

Dwaine Childers Childers Music Center Portsmouth, Ohio

#### Three Industry Titans

he recent sale of two major drumstick makers, Pro-Mark and Vic Firth, got me thinking about industry icons Herb Brochstein, Joe Calato and Vic Firth, and how important they have been to drummers, business owners and the music industry in general. A book could be written about these three gentlemen and their impact, but I'll leave that to a real historian.

As the owner of a drum shop more than 50 years ago, Herb Brochstein came across drumsticks made of Japanese oak, and he seized the opportunity, which



#### 'U.S. guitar companies should grow a backbone. Stop doing business with China until they honor the trademarks and patents.'

Dwaine Childers

led to Pro-Mark, an international company dedicated solely to the manufacturing of drumsticks. Herb not only influenced others over the past half-century to pursue their dreams of specializing in the making of drumsticks but his story inspired me in 1988 when, as the owner of St. Louisbased Drum Headquarters, I was presented with the opportunity to buy a manufacturing company that became HO Percussion. Herb ensured the continuation of the Pro-Mark legacy by passing the business on to the capable hands of his son, Maury, who shepherded it through the past 13 years, took the firm to the next level and engineered the sale to D'Addario & Co.

Joe Calato is the textbook example of necessity being the mother of invention that has driven creative people for time immemorial. He revolutionized the industry by creating the nylon-tip drumstick and improving drumstick manufacturing procedures. I always got the feeling from Joe that Regal Tip existed solely because he loved drummers and drumming, and that healthy perspective has been continued by his daughters, Carol and Cathy.

Vic Firth built an incredible brand after establishing himself as a world-class musician, and he excelled at the delicate balance of being a respected artist, educator and businessman without detracting from any of them. Most of all, he is a model for anyone who is considering a second career after a fulfilling first one. As I have expanded my involvement in commercial real estate after selling both of my MI businesses and considering what else I might do next, I often think of Vic as my inspiration since he started his drumstick company in the middle of his life. Plus, he's cooler than Col. Sanders ever was.

Herb Brochstein, Joe Calato and Vic Firth are only three of the modern percussion industry icons that are responsible for the quality of instruments available today and the high level that has been attained in the art and science of drumming. It behooves all of us to learn their stories and apply their unique qualities to our own situations.

> Rob Birenbaum Consultant St. Louis

#### One Dream Achieved

wanted to say "thank you" for the great article you included on Kraft Music ("Best Niche") as a part of your *Retail Excellence Awards* coverage in the December 2010 issue. Personally, it has been a dream of mine to be part of one of these issues. I grew up reading this magazine and always saw a time when Kraft Music would be recognized there. It's wonderful to see that time has come.

It is also quite gratifying to know that our suppliers and reps may have had something to do with nominating our company for that award. Nice to know that they value our relationship as much as we do.

> Ben Kraft Owner and Chairman Kraft Music Franklin, Wis.

#### **Beatniks Praise**

really enjoyed Greg Billings' article "Raised by Beatniks" in the January 2011 issue of *Music Inc.* I thought it was provocative from a sales perspective, and as a parent, I found it really inspiring, even moving. I've shared your insights with my wife and friends outside the industry who've all appreciated the article.

You made so many profound points, and the picture you painted of your own upbringing and the impact of your parents' choices on you and your siblings is very much what I hope for in my own family today and in the future. Thanks for writing this excellent piece. You've done your parents proud.

Matt Frazier Sales Manager Avid

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# RETAIL

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MIDLOTHIAN MUSIC I BY KATIE KAILUS I PHOTO BY SIMON BRUBAKER

# **AGAINST ALL ODDS**

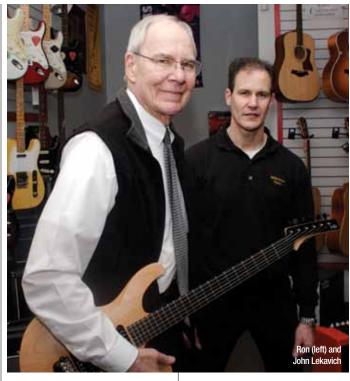
kavich would give himself a break.
The owner of Midlothian Music in Midlothian, Ill., suffered a heart attack in 2002, and numerous others since then. But instead of taking a vacation, he's powered through it with a little help from the miracle of modern medicine. And Midlothian Music, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, has never been stronger.

ou'd think Ron Le-

"He's like a one-man band," said his son, John Lekavich, co-owner of the full-line music dealership, which has a second location in nearby Orland Park. "He tries to do everything. He does repairs and he teaches. He's been working seven days a week all his life."

But while the store's coowner has suffered his share of setbacks, Midlothian Music has not. The Orland Park location has expanded to a larger facility three times since opening in 1985. The growth has been driven, in part, by Midlothian's music lessons program, which now boasts 1,000 students.

"We've moved a block or two because we've needed the bigger space," John said. "Our second location is also 4,000 square feet.



We now have about 800 lesson students a week there and 200 at our Midlothian location."

For some, one heart attack would be enough to stop them from punching the clock seven days a week. But Lekavich, now in his 70s, doesn't slow down.

"On the way home from the hospital, he'll ask to be dropped off at the store," John said. "I'll say, 'No, you have to go home,' To this day, he is here seven days a week."

#### CELEBRITY STATUS

he idea of slowing down doesn't sit well with Lekavich, which is why, in 2010, he tried a revolutionary heart pump developed by the University of Chicago. The battery-operated pump, called a left ventricular assist device, lets Lekavich continue to go about his life and work, but with a caveat: He has to change an 8-pound battery pack every four hours.

"He took the battery, and the

next thing you know, he is the Incredible Hulk," John said. "He is 110-percent. He is lifting drum boxes, teaching four days a week and doing his repairs. He hasn't missed a beat."

Since taking the pump, Lekavich has become a celebrity in his own right, gracing billboards, bus stops and television ads with his comeback story.

"He had about six weeks to live on his last go-around in the hospital, and that's when they told him about the heart pump," John said. "He is one of the hospital's poster boys now. People come from all over to our store, and he will sit down with them one-on-one, giving them a consultation and telling them what the pump has done for him."

#### 50 YEARS STRONG

AMM recently recognized Midlothian Music with a 50th anniversary award. To celebrate the milestone, the store featured live music throughout 2010, with visits from Doyle Dykes for Taylor Guitars and Fred Gretsch for Gretsch Drums.

"We had artists like Dykes and Gretsch come out," John said "And when they were here, we gave away free gear from that brand. We've had a lot of fun with the anniversary." MI

# PENT A TRUMPET 1 24/7 RENTALS Online rentals are still small potatoes for many school music retailers. So why are they embracing the concept?

he back-to-school season was a little less hectic at Paige's Music last year. In the days leading up to the start of band and orchestra season, the Indianapolis dealership used to get a slew of calls from parents panicking about making a special trip to the store or taking a day off work to rent their kids' instruments. Launching an online rental program five years ago changed that.

"You can hear the relief in their voices as soon as we tell them that they can take care of the transaction online," said Mark Goff, president of Paige's Music. "The customer can complete the process in a few minutes or take as much time as they would like to digest the details. Our system is customized by school, so the customer can simply select the school their child attends, and all of the appropriate products and dates are included." The transactions are then reviewed and approved by Paige's sales staff before being shipped.

Goff said the online rental program has created a more efficient transaction

he back-to-school season was a little less hectic at Paige's Music last year. In the days leading up to the start of band and orchestra season, applis dealership used to get alls from parents panicking

#### THE RENTAL NIGHT ALTERNATIVE

J Averwater, general manager of Amro Music in Memphis, Tenn., said that online rentals are catching on in his territory as a way for those who miss rental nights to get instruments. However, he doesn't see a large portion of rentals moving online.

"Most of our rental accounts are located in smaller rural communities," Averwater said. "Our band directors like to have their parent meetings and start beginners in the same week, so we get the paperwork and deliver the instruments at the same time. If the parent is not able to attend the meeting, it might be a week before the school rep returns, so renting online gives the customer a much speedier option.



"Online rentals are just another avenue we want to offer our time-challenged customers while still providing the same great service."

Peter Sides, president of Pennsylvaniabased Robert M. Sides Family Music Center, also stressed the importance of parent meetings. But his three-year-old online rental program has experienced tremendous growth. Sides' 2010 season saw a 40-percent increase over 2009, accounting for about 8 percent of the store's total rentals. While processing another 20 orders a day might be challenging, it's tantamount to adding another rental night to the calendar and something his company will be prepared for next season.

"Families are only getting busier and busier, so I see the growth continuing in the years to come," he said. "We will continue to emphasize that schools stick to holding [rental] meetings while using the online rental program to help stragglers and others who can't make the meeting to easily obtain everything they need to get started in music."

Reaching parents who can't attend rental meetings has also played a large part in Senseney Music's success. But according to its president, Lori Supinie, online rentals account for less than 2 percent of the company's rentals and have had their challenges. She issued a survey to band and orchestra directors after this past rental season asking whether they were comfortable with online rentals.

"Most of them responded that they tell parents to avoid looking for instruments on the Internet, perhaps not realizing we were offering online rentals," Supinie said. "We're not positive the teachers' attitudes toward 'Internet instruments' translated into a negative attitude toward our online rentals, but we will definitely address this as we go through this school year and in our preparation for next year's rental season."

She added that Senseney Music will be stepping up its online promotions and may be offering an incentive for renting online next year.

George Quinlan Jr., president of Burr Ridge, Ill.-based Quinlan & Fabish, said his staff has been challenged by expectations coming from the online buying culture outside of the music industry.

"People expect things they order online to arrive the next day," Quinlan said. "It's

just the nature of online shopping: You buy something, and it ships for free the next day. So it puts a challenge on us to make sure we are up to par on it."

To keep up with demand and ensure timeliness, Quinlan adds a second shift from mid-August through mid-October.

#### **ELUSIVE CLIENTS**

ummerhays Music in Murray, Utah, serves both rural and urban customers. While such dealers as Supinie and Sides have noticed identifiable trends among their online rental customers, Scott Summerhays has found these clients to be more elusive.

"We felt like the rural customers would jump all over it, but much to my surprise,

# 'It's a trend we didn't expect. Customers very much appreciate the conveinence, so it's worth doing.' — Scott Summerhays

the people who use it are in the city and not very far from our store," said Summerhays, who owns Summerhays Music. "It's a trend we didn't expect. But customers very much appreciate the convenience, so it's worth doing. I don't think that it has grown the pie [of rental customers], but it adds a new service to our program and the customers who have taken advantage of it appreciate it."

Quinlan — whose stores are located in the Chicago suburbs, Indiana and Michigan — has also noticed the lack of discernible trends among online rental customers. He said suburban and city-dwelling customers are just as likely to rent online as his rural customers, and some live only blocks from his store. Still, he's confident it's a growing customer base.

"It's a small percentage today, but it's growing," said Quinlan, who has offered online rentals for a decade. "Online offerings are expected now. I think parents are more surprised if you can't do everything online that you can in the store. It'll become more routine as time goes by and people who have spent their whole life on the Internet become parents." MI







#### Ontario Music Returns

On Jan. 2, Ontario Music reopened under new ownership and a new name. Now called Gard's Ontario Music, the full-line Ontario, Calif., dealership will remain in the same location and stock the same products as before. According to the previous owner, Todd Trent, Ontario Music closed last July due to the recession, school budget cuts, financial debt and the city's economic decline.

CLOSING

#### Goodbye, Fergus

After more than 40 years in business, Fergus Music — previously Olson and Carlson Music — closed its doors on Dec. 24, 2010. Owner Steve Baker told Fergus Forum that the closing marks the first time in almost a half-century that the city, Fergus Falls, Minn., will have no music store. Baker and his wife, Barbara, will be moving their non-profit project, Operation Happy Note, to Osakis, Minn. Operation Happy Note collects and delivers instruments to soldiers overseas through donations and fundraisers.

CONTEST

#### Ash Names Top Shredder

am Ash Music has crowned John-Joe Michael Roarty the winner of the 2010 Best In Shred Contest, a nationwide search for America's best unsigned guitar player. The finals took place Jan. 12 at the Sam Ash Music superstore in Cerritos, Calif., after four months and four rounds of competition. Roarty, who was one of more than 600 contestants to enter, received the grand prize, an Ibanez RG9670Z custom guitar, along with \$20,000 in music, sound and recording gear. He will also have the opportunity to perform live onstage with guitarist Steve Vai.

PROMOTION

#### Tarpley's NAMM Win

usicorp recently announced the winner of its NAMM show iPad giveaway. John Tarpley of Tarpley Music in Amarillo, Texas, received an Apple iPad after entering the contest during the convention.

"We congratulate John Tarpley on his win and thank everyone who visited our booth," said Dan Roberts, vice president of sales for Musicorp. "Musicorp enjoyed a very successful appearance at the show, demonstrating the compelling new offerings for 2011."



GIST PIANO CENTER | EXPANSION

# Gist Gets Printed

ist Piano Center celebrated the launch of its Louisville and Lexington, Ky., print music departments with grand opening events on Jan. 22 and 29, respectively. In addition to the official unveilings, public events, such as private teacher breakfasts, giveaways, sales and a drawing for a \$50 "Gist Certificate," ran from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Along with books from such publishers as Hal Leonard, Alfred, Faber and Kjos, the print department offers a full selection of musical software, MIDI files and CD play-alongs. Gist also replaced its traditional ordering process with an on-demand print service, which instantly

and legally produces copies of chosen songs in any key.

"With all of these teachers and students joining our musical family, we have decided to expand our product line to include pianos, digital pianos, player systems, piano moving, tuning, rental, repair, storage — and now — piano music," said owner John Gist. "We really are a one-stop piano resource for all of Kentucky and Southern Indiana."

Gist was also recently chosen as one of three "Alfred Premier" dealers in the world for its print music services, marketing strategies and handmade displays.

JUSIC & ARTS I MANAGEMENT

# M&A NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE VPS



Music & Arts has promoted Allan Greenberg to executive vice president of operations and Ron Beaudoin to executive vice president of sales and marketing. According to a statement from the company, the change will give them more opportunity to work with senior management of Guitar Center, Music & Arts' parent company.

Greenberg, who has been with Music & Arts since 1993, recently led its operations department, overseeing distribution, logistics, inventory control, repair, customer service and acquisitions. Beaudoin began his career with Music & Arts in 1999, merging the company with his suburban Philadelphia school music dealership and becoming a regional manager. He oversaw all sales channels, including retail stores, educational reps, affiliate networks and online, and also supervised the marketing department.

"These promotions could not have come at a better time and serve to solidify our senior management team prior to our exploration of expansion opportunities afforded by the economic recovery," said Music & Arts President and CEO Kenny O'Brien.





GUITAR CENTER I EDUCATION

## GC ADDS LESSONS BUSINESS WITH NEW LOUISVILLE STORE

uitar Center has officially taken its music lessons program to the retail store level. The company's new 17,500-square-foot Louisville, Ky., location, which opened to the public on Jan. 27, features GC's first instore lessons and rehearsal facility, Guitar Center Studios. It offers music instrument lessons for all skill levels and one-on-one Pro Tools, Logic Pro and GarageBand classes. The rehearsal space is equipped with backline gear and will give musicians access to digital recordings of their rehearsals. Previously, GC Studios was confined to a non-retail facility in Woodland Hills. Calif.

GC opened the Louisville store with a weekend-long celebration featuring giveaways and exclusive sales, including guitar and drum essentials at up to 89-percent off list price. Events included clinics (dubbed Guitar Center Sessions) with Dave Elitch, drummer for The Mars Volta, on Jan. 28; Avid, makers of Pro Tools, which hosted "Music Production 101" on Jan. 29; and Johnny Hiland, Nashville, Tenn., session guitarist and solo artist, on Jan. 30. The store also features GC Garage,

# Guitar Center launches its first retail location with a music lessons facility

an on-site guitar repair and service facility. Several other Louisville music retailers commented on the opening to *The Courier*-

Iournal.

"It's going to be tough, no doubt about it," said Bill Himbaugh, vice president of operations at Doo Wop Shop. "I don't think anyone in town is going down without a fight."

"Part of the common belief is that [Guitar Center will] go into a town and generate more interest in playing the guitar, but that remains to be seen," said Jimmy Brown, owner of Guitar Emporium. "As my Taylor rep put it to me, 'Every Taylor guitar they sell is one you don't get to sell."

Start.
Or, upgrade.

either way, we make rentals more profitable.



