

THE TOP FIVE TRENDS AT 2011 SUMMER NAMM IN NASHVILLE **PAGE 30**

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

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SEPTEMBER 2011 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

**'Best In Show'
Coverage**

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**Astro Mines
the Untapped DJ
Education Market**

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Rick Hamilton:
"Anywhere I can find
a stream of income
for our store, I take it."

GOODBYE NICHE

Why one specialty shop, Drums Etc.,
expanded into new product
categories and services **PAGE 46**

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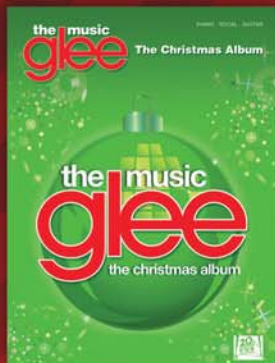
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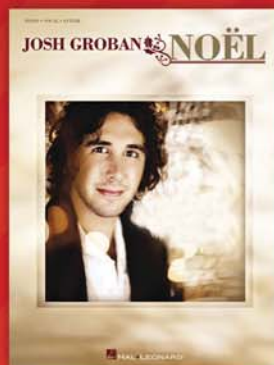
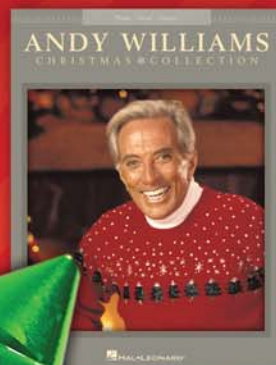
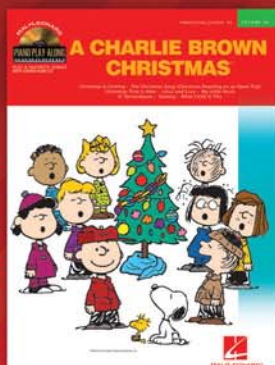
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SAMSON

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Rick Hamilton



Photo by Shane East

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- Pete Gamber, Founder of Alta Loma Music

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PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

THE POPULARITY OF LESSONS LEARNED

It began with a simple e-mail.

In spring 2009, Gerson Rosenbloom wrote to ask if we'd be interested in a column called *Lessons Learned*. He'd recently closed his dealership, Medley Music, and aimed to distill 40 years of hard-earned business lessons into a monthly series of articles.

Our response? "How soon can you start writing?"

This was a retailer who'd run a bang-up operation. He'd risen to the top of the heap, and he got out without leaving blood when his dealership's life cycle ran its natural course. For that reason, we knew *Lessons Learned* would be popular, but we didn't know just how popular.

Fast-forward two years, and the lessons-learned concept is ubiquitous in the music products industry. Countless NAMM University educational sessions have used the moniker. We centered last year's 20th anniversary issue around the idea. A friendly trade-magazine competitor even titled his editorial "Lessons Learned" a few months back.

And now, we owe Gerson another debt of gratitude. Last week, we returned from the American Society of Business Publication Editors convention in Chicago. There, we won the 2011 Silver Azbee

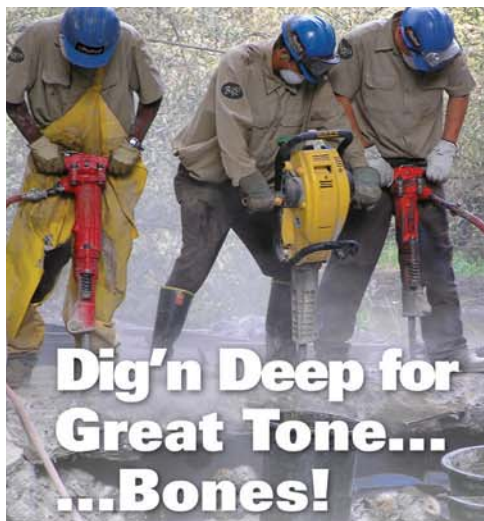
Award in the Special Section category for the 20th anniversary feature — part of our July 2010 issue. In keeping with the anniversary theme, we'd asked 20 music retail professionals, including Gerson, to contribute their own lessons learned to the story. Even our magazine-making peers took notice.