Our high-performance Website & POS features allow customers to:

- Initiate and complete full rentals online, includes live rental form!
- Rent by instrument type, city, or school/band director
- Buy related accessories and books, for pickup at store, delivery to school, or ship to address
- Export accounting data to QuickBooks directly

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IMSO I EVENT

#### ISO REACHES OUT, AWARDS VENDORS

his year's Independent Music Store Owners (iMSO) NAMM show convocation turned into a standing-room-only event. Held Jan. 13 at the Hilton Anaheim in Anaheim, Calif., the event attracted 68 dealers, as well as new vendors and a half-dozen prospective members.

iMSO President Gordy Wilcher of Owensboro Music discussed several initiatives designed to generate dealer outreach, including the recently reformed iBuy program. Developed in collaboration with Pro-Active Websites and its sister company, Cutting-Edge Solutions, the soon-to-debut iBuy generator will provide members with one-stop product ordering from multiple



distributors, as well as added SKUs and real-time tracking. Since its announcement, the ecommerce solution has already attracted 21 new vendors.

growth — it now has 514 registered members - to word-ofmouth referral from independent sales reps.

He also emphasized the im-Wilcher attributed iMSO's portance of a volunteer-based

calling committee for contacting less-active members and inviting them to participate in the online forum, which Wilcher said is iMSO's most effective form of communication. The forum lets members exchange ideas and information and currently lists more than 30,000 unique posts.

iMSO also distributed 10 Independent Friendly Vendor Awards to standout distributors and manufacturers. Winners included The Music People, D'Addario, U.S. Band/St. Louis Music, Hanser Music Group, Curt Mangan Strings, The Music Link, EMD, Crafter, CBI Cables and Hal Leonard. Dealers interested in joining iMSO should visit its website, musicstoreowners.com.





WEST MUSIC I APPOINTMENTS

# WEST WELCOMES MUSIC ED WARRIORS

Oralville, lowabased West Music recently hired Randy Hargis as an educational consultant for its music education division. He'll be based in Dallas and will assist music educators and administrators with product selection. West has also promoted Doug



Ducey to community outreach coordinator. He will work with local customers to promote music making and education programs.

#### TRIBUTE

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

#### James 'Jim' Johnson

James "Jim" Johnson, past president and founder of Mississippi Music,

passed away on Feb. 1. He was 94.

In 1946, Johnson launched Johnson Music, which became Mississippi Music in 1960. A band director, he also served



as president of The American Bandmasters Association, NAMM, American Music Conference and the Hattiesburg Country Club.

Additionally, he was on the board of the National Association of School Music Dealers, a founding member of the Omega group and active in Lions Clubs.

Johnson was a graduate of Hinds Community College and received a masters degree from Northwestern University. He was also a U.S. Army Air Corps veteran of World War II and served in the reserves.

Johnson's daughter-in-law
Rosi Johnson and son Dex currently run Mississippi Music, a
multistore full-line dealership that's
based in Hattiesburg, Miss.
He is also survived by his wife of 65

He is also survived by his wife of 65 years, Mac; his other son and daughter-in-law, Bix and Sherry Johnson; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

#### MANTOVA'S TWO STREET MUSIC I AWARD

#### Mantova's Gets Local Honors

Mantova's Two Street Music in Eureka, Calif., has been recognized as the "2010 Small Business of the Year" by the Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce for the dealership's marketing, energy and civic leadership. Chamber of Commerce Chairman Mike Newman presented the award to store owner Anthony Mantova. Rep. Mike Thompson, Sen. Noreen Evans and State Assembly member Wesley

Chesbros also sent representatives from their offices to award Mantova's signed certificates of merit.

"I was surprised but very happy that we were chosen for the honor," Mantova said. "I also really appreciate the state representatives taking the time to encourage our business. It's been a lot of hard work for the year and a half that my brothers and I have been in the music industry."



# **NAMM**® News

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# Note from Joe

#### 6 Takeaways from This Year's NAMM Show

On behalf of the NAMM Board of Directors and staff, I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who supported the NAMM Show this year. It was an important gathering as our industry slowly emerges from the past few years of recession.

We are lucky to be involved in a special industry; one made up of lifelong friends committed to something that really makes a difference in our world. I was reminded of the importance of these relationships when I personally spoke with many of you in Anaheim. Based on your comments and feedback, I've compiled a few thoughts from this year's show:

#### Music is more popular than ever.

Despite all the bad economic news recently, the NAMM Show clearly demonstrated that music is more important than ever. More than 1,100 media outlets covered the show with a promusic making message, and positive coverage of our products and technology. As a result, our industry has gotten media valued in excess of \$40 million—exposure that would be impossible to get elsewhere. NAMM's programs also received national and international coverage, which will help create more music makers (and customers) in the year ahead.

#### It's all about the people it's always been about the people

Virtually every music industry pioneer was at the show. We even brought in Mr. Kakehashi, founder of Roland, via satellite from Japan for the Breakfast of Champions. We know our icons by first names: Hartley, Skip, Remo, Vic, Sammy, Henry

and Sterling. We know the company names: D'Addario, PRS, Zildjian, Calato, Marshall, Martin and Taylor. Having our industry visionaries all under one roof only happens at the NAMM Show. They inspire us and help create the next generation of leaders.

#### New product innovation drives the industry.

We go to shows to see new products! Our customers go into music stores and onto websites to do the same. Show me an industry without innovation and new products, and I'll show you an industry in decline. The NAMM Show featured some real breakthrough products, many from unexpected companies!

#### Technology is the growth area.

When technology makes learning, playing, recording, mixing and enjoying music easier, we will likely grow the market. This segment was evident at this year's event. New technology was all over the show floor. To grow our business, it will become increasingly important to connect technology with our industry.

#### There is a new generation of attendees.

With 270+ new exhibitors and hundreds of new music retailers in attendance, we saw a new generation joining our industry. They are unburdened by the lament for the "good old days" and will create the solutions to today's—and tomorrow's—challenges. We need to nurture and support these folks; they're our future.

#### Tribes (industry categories) matter—and their coming together is critical to industry growth and development.

The NAMM Show attracts different industry categories; proaudio, combo, full-line, piano and organs, school music,
recording, sheet music and publishing, software, DJ and
lighting. And we welcome different parts of the distribution
chain: those that make, sell and use the products,
manufacturers, retailers, distributors, contractors and installers,
touring and live sound, house of worship, music educators,
music business students, corporate buyers, studio engineers.
This is a true global gathering of the music tribes, and it will
only get better in the future!

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEC

More Than 5,600 NAMM Show Media Stories Highlighting Our Members.
This Exposure Has Resulted in Media Coverage Valued at More Than \$40 Million

LUSA
LOS Angeles Times

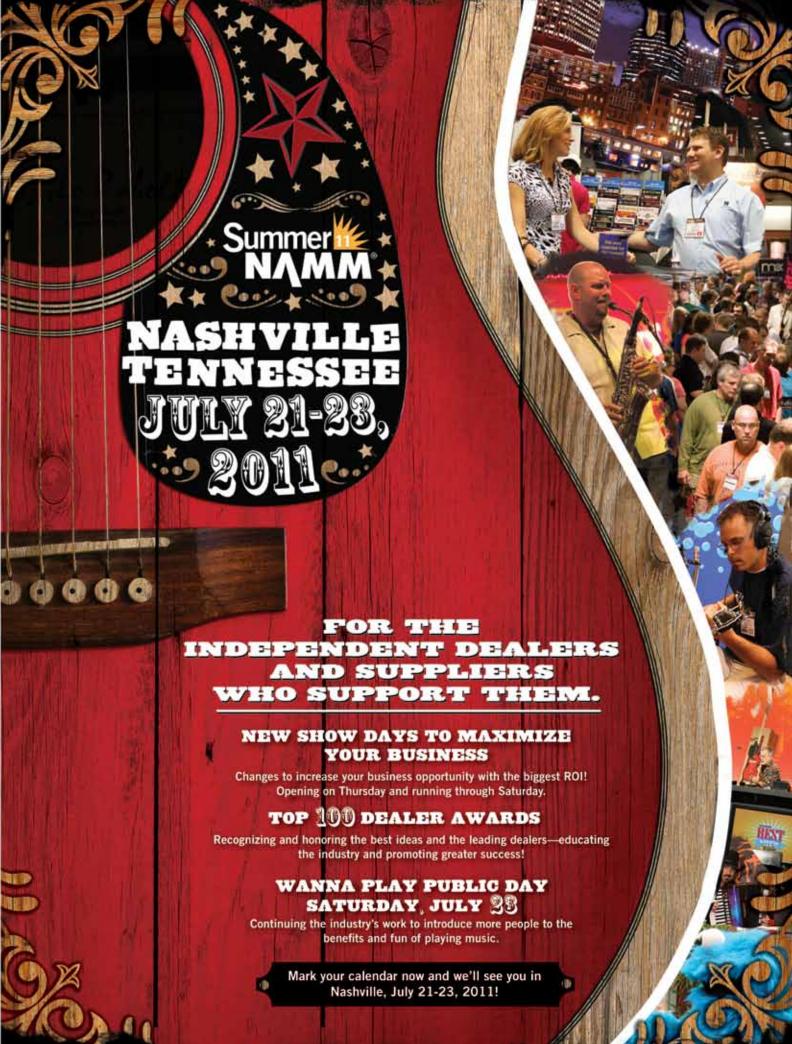
CNN

The New York Times

FOX
NEWS

Increased Media Attention = More Product Exposure and More Customers In Your Stores!











# SUPPLY

#### **InsideSUPPLY**

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SOUND COMPOSITES I BY KATIE KAILUS

# **HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE**

teve Mosher has found the new ebony, and it's not another wood.

After watching the effects of deforestation on the MI industry's natural resources supply, he started working on an alternative for such orchestral parts as bridges, tailpieces and fingerboards. The result: Sound Composites, a Eugene, Ore.-based operation that creates stringed instrument parts from carbon and graphite fiber.

"In practical terms, the music industry's ebony will soon become unavailable," said Mosher, president and head of research and development. "Other woods are nice but not particularly available either. Right now, there is not a better non-wood alternative than what Sound Composites is offering."

Mosher and his five employees manufacture the products at a 6,000-square-foot facility that houses both Sound Composites and Mosher's other venture, Moses Graphite, which he started in 1989. Moses Graphite makes parts for electric guitars and basses.

"Every part is made in-house in Eugene," Mosher said. "We are a dedicated U.S. manufacturer."

Launched in the third quarter of last year, Sound Composites also has an OEM business and fills individual requests for parts.



"People like them because they are parts that are easily installed and removed in case people want to change," Mosher said. "They do not wear and are very even tonally. And they are not objectionable-looking. You can put them on a classical instrument, and most people can't tell the difference."

#### THE SOUND DIFFERENCE

he carbon composites offer a different sound than their ebony counterparts. According to Mosher, Sound Composites' bridges provide a more harmonically complete acoustic sound to the acoustic chamber, while increasing loudness.

"They are lighter, basically," Mosher said. "And that lets the acoustic chamber be more responsive to what the player does. We can make them lighter than anything else out there, and we do."

#### ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

one and sound aside, Sound Composites is a solid alternative to ebony, a soon-to-be-extinct wood. "South American ebony is gone, about half of the African ebony supply has been depleted, and we are now working through Indian ebony," Mosher said. "The carbon fingerboards, for example, are a great alternative to the diminishing ebony supply, which is truly an accelerating problem."

Coming off Sound Composites' first NAMM show, Mosher is optimistic about the company's future. "Bouncing back from a hard economy and coming back with the same components as before is difficult," Mosher said. "Many are looking for an alternative to be prepared for when the rebound comes. We are ready for that." MI

#### SUPPLY



#### Welcome to the Neighborhood

owrey recently announced its plans to relocate its headquarters from La Grange Park, Ill., to nearby Elmhurst. The new location will put Lowrey closer to Chicago's three major interstates — and the *Music Inc.* offices. {lowrey.com}

#### ArtistApproved



# Soul-Searching Acoustics

Two members of Collective Soul recently updated their home recording studios with Auralex Acoustics' T'Fusors and Studiofoam. The project was initiated when Collective Soul drummer Cheney Brannon contacted Auralex for some help with his drum room.

"Auralex came in and made my garage and frontman Ed [Roland's] basement into a fully functional recording environment suitable for any professional musician," Brannon said. {auralex.com}



#### Blige Plays Bass

ary J. Blige is now a Ritter Instruments bass player. The singer, a standard customer, not endorser, began taking bass lessons after customordering a Cora five-string bass. {ritter-instruments.com}



KORG I DISTRIBUTION

#### **KORG FAMILY GROWS**

org has acquired exclusive U.S. distribution rights for Blackstar. Korg began offering Blackstar's products in the United States this year.

"We believe that Korg USA has the right infrastructure, market knowledge and marketing know-how to take Blackstar to the next level," said Ian Robinson, managing director for Blackstar. "The chemistry between the two companies is great, and we anticipate that this will be a long-term partnership based on

integrity and a passion for delivering outstanding MI innovation."

Korg has also taken on exclusive U.S. distribution for the Elements line of HK Audio products. HK Audio's headquarters and engineering is based in Germany.

"I am delighted that Korg USA decided to become our exclusive Elements partner in the U.S. market," said Hans Stamer, president of HK Audio.

{korg.com}

#### RADIAL ENGINEERING I AGREEMENT

# Radial Reamps Partnership

Radial Engineering recently agreed to purchase the Reamp brand and patent from producerengineer and Reamp creator John Cuniberti.

"When John decided to sell, we eagerly agreed to purchase the company assets," said Radial President Peter Janis. "We foresee Reamping gaining more and more market depth in the recording world as a means to integrate the organic feel and sound of analog audio with



today's computer-based digital workstations."

Radial also plans on integrating the Reamp into its mechanical format, while retaining the original circuit design and sound.

"As a former licensee, we plan to continue offering similar licensing opportunities to other companies that wish to partake in expanding the Reamp process," Janis said. {radialeng.com}



WARWICK I PARTNERSHIP

#### Warwick Joins U.S. Music

s of Jan. 1, U.S. Music will represent and distribute Warwick's bass guitars and amplifiers in the United States. Located in Mundelein, Ill., U.S. Music manufactures and distributes Washburn, Parker, Randall, Eden, Oscar Schmidt and Jay Turser. It also distributes Marshall Amplifiers, Hagstrom, Ouik Lok and Phonic electronics in

the United States.

"We are very pleased to have been able to partner with U.S. Music Corp.," said Hans Peter Wilfer, general manager and founder of Warwick. "They are a professional organization that understands our customer base and can meet the needs of both our dealers and consumers." {warwickbass.com}



D'ADDARIO I EXPANSION

#### D'Addario Goes Down Under

D'Addario recently announced its plans to form D'Addario Australia. The Australian division will be the exclusive importer of the D'Addario brands — D'Addario, Planet Waves, Rico, Evans, PureSound and Pro-Mark. Once established, D'Addario Australia, which will be located in Melbourne, Australia, will direct all marketing activities within the country.

"With the acquisition of Pro-Mark, and other possible future acquisitions, we felt now was a good time to establish our own organization within Australia," said D'Addario CEO Jim D'Addario.

D'Addario Australia will be nationally advertising for personnel positions and plans to conduct business by mid-summer 2011. {daddario.com}



#### SUPPLY





**LANIKAI I PROMOTION** 

#### Lanikai's Big Feature

The Jan. 31 issue of *Time* magazine featured "A String Thing," an article showcasing a large photo of the Lanikai LU-11 soprano ukulele and an interview with Scott Emmerman, Hohner's director of marketing and sales.

The article discussed the pop culture revival of the ukulele and the success of the Lanikai brand.

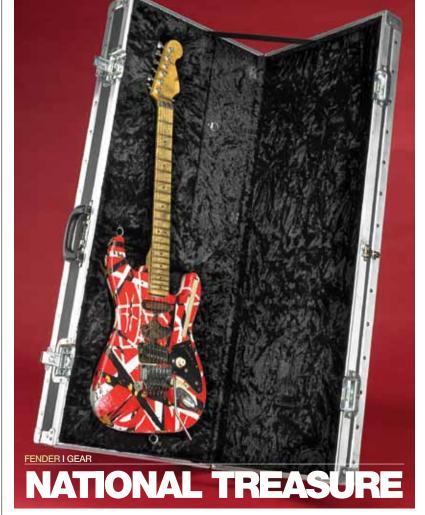
"No other uke manufacturer was mentioned, and the fact that *Time* magazine looks to Lanikai as the leader in the category indicates its dominance in the uke marketplace," said Drew Lewis, fretted product manager for Hohner. "We're very excited to receive this recognition." {lanikaiukes.com}

#### SHOPATRON I SALES

#### Holiday Sales Growth

Shopatron's MI industry ecommerce stores experienced 26-percent same-store sales growth year over year in December 2010, finishing with an overall 16-percent increase for the fourth quarter.

"Music brands typically do well during the holiday season, but a 16-percent growth rate for the quarter shows the industry as a whole has figured out that online sales are a priority going forward," said Ed Stevens, founder and CEO of Shopatron. Shopatron powers more than 35 online stores, as well as more than 800 local music shops. **(shopatron.com)** 



he Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., recently acquired the Van Halen Frank 2 guitar (pictured) through a partnership donation with Fender.

The guitar, made famous by guitarist Eddie Van Halen, was made in 2006 as part of a joint venture between Van Halen and Fender to produce a limited-edition number of guitars for

the EVH brand.

The instrument will be part of the museum's Division of Culture and the Arts, which preserves a large, diverse collection of instruments.

"The museum collects objects that are multidimensional, and this guitar reflects innovation, talent and influence," said Brent Glass, director of the museum. **{fender.com}** 

HAL LEONARD I PARTNERSHIP

#### Hal Leonard Distributes MakeMusic Globally

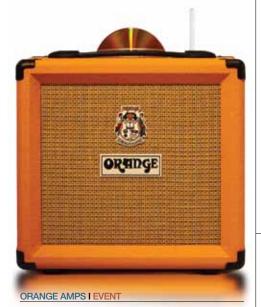
al Leonard recently expanded its agreement with MakeMusic to distribute Finale and other music notation and software products in Canada.

"We have a long history of working with Hal Leonard, and it's always been a pleasure to do so," said Roger Williams, notation sales director for MakeMusic. "When the time came for us to make a change in Canada,

going with Hal Leonard was an easy decision."

Since 2006, Hal Leonard has been the exclusive U.S. distributor for MakeMusic.

In other news, Hal Leonard recently inked a publishing deal for the music of Henry Mancini. The publisher will showcase Mancini's songs in all of its editorial areas. **{halleonard.com}** 



# FASTEST FINGERS

he Orange Amps OPC's capabilities were stretched to the limit when the world's fastest guitarist and Orange amp endorsee Tiago Della Vega broke his Guinness World Record on Jan. 7 at the CES show in Las Vegas.

Della Vega played Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight Of The Bumble Bee" at 340 BPM without any errors, smashing his previous record of 320 BPM. {orangeamps.com}

**GIBSON I LEGAL** 

#### Gibson Case Dismissed

Alawsuit Gibson filed in November 2010 against toy maker WowWee USA has been dismissed. The lawsuit claimed that WowWee wrongfully copied the designs of Gibson's Les Paul, Flying V, Explorer and SG guitar lines for its Paper Jamz toy line.

"WowWee has confirmed that the Gibson dispute has been settled," said Leon Garfinkle, executive vice president of WowWee Canada.

In other Gibson legal news, an affidavit from a federal fish and wildlife agent has indicated that last year's raid of Gibson's Nashville, Tenn., facility will likely result in indictments.

The feds filed a lawsuit in August 2010 seeking the forfeiture of six guitars seized during a 2009 raid for the illegal use of ebony under the Lacey Act. **{gibson.com}** 

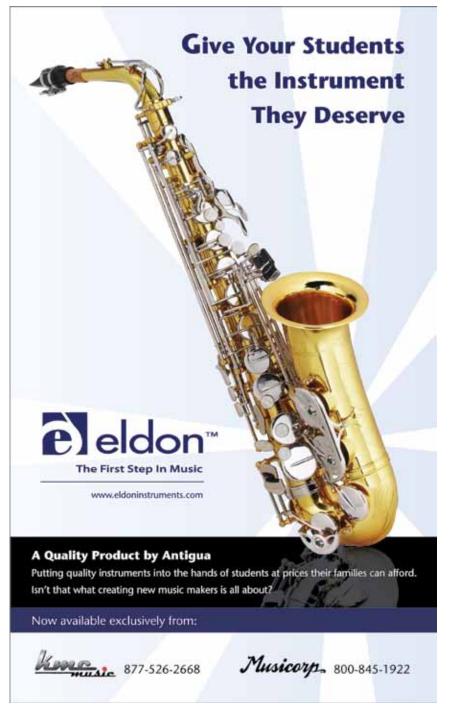


**MUSICNOTES I SALES** 

#### **DIGITAL PRINT SALES RISE**

Digital sheet music retailer and publisher Musicnotes recently announced that the sales of digital sheet music at its online store grew 25 percent in 2010, accelerating from the 21-percent growth recorded in 2009 and exceeding \$10 million in annual sales for the first time.

"Musicnotes added great content in 2010, both new song releases, as well as back catalog, made marked improvements to the customer shopping experience, resulting in a solid increase in our conversion rate," said Tim Reiland, chairman of Musicnotes. {musicnotes.com}





SAMICK I CHARITY

## Samick Shares

Samick Music donated an acoustic guitar for the 25th Annual Child S.H.A.R.E. Gala held on Sept. 25, 2010, at the Westin Hotel in Pasadena, Calif. The event honors the Child S.H.A.R.E. founders for their leadership of the program, which helps children in California by offering effective programs that recruit and support foster and adoptive families. {smcmusic.com}

#### GLOBAL TRUSS AMERICA I LEGAL

#### Global Truss Sues GLP

Global Truss America has filed suit against German Light Products (GLP) and GLP President Mark Ravenhill, alleging trademark infringement, misappropriation of trade secrets and unfair business practices, as well as other violations of the Lanham Act.

Global Truss has accused GLP of falsely stating that it's "an authorized distributor of Global Truss products in the United States and falsely stating that Mr. George Lee is the CEO of Global Truss," as well as wrongfully implying that Global Truss is the source of the products that GLP is advertising, distributing and/or selling. {globaltruss.com}

PEAVEY I DISTRIBUTION

# PEAVEY TEAMS WITH KYORITSU

eavey Electronics recently forged a distribution partnership with Japanese distributor Kyoritsu, making it Japan's sole distributor of Peavey MI and pro audio products.

Kyoritsu is one of Japan's largest distributors of musical instruments, accessories and related products.

Founded in 1979, the company has an extensive sales force, as well as numerous offices and distribution centers throughout Japan.

"We're thrilled to have Kyoritsu Corp. as our distribution partner for Japan," said Courtland Gray, COO of Peavey Electronics. "Japan is one of the most important markets in the world, and we believe Kyoritsu Corp. is the right partner to represent the Peavey product line and will help us increase our market share in the region. We look forward to a long relationship, which will see us both grow and prosper." {peavey.com}

#### **APPOINTMENTS**

#### **New Loud Additions**

oud Technologies
has named Jeff
Rocha vice president
and general manager
for EAW and Anthony
Taylor vice president
and managing director
for Martin Audio.

"EAW and Martin Audio are strong brands with their own unique personalities and reputa-





tions for service and innovation," said Mark Graham, Loud's CEO. "Both Jeff and Anthony are veterans of their brands and have already improved the speed and accuracy of brand-level decision making."

**EMD Music** recently promoted Andrew Swift to the position of operations manager.

Andrew Nagel has been tapped for the position of **L-Acoustics**' installation support manager.

Harman Professional has hired Aaron Simon as the director of licensed products. It has also named Mark Posgay as sales director. He's responsible for divisional sales in the United States.

Word Music Publishing has signed Grammy-nominated songwriter and producer Shaun Shankel. He'll work as a writer and producer for Word.

C.F. Martin recently appointed

Amani Duncan to the new position of director of promotional marketing.

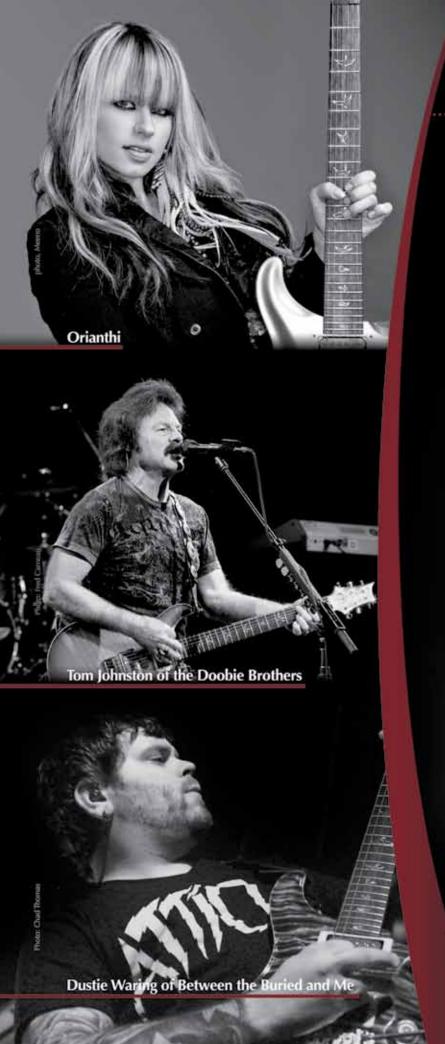
Martin Wolf has been named vice president of manufacturing and operations for **Blue Microphones**.

**Pro-Active Websites** recently promoted Dave Hall to vice president of sales and marketing.

**St. Louis Music** has hired Craig Denny to represent the P. Mauriat line.

Mayumi Martinez has been appointed to the newly created position of executive vice president for **Hosa Technology**.

François Kloc has been named vice president for **Buffet Crampon USA**.



# Diversity

də-vər-sə-tē, noun

PRS Custom 24 - guitar with incredible range - from pop, classic rock and heavy metal to everything in between.



When a guitar can span these musical extremes, you know it has to be special. Visit a PRS dealer to hear how versatile the Custom 24 can be.

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He's young.

He's nabbing B&O market share.

And he wants to teach you everything he knows.

Meet Nathan Nguyen of Instrumental Savings

ucked into an unassuming industrial park in central Orange County, Calif., sits the headquarters of a company that may be revolutionizing the online music instrument business.

Run by 25-year-old Internet entrepreneur Nathan Nguyen — named one of "The Richest Kids in America" in Mark Victor Hansen's book of the same name — Instrumental Savings roared into the online marketplace during the past five years. In that time, it has established itself as an e-tailer to beat on price while rewriting the rules of the school music retail market. And still, Nguyen said he doesn't see himself as a brick-and-mortar's competition.





#### {INSTRUMENTALSAVINGS}

"We are unique because we operate both an online and a brick-and-mortar store. Compared to our online operation, the brick-and-mortar yields greater profit margins, but our online division total profit is greater due to overall sales volume. Online [retail], at its core, competes on price, and while it is the worst way to do business, it is also a great entrepreneurial challenge to compete on operational excellence."

The way Nguyen sees it, brickand-mortar stores lose customers because they don't offer them enough reasons to stay, especially in a depressed economic climate.

"When our brick-and-mortar store experiences challenges, we don't assume that our online store division or our competing online stores are to blame. If we failed to engage our local communities and earn their business relationships, we never had them in the first place for us to say we lost them. If a local [customer] bought their musical equipment online rather than at our local store, it is because we never gave them a reason why they should continue to buy from us at the store. On a local level, it's all about maintaining relationships."

#### NO-FRILLS DESIGN

fficially launched in June 2006 as a full-line e-tailer, Instrumental Savings offers a wide range of products, everything from accordions to French horns to world percussion instruments - all geared toward the entrylevel musician. The company's no-frills website, instrumentalsavings.com, has basic photos and descriptions, along with external links directing customers to more product information. There are also links for customers to "connect" products to their online social networks. Some product pages feature embedded YouTube videos



for a pseudo-"touch" component, as is the case with the page for Yamaha band and orchestral products. Each product page also has a list of related accessories customers can add to their carts.

It's not a flashy, high-concept design, but Nguyen said that's not the point, explaining that functionality is key to converting visits to sales.

"When it comes to online, there are two questions you have to answer," he said. "One is how do you get traffic? No. 2 is how we convert the traffic into customers. Those two things [have a lot to do with] design. One design may look phenomenal, and the other one may be plain but it converts. You have to have a balance."

# Instrumental Savings devotes an entire Web page to encouraging parents to buy instead of rent

According to Nguyen, great design and intricate pages that take a long time to load aren't worth the wait for today's customer. If customers have to wait, he said he believes they'll more than likely leave the site. This dovetails with Nguyen's original strategy of targeting the entry-level market to penetrate the music industry — he's banking

on customers not needing tons of high-res photos with zoom capability. It's the dollar-store concept: When you're paying a dollar for shampoo, you usually don't expect it to have the same bells and whistles as salon shampoo in the \$20–\$30 range. Plus, you don't need to spend a lot of time comparing the two because you know intuitively what you're getting.

"After we earned our spot in the marketplace as a trusted source for musical equipment for aspiring musicians, we had to develop a completely different approach to attract the more advanced musicians," Nguyen said. "The more experienced customer we target, the more they expect from their instruments, and the more they want to inspect the instrument before they buy. Because of that, online becomes very difficult for their risk decisions. So we said, 'If that's the case, we need to lower their caution level by providing more rich media of our product offerings."

#### DON'T RENT, BUY

othing is more low-caution for a customer than renting an instrument, at least that's the conventional wisdom among school music retailers. Nguyen, however, argues that parents are actually doing themselves a disservice by renting rather than buying. He feels so strongly that buying a low-cost student instrument is a smart investment for parents that he devotes an entire Web page on instrumentalsavings. com to explaining the finances behind retail rental programs.

"The only benefit to a consumer when they rent is if the child is not really sure if he is going to continue," Nguyen said. "Renting is the worst thing you can do if you know your student is going to stick with it because



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THE HIGHEST QUALITY ENTRY LEVEL FLUTE AVAILABLE.









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Now, with the PF500, the quality craftsmanship of Pearl is available to the beginning flutist.

Inspire your student with confidence.

Start them with the Pearl advantage.

www.pearlflutes.com



#### {INSTRUMENTALSAVINGS}

it's just wasted money."

It's a controversial strategy, especially as rentals account for a large percentage of school music dealers' revenue. Nguyen acknowledged that having a large rental pool can yield fantastic returns. Still, he said the initial capital investment and the length of time before dealers start reaping financial returns are too

significant for an e-commerce business. It takes at least three years, he said, to realize a profit with rentals. During that time, a retailer continues to carry increasing debt, as it has to buy more instruments to expand its rental pool. So, his strategy is: Why not source low-cost instruments that let parents capitalize on their investment?

**OCUPY** CONVERTING TO CLICKS & MORTAR

Nathan Nguyen plans on starting an online resource, the soon-to-be-relaunched pioneeringcompanies.com, to help businesses interested in pursuing e-commerce.

"My passion is to spread entrepreneurial literacy through e-commerce," Nguyen said. He added that he wants to help startup online businesses "succeed by avoiding the mistakes I made and focus on the things that allowed us success in an unlikely industry — musical instruments — where customers are more likely to buy locally than online."

#### Here's a sneak peek of tips he'll offer on the site:

- What works in brick-and-mortar stores won't necessarily work online. "Accept that, and be humble enough to learn it again."
- Budgeting operating expense percentages for online retail is different from brick-and-mortar retail. "An online store will have a unique budget allocation that will align with specific strategies." (For more on this, refer to the main story.)
- 3. Make the website an extension of your store. "E-commerce has its limitations and its advantages, just like your bricks-and-mortar store."
- 4. Rent school music instruments locally, sell them nationally.
- 5. Service locally, support nationally. "Online, I can never provide the level of service as well as a local guy would. That's how bricks-and-mortar stores can charge a premium, by adding in service. Nationwide, in e-tailing, you give the customers tools. You can troubleshoot over the phone. You can provide them with a video on how to unstick their valves. You have to show them how to do it. Rather than being a technician, you become a coach."
- 6. There's a difference between nice design and profitable design. (See the main story.)
- 7. Track everything because you can.
- 8. More products, more traffic, more anything is the worst thing you can do.
- 9. Focus on a target market.
- 10. Beware of shipping costs. "With shipping, it's all about volume. You have to play around and figure out whether customers are willing to pay. We let them know that they aren't paying any sales tax except for California residents so it's OK to pay shipping when you're spending under \$200."
- 11. Make sure your site and your products stay current and accurate.
- 12. If customers don't have to pay sales tax on your site, promote that.

"We are the bridge for parents to say, 'Honey, we can afford it,' he explained. "Years ago, the off-brand instruments were few and a dime-a-dozen in terms of quality. But now, student-model instruments are actually good quality at a very affordable price. Because of that, it makes buying much more advantageous. We look at the best vendors that will give the best quality at the best price to help the musicians get started."

That said, students often progress past their entry-level instruments. It raises the question: Is Nguyen, who has a robust student instrument business, worried about constantly having to go after new customers?

"To grow with the market is a great strategy theory-wise, but it is an uncertainty," he said. "The loyalty question is quite high for e-commerce. If you're a local store, you can bet on [loyalty because geographically [that family is going to be with you. For online retailers, we can't bet on the fact that customers will remember us for anything. We're not there to coach them through the process. We're just there to make them feel great for the purchase. The only thing we can do is constantly be the champion for our customer's experiences shopping with us and hope they will remember us next time."

#### START-UP COSTS

hen Instrumental Savings launched in 2006, Nguyen said the company invested \$500,000 in online marketing (specifically, in search engine optimization and keyword searches) to start generating enough traffic and sales to make the site profitable. For the first three years, all profits were reinvested back into the business, according to Nguyen, who added that an online business model

differs substantially from that of a brick-and-mortar in terms of budget allocations.

"Typically, we would budget 15 percent or more of our revenue into marketing for online, whereas bricks-and-mortar stores [often] budget about 3-5 percent for marketing at most," he said. "Conversely, a physical store would invest more in their rental location to drive foot traffic. If you want to have foot traffic, you have to focus on spending on the rental space. However, online you buy traffic that comes through your store. So is it cheaper to start an online store versus a real store? The answer is that it's not. That's contrary to what people think."

An online business, he said, has to reinvest continually in marketing. In some ways, it's a losing proposition, as the e-commerce business model is getting more complicated and the online market more saturated.

"If you don't keep investing, what you have currently will be lost and gone because there will always be a new and better [website] coming out," Nguyen said. "In reality, a bricks-and-mortar store's competition is another bricks-and-mortar store. For that market to change, a store has to close. Online, you never know who is going to be your next competitor. You never know who's taking traffic from you. The new guy might put you out of business, and you won't even know it."

The huge start-up cost and online marketplace's volatility are the biggest reasons why Nguyen recommended that smaller independent dealers focus their websites initially on serving local clients. It's not as risky, and it lets dealers grow at a more measured pace without investing large sums of capital into an unpredictable business. He suggested that stores spend no more than \$5,000 for









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#### {INSTRUMENTALSAVINGS}

their initial investment — \$3,000 on the site itself and \$2,000 on marketing it.

"That should allow you to get something going," he said. "That cost should be allinclusive and allow you to start a site that can re-engage your local customers and allow them to critique the site. From there, once the site starts breaking even, you can start to reinvest and grow."

Nguyen pointed out the importance of

existing technologies for startup sites. He recommended using a programming company that's already familiar with your type of business and also cautioned retailers from using brand-new software, as it usually has bugs that need to be worked out. Plus, he suggested having hosted solutions. For example, instead of buying a full shopping cart system when you don't fully understand how it works with PCI (payment card industry)

compliance, go with something like PayPal's existing merchant solutions. "They've done it for years, and they can integrate into your site with no problem," he said.

"Once you have figured out that you have customers, then you can play around with reinvesting in certain areas. You need to build a local website first for your local customers. If you jump into nationwide retailing online, you're going to spend so much money on marketing and so much money in infrastructure. And you're going to find out that you're going to make pennies, and you're going to be really upset."

#### GIVING BACK

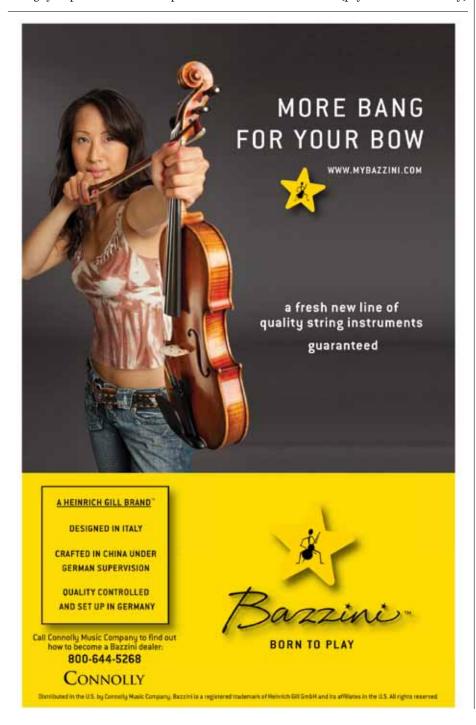
fter five years as an online retailer, about the only constant for Nguyen has been change. Instrumental Savings is set to launch a redesigned website within the next few months, something that's been in the works for more than a year. He also plans to launch a resource for brick-and-mortar stores interested in starting an online division. The site, pioneeringcompanies.com, will provide the nuts and bolts on issues to consider when starting an online business, including details on how to best utilize available resources.

Nguyen's coming off what he called "possibly the best year we've had." He credited much of his success to mentors, staff, customers and such key vendors as Yamaha that have helped him along the way. Now, he said he feels a sense of responsibility to share his knowledge and give back.

"It goes back toward the way I was brought up," said Nguyen, who immigrated to the United States from Vietnam with his family when he was 5 years old. "My dad told me that one of the biggest gifts you can give on this earth is to create employment. My dad was a major in the Vietnam War and says that if we would have won the war he would have looked for ways to create jobs for people in Vietnam. It's one of the poorest countries where a lot of people don't have jobs, and jobs are what stimulate the economy."

Still, success for Nguyen hasn't come cheaply — neither in terms of reinvestment or the pace that's required to stay on top of an ever-shifting online marketplace.

"The honest truth is that if I knew how difficult it would be, I would have never started," Nguyen said with a laugh. MI



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#### **InsideSHOWS**

- > The NAMM Show 2011 attracted a record number of showgoers, with 90,114 registered attendees.
- > The show also brought in 1,417 exhibitors, a 3.2-percent boost from 2010's 1,373 vendors.





THE NAMM SHOW 2011 I BY ZACH PHILLIPS, KATIE KAILUS, HILARY BROWN, AARON COHEN & ED ENRIGHT

# BLUER SKIES

NAMM Show 2011 signaled bluer skies ahead.
Held Jan. 13–16 in Anaheim, Calif., the convention boasted a 3-percent rise in attendance compared to last year, with 90,114 registered showgoers. Exhibitors came ready to capitalize on the traffic, investing in

s indicators go, The

# Exhibitors wrote orders at NAMM — lots of orders. A rebound?

more press conferences and dealer events than in recent years. But the most positive sign at NAMM? Retailers were spending again.

"The NAMM Show has always been good for us, but I can say that this was our best year ever," said Quincy Yu, general manager of Tycoon Percussion. "We certainly felt that this was a

stronger buying year at the show than in years past, and our sales figures have reflected this."

"Retailers are more eager to buy inventory this year than in the past two years, and this was reflected in the orders which

1. Singer-songwriter Natasha Bedingfield; 2. Guitar Center's Gene Joly (left) and Radial's Peter Janis; 3. "Father" Chad Smith; 4. NAMM's Joe Lamond (left) and Tom Schmitt; 5. Saxophonist Tia Fuller and bassist Brian Bromberg perform during Vandoren's VandoJam; 6. From left: International Society for Music Education's Margaret Barrett, Sandy Jordan and Graham Welch; 7. *Music Inc*.'s Frank Alkyer (left) and Amro Music's CJ Averwater; 8. Yamaha's Takuya "Tak" Nakata



began coming in prior to The NAMM Show, just after 1/1/11," said Marc Minarik, founder of Minarik Guitars.

GCI Technologies, maker of Gemini, Cortex and iKey Audio, prepared by taking out a 33-percent larger booth. "From open to close, the GCI Technologies booth was filled to capacity with curious individuals who were anxious to see our debut of 19 new products," said Ikey Cabasso, the company's vice president of international sales.

Music retailers in attendance expressed slightly more caution. Ray Totaro, president of Boston Piano & Organ in Natick, Mass., said he observed two moods at the show: a cautious optimism that business may be "slowly improving" coupled with "an absence of complaining" and more assertive approach to handling difficult times.

"Overall, the vibe of the show seemed positive but still cautious," added Joe Summa, owner of Greenwich Music of Riverside, Conn. "Suppliers seemed upbeat and eager to show new product but weren't as pushy as they were last year, as far as trying to get orders."

But they did get orders. In a statement issued by NAMM days after the show, the organization's president and CEO, Joe Lamond, even said he believes the music products industry is on a path of recovery and future growth.

"Every opportunity we could have hoped for pretty much happened at the show," said Paul Reed Smith, founder of PRS Guitars. "It was a good NAMM."

#### MORE FLAIR

he guitar aisles at NAMM felt like a fashion show, with endless manufacturers showcasing their unique designs and colors.

Bedell Guitars debuted its

1. From left: PM Music Center's Jason Pachona, Frank Pampenella and Shawn Maxwell; 2. Roland's Kaz Tanaka (left) and Chris Bristol; 3. D'Addario's Brian Johnson; 4. Aguilar's Dave Boonshoft; 5. Greenwich Music's Beverly and Joe Summa; 6. Elixir Strings' Brendan Bombard; 7. Fender's Justin Norvell; 8. Two Old Hippies' Dan Mills; 9. Kala's Leanne McClellon (left) and Rick Carlson; 10. From left: Daisy Rock's Jennifer Farmer, Tommy Norton, Rich Lackowski, Tish Ciravolo and Scott Galloway; 11. Gator Cases' David Parrish; 12. DBZ's Dean Zelinsky (left) and Jeff Diamant; 13. Graph Tech's Dave Dunwoodie; 14. The Marshall and U.S. Music team; 15. Members of Korg USA and Blackstar Amplification

limited-edition Hippie Chick line, offering 36 models in each color. The line also includes six one-of-a-kind Amanda Dunbardesigned guitars that feature a Swarovski Austrian Crystal face.

Gibson's new Firebird X Limited Editions are available in a swirled paint finish designed after paint swirls found on the company's Nashville, Tenn., factory floor following last May's flooding. Finishes include Redolution and Blue-volution.

Taylor Guitars rolled out new color options for its SolidBody Electric lines. New colors for the standard body include Borrego Red, Tiger's Eye and Gold Rush, while the classic body line now boasts Lava Red Pearl, Jewelescent Orange and Purple Flake.

"We're offering some really crazy colors and wood styles, giving players more choices and personality," said Dan Boreham, marketing manager for Taylor Guitars Europe.

#### VINTAGE VIBES

lsewhere, guitar products vendors were rockin' like it was 1961. Fishman, for instance, launched the Blackstack Passive Soundhole Pickup, which features the vintage sound of a double-stacked humbucking magnetic pickup.

"These [pickups] give that great vintage sound," said David Fournier, senior product manager for Fishman. "They are great for rock 'n' roll guys







1. DigiTech's Scott Klimt (left) and Jay Woolley; 2. Martin's Dick Boak (left) and Fishman's Larry Fishman; 3. ESP's Matt Masciandaro (left) and Jose Ferro; 4. Musiquip's Erik Lind (left) and John Kelley; 5. Cordoba's Kiel Stubblefield (left) and Naomi Con; 6. Hohner's Jimmy Zednik (left) and Drew Lewis; 7. From left: American DJ's Scott Davies, Tom Freret and Alfred Gonzales; 8. Audio-Technica's Gary Boss; 9. Blue Microphones' John Maier and Hillary Money; 10. Lynx Studio Technology's Phil Moon (left) and David Hoatson; 11. beyerdynamic's Oliver Senghaas; 12. Electro-Voice's Guy Low; 13. Lectrosonics' Karl Winkler; 14. From left: QSC's Phil Sanchez, Justin O'Connor, Ray van Straten and Lorenzo Barrios; 15. The Ultimate Support team; 16. Olympus' Ray Acevedo; 17. Solid State Logic's Damien Egan; 18. Neutrik's Paul Milbery; 19. Rane's Dean Standing

that want a great sound."

In celebrating its 35th anniversary, Seymour Duncan rolled out a limited supply of the Seymour Duncan 35 Guitar, a hand-built custom model in a vintage-modified form. Duncan himself created the instrument more than 35 years ago.

The Music Link's executives announced that the AXL Badwater USA series will now be built by hand in California. The American Badwater SRO model takes players back to the 1950s with its vintage-style bent-saddle bridge and TonePros Klusion tuning machines.

"This isn't a guitar like every other guitar on the wall," said Travis Atz, product development director for The Music Link. "We're ensuring top-quality playability by overseeing the building of each one in California."

Fender's new G-DEC 3 Thirty practice amps features the G-DEC 3 Thirty Blues vintage-style amp with a classic look, blonde vinyl covering and chrome corners, evoking an early 1960s feel. The amps also come in metal and country versions. The G-DEC 3-friendly SD cards offer instructional playalong tracks and amp presets in conjunction with some of Hal Leonard's popular titles, including Jimi Hendrix and AC/DC books, as well as such songbooks as *Hal Leonard Guitar Method Book 1*.

"These are awesome because teachers can use these when they're teaching their students," said Jason Farrell, public relations manager for Fender. "It enhances their lessons a lot."

#### UKES & BEYOND

he much-hyped uke craze showed no signs of slowing down at NAMM.

"We have been right in the middle of it," said Rick Carlson, director of sales and marketing for Kala Brand Music. "Everything has been selling very strong for us." See the world...

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Kala launched the Ukadelic line, which includes paisley, tiedye, tropical and flag designs. All models are available in soprano size, with the reggae model also available in tenor.

Hohner officially unveiled its Kohala brand of ukes, which includes two series: the Kohala Original and the Kanikapila. The Kohala Original is a lower-end series that offers the four main ukulele sizes and an instruction booklet with each. The Kanikapila series also features the four main sizes and comes bundled with a gig bag, clip-on tuner and instructional booklet.

"Ukuleles are in more and more of a demand," said Jimmy Zednik, inside sales representative for Hohner. "So, naturally, we are excited about the potential of the new Kohala line."

In related news, The NAMM Show featured many notables in the guitar accessories segment, including primeVibe, a seasoner for guitars, ukuleles, mandolins, violins, violas, cellos and upright basses. Users hook an iPod up to the unit, which plays music directly into the instrument's wood. The transducers convert the instrument's wood into a loudspeaker, letting the music be heard through the instrument's body and seasoning the guitar in the process.

"It keeps the guitar, or any instrument, open on a regular basis," said John Kelley, general

1. From left: PianoDisc's David Honeywell. John Sagissor and Gary Burgett; 2. From left: Avid's Derk Hagedorn, Mark Williams, Michael Parker and Dusty DiMercurio; 3. From left: Auralex's Terry Hayes, Jeff Lantz, Andy Teinen and Ryan Gibbons: 4. KickPort's Jesse Bradman (left) with drummer Joe Porcaro: 5. From left: Paiste's Andrew Shreve and Kelly Paiste; 6. Clockwise, from top left: KMC's Jay Wanamaker, John Palmer, Jim Stanek and Ken Fredenberg; 7. Natal's Jason Roper (left) and Craig Glover; 8. Istanbul's Bülent Akbay (left) and Mehmet Tamdeger; 9. Pro-Mark's Kevin Radomski; 10. KHS's Steve Jacobs; 11. Score Marketing's Marc Ingber: 12. Taye's Todd Trent (left) and Jim Phiffer; 13. Vic Firth Inc.'s Vic Firth manager for Musiquip, the distributor of primeVibe. "After the instrument is seasoned, it provides better projection and longer sustain."

The Guitar Rest from Planet Waves turns any flat surface into a guitar stand when the rubber rest is placed over the surface's edge. "The small size makes it easy to throw in any guitar bag, and the top holds picks," said Brian Johnson, fretted string product specialist for D'Addario.

#### AVID'S GAME CHANGER

vid's recent decision to make Pro Tools 9 open platform resonated among all corners of the audio and recording industry. Phil Moon, vice president of sales and marketing at Lynx Studio Technology, even called the move a "game changer."

#### New gear from Shure, Nady and Lectrosonics put digital wireless front and center

"The effect is the end-user can now choose whatever interface they want to use [with Pro Tools 9]," Moon said. "If they want to use one of our sound cards, they can. They couldn't do that before."

And Avid executives pointed out that this newfound flexibility with Pro Tools should extend all the way to the retail floor. Dusty DiMercurio, Avid's marketing manager for retail, mentioned that dealers can now reach more customers than before with Avid products, as users no longer have to choose between a Pro Toolsonly setup versus their own cus-



1. From left: Hammond's Jay Valle, Dennis Capiga and Scott May; 2. Cympad's Reto Hirschi; 3. From left: Battlefield Drums' Anthony Lee, Nash Nardone and Roger Kowalewski; 4. Ludwig's Kevin Packard; 5. Shure's Al Hershner (left) and Mark Humrichouser; 6. Tama's Terry Bissette; 7. Remo's Brock Kaericher; 8. From left: Pearl's Steve Armstrong, Terry West and Glen Caruba; 9. Hohner's Scott Emmerman; 10. From left: Drumcraft's Vince Mancuso and Winfried Holl, drummer Scott Pellegrom, and Drumcraft's Robert Hessler and Florian Bredl; 11. Genz Benz's Roger Hart (left) and Jeff Genzler; 12. Pearl's Shawn Lafrenz (left) and Mark Terek; 13. DW's John Good; 14. TRX's A.J. Novak (left) and Kyle Peek; 15. Supernatural's John Cross; 16. Crush's Mike Swenson (left) and Rick Hughes; 17. Zildjian's John Roderick (left) and Chris Ryan; 18. Sabian's Andy Zildjian

tomized recording setup.

"Now, a customer who likes using our hardware can buy our hardware without buying our software," he said. "And now, somebody who already invested in [another brand of] hardware can buy Pro Tools. So, resellers have a lot more customers that they can engage with and work with using our solutions."

The move was met with elation from dealers and end-users alike. "Best In Show" panelist and Sweetwater Director of Purchasing John Grabowski gave Avid a "Best In Show" nod partly because of Pro Tools 9. Avid even featured a Pro Tools-appreciation wall in its booth, displaying such social media-generated user comments as, "Pro Tools 9 is siq!"

#### WIRELESS GETS DIGITAL

dudio suppliers also jumped on the digital wireless trend. Most notably, Shure debuted its first digital wireless system, the PGX line. Featuring 24-bit, 48-kHz digital wireless technology, it operates on the 900 MHz band, outside of TV interference.

"The sound quality is stellar, said Mike Lohman, Shure's media relations manager, who noted that the price is slightly higher than PGX analog systems.

"With a lot of changes in the FCC spectrum, people are going out to buy new wireless," said Mark Humrichouser, Shure's general manager, Americas. "I think we're seeing strong interest in digital platforms, although I don't think people are quite sure how and where those should be used and what the benefits are."

Likewise, Nady showed its new DW-2 digital wireless mic system. It operates in the 2.4 GHz band and has a 120 dB dynamic range and extended frequency response of 30–15 kHz.

Even Lectrosonics went the digital route with the Quadra digital wireless monitor





system. "Most wireless monitor systems are FM and analog," said Karl Winkler, the company's director of business development. "They've changed very little in the past two decades, and we're introducing something totally different."

#### NEXT-GEN PERCUSSION

he biggest news in drums wasn't a drum product, per se. Through a strategically placed dual microphone and DSP engine came Zildjian's revelation in percussion signal processing: Gen16 acoustic-electric (AE) cymbal technology. The perforated Gen16 AE cymbal is a real cymbal with a natural response, as opposed to a sample trigger device. Conversely, the tone module features five channels of diverse classic and

non-traditional Zildjian tones and optimal sound positioning technology for lower-volume play. Each tone channel includes a half-dozen crash, ride and hi-hat tones, but additional bundles will be available in the future.

"When you have traditional overheads, something has to be sacrificed to make it sound right," said Zildjian Product Specialist Chris Ryan. "You need to be at low volume for each one."

From conception to launch, it took the Zildjian team a mere seven months to develop the Gen16 AE's special sheet alloy for versatile manufacturing in an array of shapes and sizes.

#### LESS IS MORE

The word "versatile," in fact, resonated amid the havoc of

# The biggest news in drums, Zildjian's Gen16, wasn't a drum product, per se

NAMM drum set exhibitors. Several manufacturers leaned away from genre-specific pigeonholes, aiming to join the larger flock with minor adjustments to their product repertoire. Specifically, these exhibitors abided by a lessis-more mantra, casually throwing out such terms as "thinner," "shallower" and "cost-effective."

Pearl, for instance, took a low-mass approach to increase the resonance and tone of Reference series kits, removing a third of the bulk with thinnerply shells, low-mass STL swivel tube lugs, and 1.6-mm hemmed and welded fat tone hoops. The Reference series uses task-specific bearing edges and birch, maple and African mahogany woods to offset the tonal difference from the thinner shells.

"Depending on what you're tuning for, you've got a much wider range of tuning capabilities," said Steve Armstrong, director of marketing for Pearl. "They really speak to you right over the top."

Sonor complemented its new beech shells with lighter-weight lugs and a smaller total acoustic resonance tom-tom mount to accommodate this year's 2-inchshallower toms. The move aims to ensure a round, beefy sound,



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despite the weight loss.

"The reason we went for this shallower T.A.R. mount is because we're starting to see that shallower sizes are starting to come back," said Sonor Product Manager Larry Nelson.

For some, versatility meant leveling the economic playing field. Tama offered multiple configurations of the Starclassic series — a jazz-style kit, a fusion kit and two rock-style kits — as well as lacquer and wrap finishes, while announcing a pocket-friendly price for the birch range.

"This kit is actually paired to fit all kinds of styles," said Tama Division Manager Terry Bissette. "Anybody could play any type of music and get a good sound out of the kit." 1. American Music & Sound's Ben Davis; 2. Moog's Emmy Parker (left) and Steve Dunnington; 3. QRS's Tom Dolan; 4. Casio's Richard Leiter; 5. Organist Joey DeFrancesco; 6. Young Chang's Dan Yuter; 7. Roland's Amanda Whiting; 8. From left: Yamaha's Paul Calvin, Mark Anderson and Rick Young; 9. American Music & Sound's Mike Papa

Among accessory makers, Vic Firth Director of Education Neil Larrivee showed the lightweight Dual Tone — a wood tip, feltcore butt-ended 5A stick — and rubber-tipped 5B Chop-Out as standout multipurpose extensions of the company's American Classic series.

#### MODERN CLASSICS

o meet the recent demand for vintage and custom kits, manufacturers reimagined classic specs with contemporary adjustments. Yamaha's kapur Club Custom kit exudes an undeniable







vintage vibe but flaunts a flagship YESS modeling system and effortless maneuverability never before seen on classic pieces.

"Who hasn't had an old vintage kit with a corkmount and tried to get a drum in the right position?" said Yamaha Marketing Manager David Jewell. "With this Club Custom kit, you're going to be able to do that."

DW took a production-oriented approach

and lowered the fundamental frequencies of the limited-size Performance series maple kit using a tri-grain shell construction and classic Collector series parallels.

In cymbals, Paiste authentically restored its coveted 1950s- and '60s-era Formula 602 models. Discontinued in 1994, the Switzerland 320 bronze collection includes two crashes, two rides and a hi-hat.







Alfred's Daniel Smolenski (left) and Antonio
 Ferranti: 2. Hal Leonard's David Jahnke

#### INEXPENSIVE INNOVATIONS

espite the piano sales downturn in recent years, many piano and keyboard manufacturers at NAMM expressed optimism about their futures. They addressed buyers' thinner wallets with more affordable instruments and harnessed the latest technological advances with new innovations.

Two companies that accomplished a great deal using technology included Roland with the V-Piano Grand and Casio with the WK-7500 digital keyboard, which also hits a reasonable price point — listing at \$599.99. The V-Piano Grand uses a new sound generator to sound much larger, and sometimes older, than it actually is. It also uses component object sound modeling, not sampling, so players can make it sound like a 12-foot Steinway with gold strings — or a piano of their own devising altogether. Casio's WK-7500 features a 32-track sequencer and a library of 800 different instrumental sounds. It can also take prerecorded sequences and record them straight into the keyboard.

One of the Casio's sounds is a duplication of a Hammond B-3 organ, complete with drawbars. But not to be outdone, Hammond itself released the new Mini-B, which sounds



like its iconic predecessor and comes bundled with a specially designed 100-watt Leslie speaker. It also has a sound generator that can create 96 digital tonewheels.

"Everybody loves the B-3, but a B-3 and Leslie is very expensive, especially with a difficult economy," said Hammond Senior Vice President Dennis Capiga. "The Mini-B makes having that sound much more affordable."

A market that Hammond has always sought, churches, was also the focus of Lowrey's dealer reception at NAMM. Brad Bryan, Lowrey's business management director, emphasized that his company "must understand the church market" as it introduced the new Tribute and Prelude organs. It's a market that can rise above the ebb and flow of ordinary business cycles.

Economic upturns and downturns also haven't stopped such venerable companies as Moog, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. At NAMM, it introduced the Slim Phatty analog synthesizer, which packs its full-featured arpeggiator and oscillators into an instrument that measures only 17 inches wide.

"You can just put it in a bag and put it in a carry-on on a plane," said Moog engineer Steve Dunnington. "It's a little nutty, but we're a little nutty, and we love the sound of analog."

#### PRO HORN BOOM

rass and woodwind manufacturers showed more interest than usual in the semi-professional and professional markets. Several NAMM exhibitors introduced highend and step-up horns that played up the appeal of vintage looks while reflecting significant advances in design.

Selmer Paris launched its Jubilee line of Series II and Series III saxophones in celebration of the company's 125th anniversary. Also new from Selmer was the Leblanc Bliss line of student upgrade clarinets.

Cannonball presented the Lynx, a light-weight trumpet with brilliant tone designed for lead players, along with the Fiore model semi-pro grenadilla wood clarinet. "At Cannonball, we're always messing with acoustics," said Ryan Lillywhite, an acoustical technician with Cannonball, of the new trumpet. "We're acoustical freaks, always trying different things to get it to sound bet-

ter and make it easier to play."

Schilke is now shipping its high-end 1040 FL flugelhorn, which was shown as a prototype last year. "What the pros like about this is in the upper register, when you get above the staff, you get the sense that it slots," said Phil Baughman, Schilke sales manager. "So you can grab a note the way a trumpet does without sacrificing the flugelhorn sound."

The company's new ST30 small-bore tenor trombone offers pros lots of tonal options by providing a choice of different bell and slide materials, in addition to three interchangeable lead pipes.

P. Mauriat showed the Le Bravo 200 saxophone, an intermediate horn designed for hobbyists who want professional features without spending a ridiculous amount of









1. P. Mauriat's Adam MacBlane; 2. Antigua's Kerry Klingborg (left) with saxophonist and technician Peter Ponzol; 3. D'Addario's Robert Polan; 4. Buffet Crampon's Al Maniscalco; 5. Conn Selmer's J. Michael Holmes; 6. Hollywood-Winds' Shun Hwa Chang; 7. Denis Wick artist Kirk Garrison at the Dansr booth; 8. Yamaha's Jonathan Goldman; 9. Schilke's Phil Baughman

money. Buffet Crampon brought the Keilwerth brand back to the U.S. pro saxophone market, paying extra attention to its Vintage series.

Antigua Winds turned heads with its Pro-One alto and tenor saxophone series, which features solid designs and minimum bling.

"The purpose of us building the Pro-One was to elevate the awareness of Antigua," said Kerry Klingborg, the company's general manager. "It's aimed right at the professional. We've got a vintage lacquer on the horn, and this engraving is done by hand."

Yamaha rolled out three new pro horn lines: the Custom Z soprano saxophone, the Xeno 20th anniversary trumpet and the 897Z tenor trombone. Each spent a long time in the development stage, as the company consulted with top artists for design input.

Eastman Music added soprano and baritone models to its line of pro saxophones. They're available in black nickel and gold lacquer and feature adjustable palm key heights. Eastman also displayed its new line of reeds in both French (Esperto) and American (Venuto) cuts.

Among B&O accessory companies, Rico had a new offering with its Reserve Classic alto saxophone reeds, which have

been winning over top classical saxophonists in large numbers with their dense cut and overall consistency from reed to reed.

In addition to the long-awaited Vandoren V16 mouthpiece for baritone saxophone, Dansr announced the availability of Vandoren V12 reeds for tenor saxophone and the Denis Wick Fiber Mute, a student straight mute with a professional sound.

"There has only been a small amount of student-level straight mutes available in the industry for a very long time, and there's not much quality out there," said trumpeter and educator Kirk Garrison, a Denis Wick artist. "So we had the idea to introduce an entry-level straight mute at a good price. It's real durable, and if you compare it to one of our expensive professional mutes, there's not that much difference."

#### PLAY-ALONG POWERHOUSES

lay-alongs ruled the day among publishers, who have discovered the power of packaging accompaniment CDs and other learning aids with their print music products.

Alfred beefed up its Jazz Play-Along series and Jazz Easy Play-Along series and added more titles to its Easy Rock and Easy Popular Movie Instrumental Solos series with instrument-specific demo tracks. "You haven't lived until you've heard 'Stairway To Heaven' for viola," said Daniel Smolenski, an Alfred account executive. The company also offered dealers a 55-percent discount with no billing for 90 days on its jazz and pop play-alongs, with fully guaranteed package deals and display options.

Popular video games and Warner Bros. movies also continue providing a huge amount of new repertoire for Alfred, which now includes enhanced accompaniment CDs with such products as its new World Of Warcraft books.

"It is an MP3 CD since traditional audio CDs are almost passé," Smolenski said. "It affords us the opportunity to get more music on the CD, the entire book and all the tracks. It's the preferred format now to rip it right to your iPod."

Hal Leonard played up its *Guitar Tab White Pages*, a best-selling songbook of hundreds of pop titles that's now available in a play-along format.

"Our play-along series has continued to grow and grow, so we wanted to marry two of our best brands together into one," said David Jahnke, Hal Leonard's vice president of national sales.

The company also expanded its Real Book series to include *The Real Book Volume IV*, as well as several new titles — *The Real Blues Book*, *The Real Bluegrass Book* and *The Real Rock Book* among them.

Carl Fischer announced that it now includes a piano accompaniment CD of tracks in MP3 format with its Repertoire Classics series of classic instrumental solos and other familiar titles, such as 48 Studies For Alto Saxophone In Eb.

And the ukulele craze continues to fuel the print industry. Homespun Music Instruction released a two-DVD set to teach the instrument to beginners, while Hal Leonard released its *Play Ukulele Today!* package, which includes a beginner model ukulele, method book, instructional DVD and CD.

Jahnke explained: "We were thinking, how can we help the very beginner ukulele students as well as give the retailers a very easy package to sell?"

The NAMM Show 2012 will be held in Anaheim from Jan. 19–22, 2012. MI

# PEAVEY BASSES MARGIN \* PRICE POINT \* SELECTION \* QUALITY



There's a lot to be said for an instrument that just feels right. Widely praised for their solid tonal response, comfort and craftsmanship, Millennium Series bass guitars are essential equipment for gigging bass players who crave a finely crafted instrument that responds to an individual's touch.





For over 45 years, Peavey has been the dealers' choice. Talk to your Peavey representative today about the new Peavey line, or call (877) 732-8391 now for your opportunity to become a Peavey dealer.

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\* MAP Pricing



#### $\diamondsuit$ ${ t STARSIGHTINGS}$



Guitarist Earl Slick tests out his signature model at the Warwick booth.



Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (left) and retired New York Yankee Bernie Williams speak about the importance of music education at the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus.



Barenaked Ladies' Ed Robertson (left) and Kevin Hearn hang at the Shure booth.



Trumpeter and Schilke artist Rick Baptist (right) swings by the Schilke booth to talk shop. He's pictured with Schilke President Andrew Naumann



lootsy Collins (left) and Larry Graham at the Warwick booth.



NAMM I PERSONNEL

# **NEW BOARD NAMED**

AMM held its annual meeting of members on Jan. 15.

During the event, NAMM Chairman Tom Schmitt called for the nomination of the new members to the board of directors.

They include Jake Connolly, the president of Connolly Music; Sharon Hennessey, the vice president and owner of The Music People!/On

Stage Stands; John Riley, the president and owner of Fletcher Music Centers; Michael Skinner, the president of Dansr; Kenny Stanton, the president and CEO of Ken Stanton Music; Scott Summerhays, the president of Summerhays Music Center; Lori Supinie, the president of Senseney Music; and Thomas Veerkamp, the marketing manager of Casa Veerkamp.

GAMA I EVENT

# GAMA Hosts Int' Business Panel

he Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association's (GAMA) annual meeting kicked off with bittersweet news. The organization hosted its Teaching Guitar Workshop at a record 13 sites in 2010, but it will only hit 10 sites this year. Still, outgoing GAMA President Harvey Levy said he sees this as an opportunity.

"We can do more with these [sites] now," Levy said, addressing a crowd of manufacturers and press at the Anaheim Marriott on Jan. 12.

And despite this dip, GAMA's membership actually increased during the recession.

"You folks have been steadfast," Levy said. "You've written the checks. GAMA is stable now."

GAMA devoted the second half of its meeting to a discussion focused on emerging international markets, with



four panelists representing companies in Brazil, India, China and Russia.

As with North American retailers, the panelists expressed challenges competing with fierce Internet retailers. They also discussed unique issues, importing chief among them.

At the meeting's close, Paul Damiano, KMC Music's senior vice president of sales and marketing, was elected the new GAMA president.



On Jan. 14, Seymour Duncan celebrated its 35th anniversary with a press conference at its booth. From left: Seymour Duncan's Maricela "MJ" Juarez, Bill Leigh, Frank Falbo, Seymour Duncan, Cathy Carter Duncan, Evan Skopp, Kevin Beller and Phil Ressler.

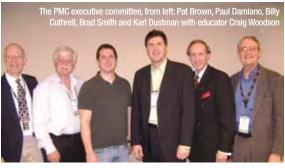
**LENNON BUS I EDUCATION** 

# Lennon Buses in Big Names

The John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, in conjunction with NAMM, kicked off the show on Jan. 13 with a performance by Grammynominated singer/songwriter Natasha Bedingfield and appearances from Gov. Mike Huckabee and New York Yankee Bernie Williams.



The bus is a nonprofit mobile pro audio and HD video recording facility that provides handson experiences for students of all ages.



PMC I MEETING

#### PMC RECAPS GROWTH YEAR

The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) held its All Membership Meeting on Jan. 15 at the Anaheim Hilton. The event kicked off with Executive Director Karl Dustman announcing that PMC welcomed a record number of new members last year.

Progressive Music Center owner Billy Cuthrell, who also handles marketing and promotions for PMC, recapped the organization's activities at the 2010 Warped Tour. PMC hosted five Lesson Lab tents at the music festival, in partnership with local retailers.

"We had 20,000 people on average walk through the gate [at each event]," Cuthrell said. "Even if they didn't touch your product, they walked by."



TEC AWARDS I GEAR

# TEC AWARDS HELD AT NAMM

or the first time, the 26th annual Technical Excellence & Creativity (TEC) Awards were held at The NAMM Show. The event took place on the evening of Jan. 14 at the Anaheim Hilton. The Les Paul Award — given to a musician or recording professional whose work combines music and technology — was given to guitarist, songwriter and producer Lindsey Buckingham. Producer Ken Caillat and engineer Elliot Schenier presented Buckingham with the honor. An additional 25 TEC awards were handed out. MI winners included:

- Ancillary Equipment: TC Electronic PolyTune
- Digital Converter Technology: Metric Halo LIO-8
   The LIO-8 is an eight-in AD, 10-out DA FireWire converter with eight channels of AES I/O that supports up to 192 kHz sample rates. The unit is designed to deliver transparent audio between the domains.
- Recording Devices: Sony PCM-M10
- Microphone Pre-amplifier Technology: Rupert Neve Designs Portico 5017
- Microphone Technology/Sound Reinforcement: Neumann KMS 104 plus
   The KMS 104 plus is a cardioid handheld condenser vocal mic featuring transparent sound for optimal intelligibility.
- Microphone Technology/Recording: Neumann TLM 102
   The TLM 102 is a large diaphragm microphone that achieves ideal sonic quality in a small package. The TLM 102 is 13-percent smaller than the TLM 103.
- Wireless Technology: Sennheiser 500 G3 series
   The ew 500 G3 series wireless system features wireless systems manager software and has been used on Broadway and with international touring acts.
- Sound Reinforcement Loudspeaker Technology: JBL Vertec VT4886/VT4883 Subcompact Line Array
- Studio Monitor Technology: Genelec 8260A
- Musical Instrument Technology/Hardware: Nord Electro 3
- Musical Instrument Technology/Software: Celemony Melodyne Editor
- Signal Processing Technology/Hardware: TC Electronic System 6000 MKII
- Signal Processing Technology/Software: Lexicon PCM Native Reverb Bundle
- Workstation Technology: Apple Logic Studio
- Sound Reinforcement Console Technology: Avid Venue SC48
- Small-Format Console Technology: Solid State Logic X-Desk
  The X-Desk combines a 16-channel SSL SuperAnalogue summing mixer with a compact analog audio hub. The unit is
  small enough to be easily transported and includes smooth
  100-mm faders, as well as stereo and mono aux sends.
- Large-Format Console Technology: Solid State Logic Duality SE
   The Duality console offers a hybrid approach and
   has been used by Alicia Keys, the LA Sound Gal lery and the Royal College of Music.





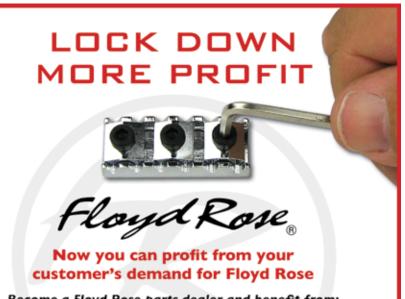
## **Neutrik Toasts**

eutrik hosted a champaign toast at its booth on Jan. 13 to celebrate the opening of its new 25,000-square-foot facility in Charlotte, N.C.

"We are very excited about this new location," said Peter Milbery, president of Neutrik USA. Neutrik moved from its former lo-

cation in New Jersey on Jan. 3.





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KORG I EVENT

#### KORG LAUNCHES **KRONOS**

org held a launch party for its flagship Kronos Music Workstation on Jan. 12. The evening included demos by such artists as drummer David Haynes, jazz pianist Eldar and Jordan Rudess of Dream Theater.



YAMAHA I GEAR

#### YAMAHA'S NEXT-**GENERATION ACOUSTICS**

amaha opened The NAMM Show on Jan. 13 with the debut of its next-generation acoustic guitars, the A-Series. The handcrafted instruments were presented by guitarists Lee Ritenour and Don Alder during a press conference at the company's Marriott Hotel exhibit space.

The A-Series, offered in a dreadnought cutaway and a concert-size cutaway, boasts new details, ranging from a new headstock design to rosette and mahogany binding. The guitars also feature a slimneck profile and a rounded fretboard edge, as well as increased string spacing and lower action.

All models have been outfitted with new S.R.T. (Studio Response Technology) electronics, developed by Yamaha. The S.R.T. pre-amp incorporates a piezo pickup system with a built-in microphone modeling technique specific to each guitar model. The system lets players choose from three different mic settings that can be blended with the pickup. Plus, the S.R.T. system has a feedback detector to cancel feedback frequencies in live situations.

"The neck is a dream to play," said Ritenour of the guitars.

"We often hear stories from artists and customers that their first guitar was a Yamaha, and now, with the new A-Series, their next guitar should also be a Yamaha," said Dennis Webster, marketing manager for Yamaha Guitars.



NAMM YP I ASSOCIATION

### NAMM YP's Bowling Night The NAMM Young Professionals (YP) or-

The NAMM Young Professionals (YP) organization hosted its first annual NAMM YP Gutterball Invitational at the 300 Anaheim bowling alley in Anaheim, Calif., on Jan. 14.

"The event perfectly served its purpose in uniting some of the industry's brightest young business minds," said Zach Frederick, president of NAMM YP. "We had a huge group of up-and-coming business leaders from just about every continent."

The champions trophy was taken home by Team Lebowski, which included Bryan Akers and Jonathon James from Avatar Events Group. Giveaways were also doled out, including a Marshall Tube Amp, which Kevin Damm, owner of Damm Music Center in Wichita, Kan., took home.

NAMM YP helps MI business talent under the age of 40 network and recruit within the industry.



ST. LOUIS MUSIC I LICENSING

# SLM Gains Licensing for Alvarez

St. Louis Music (SLM) has reached a worldwide exclusive licensing agreement for the Alvarez guitar line. The agreement states that SLM assumes complete responsibility of the guitar line's domestic and international sales and marketing, product development, manufacturing, artist relations, warranty, and customer service.

This agreement follows a successful year of SLM managing the exclusive U.S. distribution of Alvarez.

"Except for a brief period, Alvarez has been part of the SLM stable since 1969," said Chris Meikle, SLM's senior vice president.



SCHOOLJAM I EDUCATION

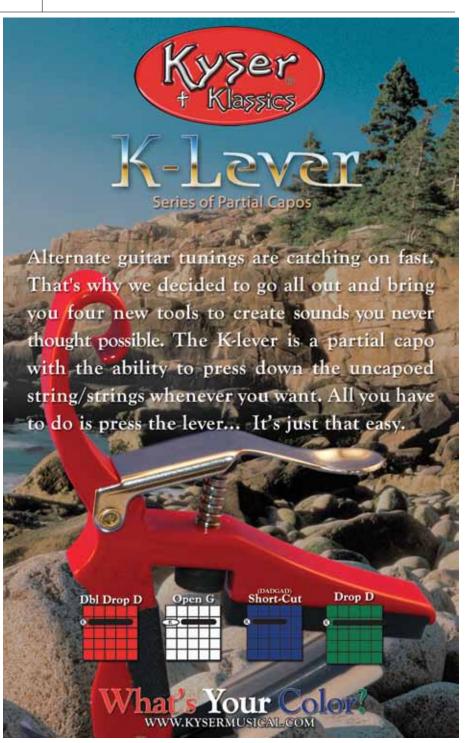
## **TEEN BANDS JAM AT NAMM**

The second annual SchoolJam USA teen battle of the bands was held on Jan. 15, and Grid 1 Audio sponsored prizes for the top 10 bands.

The band Peligro, from Gahanna, Ohio, received first place in the competition, winning a trip to Europe in April to perform at the 2011 SchoolJam Germany finals, a private music video recording

session on the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus and \$1,000 toward the purchase of new band gear, as well as \$5,000 for their school music programs.

SchoolJam USA is a national program sponsored by NAMM that rewards young musicians and their school music programs with funding and prizes.







Jan. 16, the last day of The NAMM Show 2011, began with "Best In Show," a gathering of music retail and gear experts who discussed their favorite products and services at the convention. Held at the Anaheim Hilton, the NAMM University session was moderated by *Music* Inc. Publisher Frank Alkyer. Nearly 700 attendees listened as the panelists discussed their top choices in four categories.



Gayle Beacoc Beacock Music Vancouver, Wash.

#### Something Small: HingeStix

#### **Big Bang Distributors**

The idea with the HingeStix is that they give beginning drummers the correct sticking action when they are starting out. Teachers are just loving it. It is the No. 1 thing they tell me when students start — that it's difficult for them to get the correct grip. This takes the guess work out of it, and students learn the correct way.

#### **Gotta Stock It:**

#### What Music Means To Me Book/CD by Richard Rejino Hal Leonard

The stories and the pictures in this book will move you, and they will teach our customers. The book reinvigorates me and my staff with exactly why we are doing what we do. I've used the paperback version of this book as a recruiting tool for school districts.

#### **Companies To Watch:**

#### **Minarik Guitars**

Minarik is known for very custom, handmade guitars. They have a guitar called the Lotus, and it has all of the high-end features that the custom guitars have but at a great price point.

#### **Best In Show:**

#### YSS-82Z soprano saxophone Yamaha

We have been waiting for this saxophone for a long time, since the 62 was discontinued. As far as I can tell, they have perfected the soprano sax with this instrument. This sax comes in four finishes and comes with a curved neck or straight neck.



Greg Billings Steinway Piano Gallery Naples, Fla.

#### Something Small:

#### iKlip universal microphone IK Multimedia

Seven million people have iPads, and if you want to bring them into music stores, this is the product you need.

#### **Gotta Stock It:**

## *The Rollicking Piano Bar Songbook*Hal Leonard

This is the ultimate baby boomer piano book. It has every song that you are going to want to play at a party if you are over a certain age.

#### **Companies To Watch:**

#### QRS Music

QRS's PNOScan can be installed into any piano in 15 or 20 minutes. It is simple, it works and it is not really expensive.



## **Best In Show: V-Piano Grand**

They have taken the V-Piano, which was a breakthrough in and of itself, and put it in the right cabinet with the right amplification. It is the price of a lower intermediate grand piano, and it performs like a concert grand piano.



**Brad Boynton**Rhythm Traders
Portland, Ore.

#### **Something Small:**

#### The Finger Shot and Qube Latin Percussion

The Finger Shot sounds great in the air, and these work great for guitarists and keyboardists, as well as percussionists.

#### Gotta Stock It:

#### Formula 602 cymbals Paiste

The line originally had 20 cymbals, and they brought it back to about five, which means retailers can stock it without having to go too deep. But because there are only five cymbals, if you have a lot on your wall already, you could put these on a kit so people can play them.

#### **Companies To Watch:**

#### Meinl

The main thing as an independent dealer is that they just plain get it. They understand that it is important to forge long-term relationships.

#### **Crush Drums and Percussion**

They have terrific-looking drums that sound great. They have an interesting use of materials, not just maple but acrylic and carbon fiber.

#### **Best In Show:**

#### Gen16 cymbals Zildjian

These acoustic-electric cymbals have two microphones underneath, and they basically record the acoustic sound and run it through a sound processor. It blurs the distinction between digital and acoustic, which I think is great.





Alam Friedman Friedman, Kannenberg & Co. Farmington, Conn.



#### FirstMix DJ USB/MIDI Controller Gemini

If you ever want to be a DJ, all you need is a computer and some music. You take your iTunes library, and it basically lets you sync up tunes. It does scratching, and the transitions are phenomenal.

#### **Gotta Stock It:**

#### Led Zeppelin Complete Lyric & Chord Songbook Alfred

The book is made exactly how the band members wanted to present it. It is the ultimate play-along book for Zeppelin freaks like me.

#### **Companies To Watch:**

#### **Radial Engineering**

They make truly practical applications and tools for guitar players and owners of recording studios. They have a segment of their business called Prime Acoustics that makes all kinds of small and medium-sized acoustical products for the studio to reduce noise and sonic rumble. Radial's new product, The Workhorse, is a modular rack and mixer that features high-quality components and is reasonably priced.

#### **Best In Show:**

#### The Game Changer guitar pickup technology **Ernie Ball**

They have effectively come up with this product that leaves the guitar alone, unchanged, wired normally, but lets you maintain different sounds and combine pickups.



Sweetwater Sound Fort Wayne, Ind

#### **Something Small:**

#### **VRM Box headphone** monitoring system **Focusrite**

The VRM Box features 10 different speaker models for around \$100. This product is amazing.

#### **Gotta Stock It:**

#### **Kronos Music Workstation** Korn

This is a home run. It has nine. different synth engines and 4.7 GB of memory. It looks great, sounds great and is designed great.

#### **Companies To Watch:**

#### **Avid**

Avid has been doing a lot of interesting things lately, especially with Pro Tools being available to a larger market



#### **Best In Show:**

#### **Tempest analog drum machine David Smith Instruments/ Roger Linn Designs**

to younger customers, as well.

There is a market out there for drum machines. If you want an instrument like this, there are not too many options out there, and if you would choose anyone to make it, it would be these guys.



Brian Reardon Monster Music Levittown, N.Y.

#### **Something Small: Superior Vocal Health** voice sprays

**Superior Vocal Health** You can't sell singers their instrument, but you can help them care [for] and maintain it. Superior Vocal Health's voice sprays are ideal for that.

#### **Gotta Stock It:**

#### **Grip Studios Custom Guitar Hangers Grip Studios**

These guys initially created these because they wanted to hang their guitars in a creative way in their own studios. They are really easy to mount, and they do a good job holding the guitar. Because they are not available everywhere, people feel like they are buying a really unique product.

#### **Companies To Watch:**

#### **Tycoon Percussion**

It's a family-owned business, and they own their own factory. There is a tremendous consistency in what they produce. Therefore, you can see it in the woods, the hardware and the skins.

#### **Best In Show:** Lâg Guitars

#### Kora

They are incredibly affordable. They start at around \$200. But even at that level, they have carved headstocks, really beautiful binding and solid woods.



Owensboro Music Center Owensboro, Ky.

#### Something Small: **GHC-200** Guitar Humidifier Controller **Crafter Guitars**

This humidifier is really neat. It shows the temperature inside the guitar, as well as outside the guitar. You are really going to do well with these.



#### **Gotta Stock It:**

#### Kirlin Cahles **Kirlin Industries**

# Everyone sells cables. I didn't

want to share these with everybody because it's such a great secret. We've sold hundreds of these. They are great people to work with, and they have phenomenal cables.

#### **Companies To Watch:**

#### **Two Old Hippies**

This is a company that cares. Unless you've been living under a rock, you've seen their great marketing. Their exciting news is that they have acquired Breedlove Guitar, and I think that is going to give them a chance to continue to improve.

#### **Best In Show:**

#### **NAMM University**

This year, NAMM U has been better than ever. And how can you beat it? It's free with great advice.



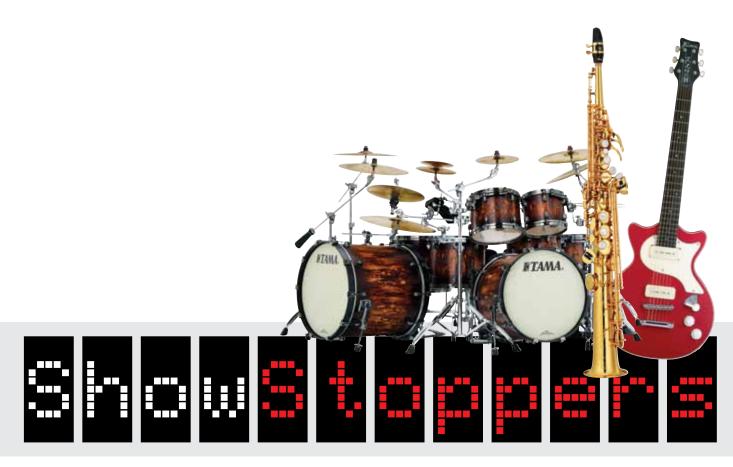
#### THE REEDS THAT WILL BLOW YOU AWAY!



Benz Reeds represent the absolute best quality, precision engineered reeds available for woodwind instruments today. Swiss craftsmanship is legendary, and Benz Reeds carry this tradition into the hitherto neglected realm of woodwind reeds in real style. Each Benz Reed is meticulously crafted from premium Arundo Donax cane. The properties of this cane are specially analysed in a newly developed process, with each individual reed separately machined according to tension and resonance. This secret profiling process makes Benz reeds sound extremely good indeed. They are balanced, easy to play at all pitches and suitable for all styles of music. Now you can finally concentrate on your playing!



www.benz-reeds.ch



#### 50 Premier NAMM Products

The iRevolution stormed this year's NAMM show in full force. Apple's influence pervaded everything from the latest guitar effects to audio peripherals — primeVibe even rolled out a device that helps break in new acoustic guitars using an iPod. And amid this tech fair, there were plenty of throwbacks, too. Fender showed new Strats, Teles and Gretsches that paid tribute to yesteryear, as did horn companies (Antigua) and even plug-in makers (Waves). Here are the highlights.

by Zach Phillips, Katie Kailus, Hilary Brown, Ed Enright & Aaron Cohen



**3 ERNIE BALL THE GAME** 

**CHANGER** The Game Changer earns its name by giving guitarists access to a library of tones through a true analog pickup switching system. It electronically rewires a guitar or bass instantly, combining any order of pickup coils in series, parallel, and in or out of phase — without digitizing or modeling the audio signal. And users can save and share their tones with others at The Game Changer website. It's currently available on certain Music Man Reflex models. {gamechanger. music-man.com}

#### 4 GRETSCH GEORGE HARRISON 'TRIBUTE' DUO

JET Gretsch paid tribute to the Quiet Beatle with its limited-edition Custom Shop G6128T-GH 'Tribute' Duo Jet. A meticulously crafted replica of the instrument Harrison played from 1961–'63, its Bigsby B6C tailpiece tremolo arm has a black Phillips head pivot bolt, and the strap button on the lower bout is offset to accommodate the Bigsby. The instrument is limited to 60 pieces. {gretschguitars.com}

#### **5 ESP LTD SNAKEBYTE**

Greeting showgoers just outside ESP's exhibit, the Signature Series LTD Snakebyte features a body shape designed in collaboration with Metallica's James Hetfield. The guitar also has a set-neck construction at 24.75-inch scale, a mahogany body and neck, and an ebony fingerboard with 22 XJ frets. Components include Sperzel locking tuners, Schaller straplocks and a TonePros locking bridge/tailpiece. {espguitars.com}

#### **6 FENDER ANNIVERSARY**

TELE, P-BASS Fender celebrated the 60th anniversary of its Telecaster and Precision Bass with two collectible models. They feature Blackguard Blonde thinskin nitrocellulose lacquer finishes and 60th anniversary commemorative neckplates. Plus, the P-Bass has a unique vintage-style pickguard, and the Tele has a new American Standard bridge and No-Load tone control. {fender.com}





(Cyberstep)

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#### SHOWSTOPPERS



#### 1 YAMAHA CUSTOM Z SO-

PRANO SAX Yamaha relied on input from some of the country's top saxophonists in developing its YSS-82Z and YSS-82ZR Custom Z soprano saxophones - the company's first one-piece professional-level sopranos to be released in about 20 years. Available in straight- or bent-neck designs and based on the classic Yamaha 62 and 62R model sopranos, the new Custom Z is a responsive instrument with a vibrant sound, ideal response and highly refined key ergonomics. It comes in four different finish options: gold lacquer, silver-plated, black lacquer and unlacquered. {yamaha.com/band}

#### **2 ANTIGUA PRO-ONE SERIES**

Antiqua enlisted the help of saxophonist and veteran technician Peter Ponzol to create the Pro-One pro saxophone series. The line raises the bar of Taiwan-made saxophones, with numerous design innovations that improve tonal quality and enhance the overall playing experience. Key to the high performance of the Pro-One models is the Ponzol-designed P1 neck, drawn tone holes, a well-contoured keyboard layout and a hybrid-sized bell diameter. The horns exhibit an overall coherence and clarity with a nicely colored sound. {antiguawinds.com}

3 SCHILKE ST30 Schilke gave pro trombonists some serious tonal options with the ST30 small-bore (0.500) tenor model. It features an 8-inch-diameter bell offered in either yellow or rose brass. The yellow brass bell affords the player a brilliant sound across all registers and is suitable for lead or section paying; the rose brass bell presents a warm, singing sound, ideal for solos and ballads. Hand slides are available in yellow brass or nickel-silver. The yellow brass slide yields a slightly warmer sound with wellrounded articulations, and the nickel-silver slide creates a brilliant sound with more immediate response. {schilkemusic.com}

#### **4 HOLLYWOODWINDS**

**HORN BLOWER** Crafted from a lightweight ABS polycarbonate plastic, HollywoodWinds' Horn Blower extends the lifespan of sax and trumpet pads and relieves instruments of unhealthy bacteria. The unit, which has a battery- and USB-powered fan, is inserted into the instrument bell after play. At a noise rate of 15-20 decibels, the Horn Blower emits quiet airflow at room temperature without creating unnecessary heat within the instrument. A four-stage slide switch can customize operation time.

{hollywoodwinds.com}



# A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR FORWARD-THINKING DEALERS

Accomplished players and discriminating dealers are going to want to see and hear this new saxophone.

ALTO AND TENOR MODELS DESIGNED BY PETER PONZOL
FINEST MATERIALS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE
WORLD-CLASS DESIGN AND ENGINEERING
TARGETED CONSUMER MARKETING CAMPAIGN
COMPLETE DEALER PROGRAM WITH INCENTIVES AND SALES SUPPORT

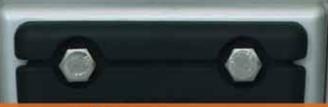


THE 21ST CENTURY SAXOPHONE









STROBOTUNER

CLASSIC CONN STROBOTUNER DESIGN | 100% TRUE-BYPASS TUNING | ABSOLUTE O.1 CENT GENERAL AND RESIGNAL OVER THE ENTIRE TUNING RANGE | LARGE, HIGH-CONTRAST DISPLAY EASILY VISIBLE IN DIRECT SUNLIGHT | SWEETENED TUNING PRESETS FOR 23 INSTRUMENTS | BUZZ FEITEN TUNING SYSTEM® SUPPORT | NOTES TO USER-DEFINED FAVORITES | PROGRAMMABLE FROM ANY COMPUTER NOTE (MAC/PC) | DROP TUNING/CAPO TUNING WITH AUTO-TRANSPOSITION | ONBOARD, STUDIO QUALITY, ACTIVE DI

DE-CAST CHASSIS NOW SHIPPING SPEED LOAD BATTERY ACCESS

ONE-CAST CHASSIS SPEED LOAD SPEED LOAD BATTERY ACCES











#### 1 ZILDJIAN GEN16

**AE CYMBALS** Unlike other electronic percussion systems, Zildjian's Gen16 AE cymbals boast a remarkably natural feel. The perforated AE is an actual cymbal, utilizing such Intelligent Percussion technology as a dual microphone and DSP engine to produce realistic responsiveness at low volume levels. The cymbal's sound positioning technology helps a wide array of traditional and non-traditional tones ring true. {zildjian.com}

#### 2 REMO POWER-

**STROKE PRO The** recent demand for emphasized low end inspired Remo's Powerstroke Pro. Constructed with 10-mil film, it features a Pressure Dampening Profile and permanently mounted acoustic foam that delivers maximum volume and projection while producing controlled highs, accentuated mid and maximum low-range frequencies. The Ultrasonically Welded Profile also gets rid of separation and unwanted noise. {remo.com}

#### **3 SABIAN HOLY**

**CHINA** Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith modernized Sabian's china with a few slight alterations. With 51 holes in the 19-inch model and 64 holes in the 21-inch model for volume and sustain, the Sabian Holy China features a higher profile to raise the pitch and a large, unfinished bell for cut and durability. The large raw bell, high profile and wide lip also make it loud and cutting. {sabian.com}

#### 4 KICKPORT CAJON-

**PORT** KickPort brought the enhanced resonance and depth of its flagship product to the cajon. The CajonPort expands the presence and sonic range of virtually any cajon by adding bottom and a fuller frequency spectrum. By differentiating the cajon's bass and snare frequencies. it lowers the fundamental by almost a full octave, resulting in a versatile instrument - minus the boxi-

ness. {kickport.com}

#### **5 TAYE METALWORKS**DOUBLE BASS PEDAL

This Taye pedal promises "a seamless bond between you and the bass drum," eliminating that feeling of constantly adjusting to a pedal. How does it achieve this? Super-tweakablity, via a patented fully adjustable cam, roller-bearing spring assembly, footboard length adjustment and upgraded hinge system. It's something to talk about with returning drum customers.

{tayedrums.com}



This little rascal packs quite a punch for its little price. Sure, the new Loudbox Mini is barely 14" wide, and a featherweight 20 lbs, but with 60 beefy watts of clean, sparkling Fishman sound, it can handle whatever your acoustic can dish out. It stands ready for open mic night with feedback suppression, digital reverb and chorus and an XLR output that lets you monitor onstage without needing an extra DI box. Booyah!



# The new Loudbox Mini. Don't let the power go to your head.





#### SHOWSTOPPERS



1 FISHMAN LOUDBOX MINI Fishman continued to reinvent the portable P.A. concept with its Loudbox Mini. Weighing in at 20 pounds, the unit offers up 60 watts of sound and lists for \$459.95 — ideal for solo acoustic coffeehouse and club performers. The instrument channel has a three-band EQ, reverb, dual-function chorus and phase switch for fighting feedback. The mic channel features a two-band EQ with low and high tone controls, as well as reverb. {fishman.com}

#### **2 DIGITECH TH-150 HEAD & CABINET**

DigiTech's big NAMM news: It's back in the amp business. To celebrate, the company rolled out the TH-150 two-channel guitar amp head and matching 4 by 12 cabinet. Sonically, this double-threat delivers warm cleans and tight, crunchy rhythm tones via an all-tube pre-amp and power amp section. In terms of features, the TH-150 has switchable normal and overdrive pre-amp volume; normal and overdrive master volume; and bass, middle, treble and presence controls. MAP: head, \$2,399.95; cabinet, \$499.95. {digitech.com}

**3 VHT SPECIAL 6** The latest guitar amp highlight from The Music Link, the VHT Special 6 line delivers a hand-wired model for less than \$300 list. Ideal for home amp builders and tube amp lovers, it gets its sound from one 12AX7 pre-amp tube and one 6V6 output tube. The footswitchable gain boost expands the 6-watt amp's tonal range, so it can achieve clean and overdriven sounds. MAP: combo, \$229.99; head, \$199.99; 1- by 12-inch Special 6 cabinet, starts at \$164.99. **{themusiclink.net}** 

#### **4 KEMPER PROFILING AMPLIFIER**

Introducing an entirely new concept in guitar amplification in the digital domain, the Kemper Profiling Amplifier "learns" the sonic behavior of any guitar amp and offers the exact tone and feel the player expects from a normal amp. The lunchbox-sized unit includes a stomp box section, master FX section and set of unique parameters for further shaping the amp profiles from classic architecture to modern. **{kemper-amp.com}** 





#### SHOWSTOPPERS

# \*SoundBanks



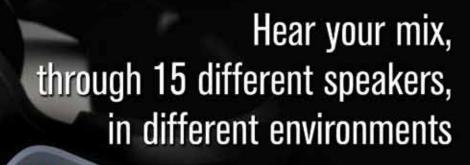




1 CASIO WK-7500 The WK-7500 keyboard puts a substantial army of sounds at players' fingertips. The 76-key instrument comes loaded with 800 tones that range from vintage pianos to a Chinese erhu. Along with these sounds, the WK-7500 also has 250 preset rhythms, including rock, Latin, jazz and classical. Plus, it has a 17-track sequencer that can save song files to an SDHC card or as an audio recording. Casio's free Data Manager 6.0 software can convert those songs into a WAV file for burning onto a CD. MSRP: \$599.99. {casio.com}

2 NORD STAGE 2 SERIES The Nord Stage 2 series boasts a cornucopia of technology. The synth section includes an arpeggiator and Nord sample playback functionality. The piano section features string resonance, dynamic pedal noise and a user-replaceable memory twice the size of Nord Stage EX, compatible with the free Nord v5 Piano Library. The organ section features the tonewheel and transistor organ modeling of the C2 Organ together with a newly developed rotary speaker model. {nordkeyboards.com}

**3 KORG KRONOS** Korg's new flagship keyboard, Kronos, features a whopping nine sound engines — pianos, organs, synths and more. VMT (Virtual Memory Technology) gives the instrument access to massive piano, drum and tape-based keyboard libraries. And then there's the performance features, such as Smooth Sound Transition, which keeps held or sustained notes and their effects sounding when changing sounds or modes. As "Best In Show" panelist John Grabowski of Sweetwater commented, "I don't know if I can figure out what it doesn't have in it." **{korg.com}** 





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#### SHOWSTOPPERS

# \*GuitarAddOns



#### **1 KALA UKADELIC**

**UKULELES** Bursting with flower-power flair, Kala's Ukadelic line features paisley, tie-dye, tattoo, flag and reggae designs. The models are available in soprano size with the reggae model available in a tenor size. The Ukadelics feature all-wood construction, geared tuners and Aquila strings. **{kalaukulele.com}** 

#### **2 ALESIS GUITARLINK**

**PLUS** The Alesis GuitarLink Plus makes recording on a computer ridiculously easy. It lets users connect guitars and other line-level audio sources directly to a Mac or PC without installing drivers. The GuitarLink Plus' internal analog-to-digital conversion boasts studio-quality 16-bit, 44.1-kHz digital audio from a quarter-inch to USB connection. Once the guitar and computer are hooked up, the included Native Instruments Guitar Rig LE software processes the signal. {alesis.com}

# USB INSTRUMENT CARLE This since is particular a disc correct unit in exciting you reserve to play in any perfuse. Any perfuse. Will in excitation and exceeding software residued. Will @ Guitter Rig 4 Life Any of the state o

#### **3 AMPTWEAKER TIGHT-**

BOOST The TightBoost, unlike many clean boost pedals, offers a warm, tube-like tone even when pumped. The unit, which was built based on user feedback, also features a mid EQ control that recreates the coveted tone of a parked wah pedal without cutting off the high-end.

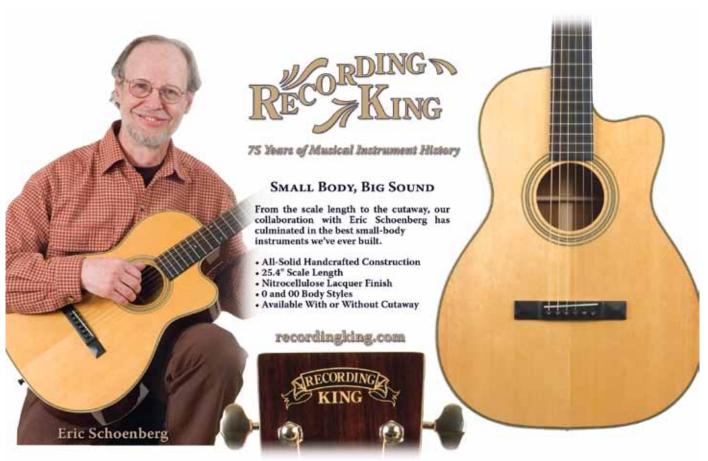
{amptweaker.com}

#### **4 LEVY'S LYRIC STRAPS**

Singing along has never been easier than with Levy's lyric strap line. The song lyrics, exclusively licensed from Sony/ATV Music Publishing, are sublimation-printed on polyester webbing and feature an original design and lyric excerpt on the front, as well as full song lyrics on the back.

{levysleathers.com}









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## \* MicLocker

#### **1 SHURE PGX DIGITAL WIRE-**

LESS SYSTEM PGX represents Shure's first foray into digital wireless mic systems. It combines 24-bit, 96-kHz digital audio with extended battery life and operates in the 900 MHz band to avoid TV interference. The handheld systems have been designed to match the sounds of such mics as the cardioid SM58 and supercardioid Beta 58A. MSRP: \$536-\$624. {shure.com}

#### **2 IK MULTIMEDIA IRIG MIC**

A handheld condenser mic for iDevices, the iRig Mic is ideal for most every application — singers, songwriters on the move, speeches, instruments and field recording. It features a unidirectional electret-condenser microphone capsule, three-level gain switch and rugged metal body. The iRig Mic comes with VocaLive, iRig Recorder and AmpliTube. {ikmultimedia.com}

3 CAD USB U9 MINIMIC CAD's technologically advanced line of multipurpose USB microphones grew with the U9 MiniMic. The U9 plugs directly into computers with a headphone out for playback monitoring and Skype. It features an omnidirectional condenser capsule that swivels 180 degrees for convenient positioning and an LED to indicate when the mic's active. {cadaudio.com}

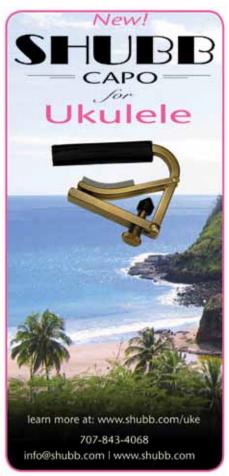
#### **4 SAMSON METEOR MIC**

Think of the Meteor as your doeverything computer mic. Made for Skype, iChat, voice-recognition software and, of course, recording, the Meteor has a fold-back tripod-leg design for ideal desktop positioning. With no drivers, it operates straight out of the box and is compatible with most computerbased digital audio software. MAP: \$99. {samsontech.com}







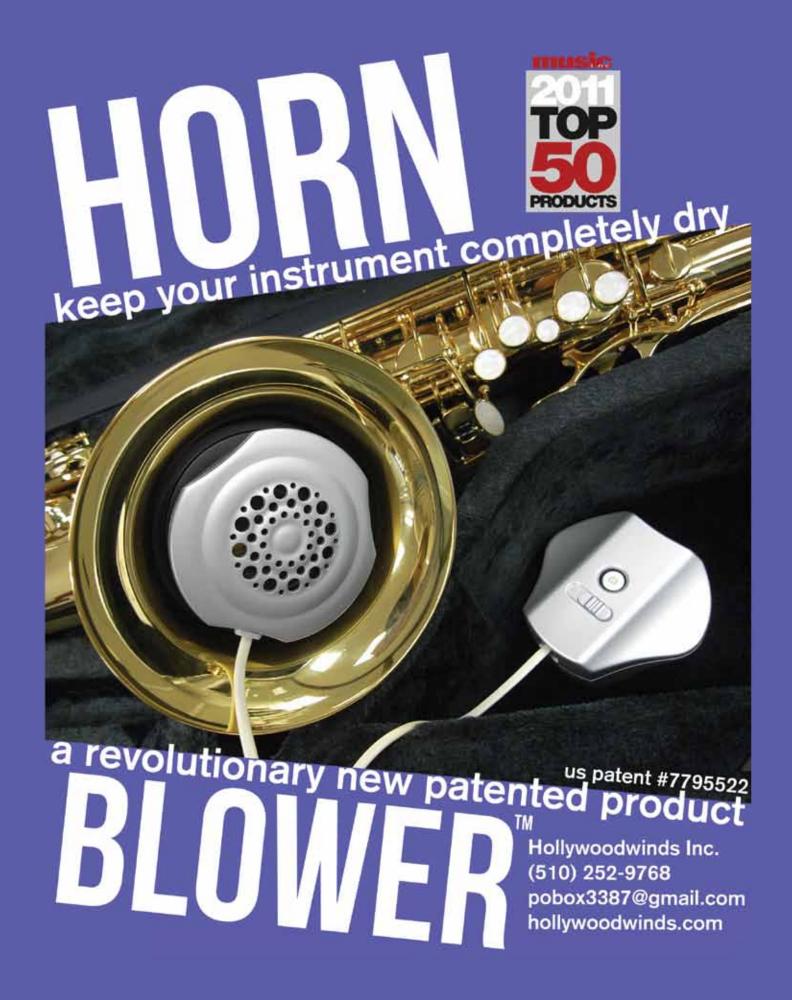








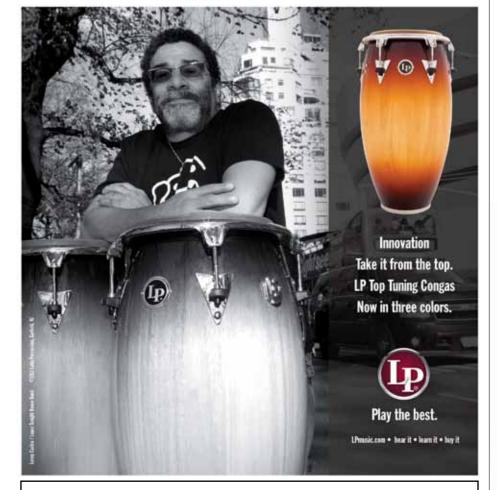














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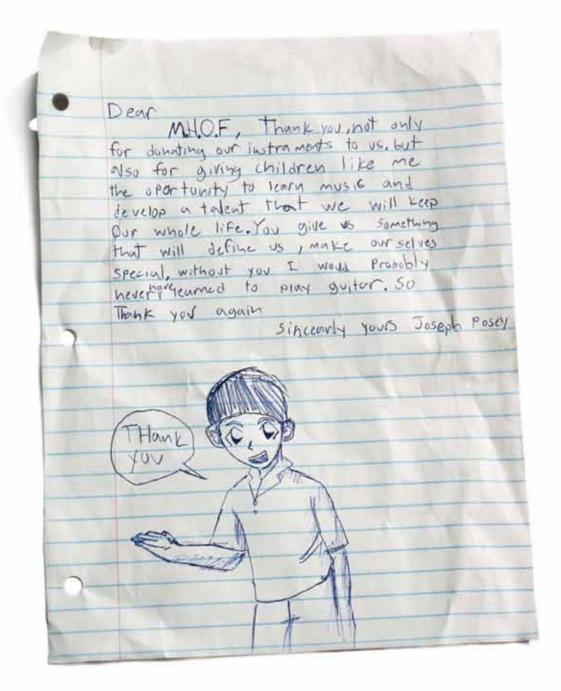
#### **SHOWSTOPPERS**



#### 1 GREG BENNETT GOM100SPK N

BY SAMICK Dubbed "the loudest guitar you've ever heard at this price point" by Samick, the Greg Bennett GOM100SPK N achieves its sound with Thunderflex bracing. The instrument has an orchestra model body, solid sitka spruce top, nato mahogany back and sides, multi-play binding, die-cast tuners, and a vintage sunburst finish. It comes with a 10-mm padded gig bag. MSRP: \$299. {samickguitar.com}

2 BEDELL HIPPIE CHICK Bedell Guitars is rocking chic with its latest line of Hippie Chick models. The limited-edition guitars feature Alaska sitka spruce with honed Adirondack bracing, solid American hard maple bodies, and an African ebony fingerboard and bridge with one-piece African mahogany necks. Only 36 guitars in each color will be made. {twooldhippies.com}



#### That's why.



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\*HybridPianos

1 ROLAND V-PIANO GRAND With the V-Piano Grand, players can choose from vintage piano sounds to futuristic vanguard piano model presets — or they can create their own customized piano libraries. The instrument combines V-Piano technology with a multichannel sound system in a polished ebony cabinet. The piano modeling technology meticulously recreates the

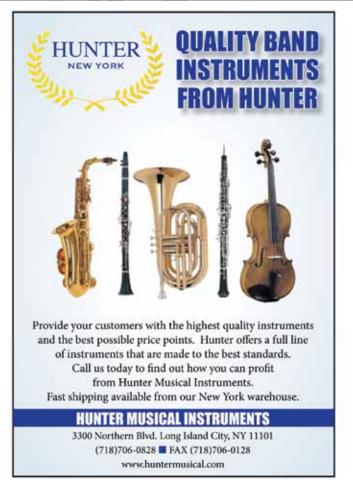
interactions of the components inside an acoustic piano. **{rolandus.com}** 

2 YAMAHA DCFX Yamaha brought a CFX concert grand into its Disklavier Pro series with this instrument. The piano includes a sound muting system, XG instrument tone generation, MIDI and personal computer connections, and a SmartKey play-assist system. It can be controlled through an iPhone application. The Remote Lesson feature is an Internet-based educational tool that allows for transcon-

tinental classes. {yamaha.com}

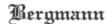






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## \* iDeviceAddOns

**1 MUSIQUIP PRIMEVIBE** Prime-Vibe seasons stringed instruments for better projection and note separation. Users can hook up their iPods to the unit, which plays music into an instrument to loosen its wood. MSRP: \$129. {prime-vibe.com}

**2 K&M iPAD HOLDER** K&M is keeping up with the digital times by introducing the iPad holder. It can clasp onto any stand sized from 0.27–1.18 inches in diameter, and the Prismatic Clamp offers a wide swing range. **{k-m.de}** 

**3 STUDIO DEVIL GUITAR AMP APP** This iDevice app is a guitar amp simulator that features Studio Devil's modeling algorithms for the ultimate in guitar tone. The app is available at the iTunes store. **(studiodevil.com)** 

1





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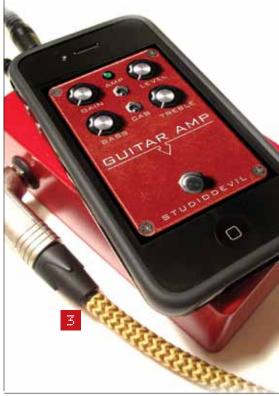
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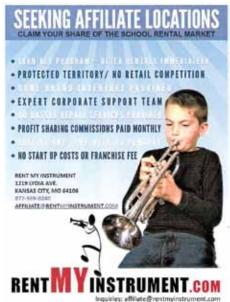
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Kenny O'Brien President

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#### HANDLING CAUTIOUS CUSTOMERS



NAMM hosted "Lessons Learned: How Doing Business Now Has Changed for the Better" the morning of Jan. 14. The panel discussion, moderated by consultant Danny Rocks, looked at how four music retailers have managed the downturn and changing business climate. In particular, the panelists offered ideas for creating relationships with and selling to tough customers. Highlights:

#### GENERATING TRAFFIC

With the economy changed, customers are dealing with a lack of confidence. It affects [how they] go into stores. We looked at it from the standpoint of reaching out instead of waiting for them to come in, and we made the decision to do events and clinics at a heightened level. It allowed us to refocus our company and our business more on our customers and giving them a reason to come into the store. We were able to reverse that trend in about three or four months.





#### SAVING RELATIONSHIPS

We started what we call our Bravo program. We provide a feedback card to every customer, with every transaction. And on that feedback card there are four options where they can rate their experience with us. One is "bravo," which means we did a really great job; the other is "good"; the other is "OK"; and the other is "boo."

When there is a "boo" and the customer gives his or her name and contact information, I [as the owner] call them directly. And they often say, "I really had no expectation that anybody would read this or pay attention to it." My goal at that point is to save the relationship. I don't get very many "boos," but in most cases, with maybe one or two exceptions, I've been able to save every relationship, so we can continue to do business going forward.

#### BOOSTING STEP-UPS

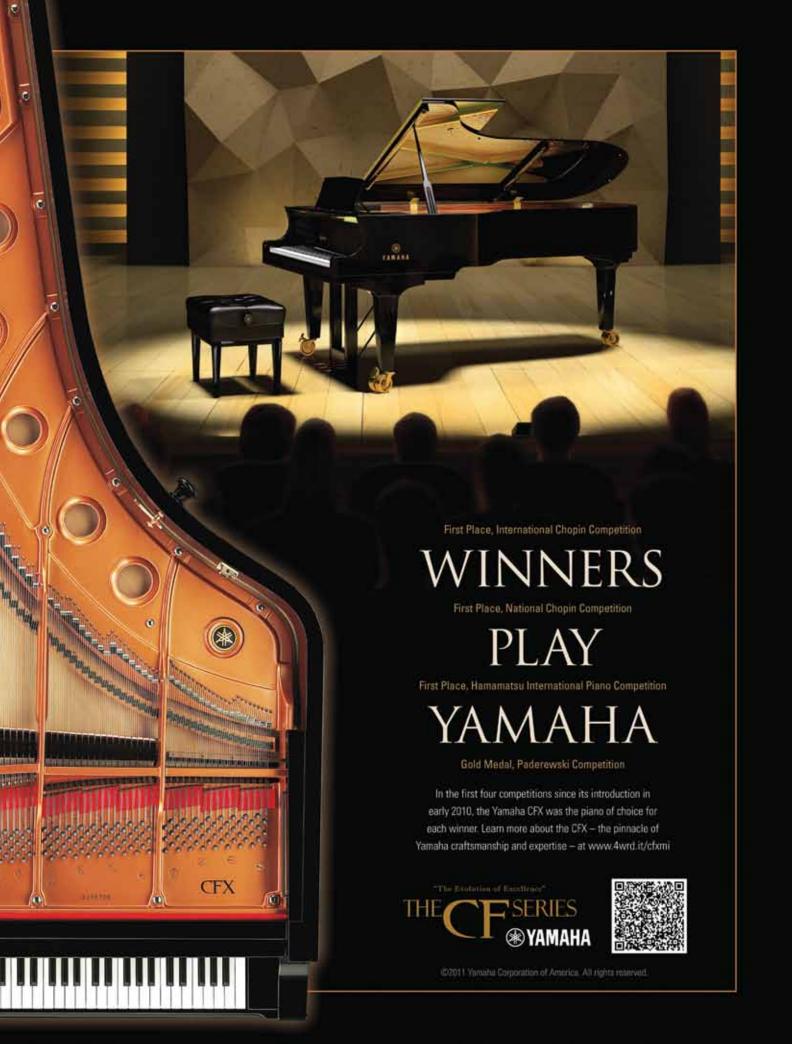
The credit issue, I think, has affected us all. For our particular store, we depend a lot on step-up instruments from our rentals. So our biggest issue when all this happened with the credit industry was converting those rental customers to step-up instruments. We needed to figure out a way to get that instrument in their hands - not in an old way. [Customers] weren't just popping out a Visa like the old days. So our job as salespeople and retailers, good retailers, was to figure out the options that they had. Was there a way to get a monthly payment? Was there a way to get credit and have Grandma co-sign?

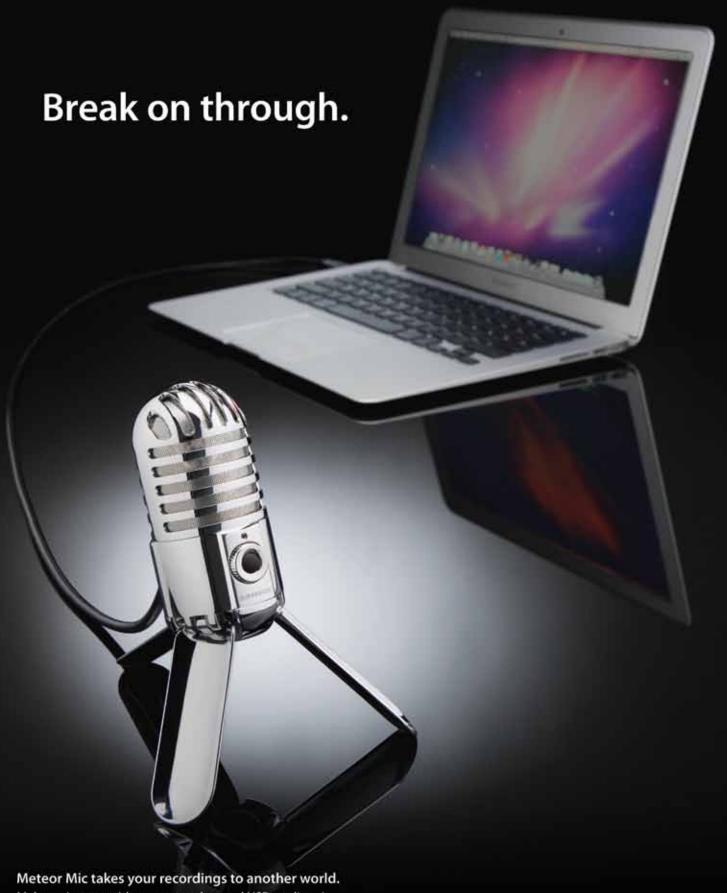




#### MONITORING THE WEB

How many people actually know what their Yelp page says? I think at this point we recognize about 40 different social sites where we're ranked, where there are comments about us. The truth is. it matters. We have to go find out what people are saying. You need to know what people are talking about and respond to it. Every single negative response gets somebody getting in touch with that customer and trying to turn it around. We've actually seen on our Yelp page quite a few people posting a rewrite and saying, "They contacted us. I've changed my rating. We love them." That is invaluable advertising. It's the mentality of winning customers over one at a time right now.





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