So why did the lessons-learned concept stick? I think it's because wise people learn from the hard knocks of others. Because business often gets tougher, not easier, the longer you're in it. And because industry newcomers need a roadmap, especially in this climate.

Rosenbloom has picked up more lessons learned in his new life as Wechter Guitars' managing director. His column in this edition of *Music Inc.* looks at retailer website blunders that he's seen while prospecting for new clients. It's a must-read, and be forewarned, it ain't pretty. (See page 44.)

On the topic of lessons learned, here's one I've picked up lately: Make change part of your daily activities, a process as critical as opening your doors each morning. A music retail business should be a constantly evolving organism that responds and adapts to the market. And that means always seeking new opportunities and ways to improve operations.

For a good example of a retailer that continues adapting and changing with the times, check out this month's cover story on Drums Etc. of Lancaster, Pa. (The story starts on page 46.) When Drums Etc. opened in 1985, it was one of roughly seven independent music stores in the local market. Now, it's one of two. Find out why. **MI**



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LETTERS

Shattering Old Advertising Models

Greg Billings' column, "Shattered!," in the July issue of *Music Inc.* was excellent. I may appreciate it more than most because, prior to serving in the MI business, I worked as an advertising sales rep for three newspapers selling ads, creating ad content, editing, writing and proofreading. Advertising became my business, and boy, did I learn.

Billings is absolutely correct — the old advertising model is broken. A couple of years ago, I was asked to give a presentation to a university mass media class, in regards to my experiences and perspectives in the media and print business. I addressed how newspapers have failed to change with the times, and now they are paying for it. Did print die? No. I listed the increase in local, targeted publications in comparison to those available within the past few years.

The importance of the message in content cannot be underestimated. When I had customers tell me their ads didn't work and no one saw them, I would counter that by giving them free ads, but I would select the ad copy. Also, I would use a small 1- by 1-inch ad for this purpose. The puzzled advertiser would ask about the content I would use in that very small ad, and I would reply, "70-percent off all merchandise, today only at XYZ store."

Their immediate, frantic response was, "You can't do that." I would ask why not, and they would tell me that they'd go broke selling all of their product at a loss. I responded by asking them, "You mean your store would be flooded with customers and they



would purchase all of your merchandise?" I would emphasize that the customers saw the ad, and the response was the result of the message.

One of my favorite books on advertising is *The Elements Of Copywriting: The Essential Guide To Creating Copy That Gets The Results You Want* by Gary Blake and Robert Bly. Too often, MI ad buyers know little about effective advertising. This book can help them.

One of my ad media rep friends had a good philosophy on advertising. He said that advertising is similar to a hot air balloon: It takes quite a bit to get it up in the air, but once there, an occasional puff of gas will keep it afloat for all to see. Cut off the gas, and the balloon will be back

on the ground.

Yes, the old ways of advertising have changed. It behooves MI store owners to know more about advantages, techniques and unique aspects of all media. Most of us can negotiate rates, but as Billings said, we often lack effective ad copy and design concepts.

Chris Cruz
Rental Manager
Smith Audio Visual
Topeka, Kan.

Thanks From SLM

Thank you so much for writing the wonderful article "Bold Moves" in the July issue of *Music Inc.* When I started in the music business in 1974, there were about 75 distributors in the United States — I think there were 10 just in New

York. Thirty-seven-plus years later, the landscape has changed completely and will continue to change. The number of full-line distributors that have everything from Martin guitar strings to Vandoren reeds is down to about four or five.

Distribution is not that different from retail. We are all faced with similar problems, such as shrinking margins, competitors that sell by price only and the daily grind of running the operation. This includes keeping employees motivated and excited about their jobs, keeping an eye on expenses, and really understanding your inventory — your No. 1 asset on the balance sheet.

Music Inc. did a fantastic job writing about our company. I feel it was an important industry story since an icon like St. Louis Music could have easily been one more name on the long list of distributors that went away.

I would like to thank Editor Zach Phillips and Associate Editor Katie Kailus for making the trip to St. Louis and spending a day here. St. Louis Music is filled with almost 90 years of rich history and has been an important part of many dealers' growth throughout the years.

I will never take my eye off the ball that is the independent music dealer, 8,000 strong — the backbone of the music business and the ones who help with our continued growth.

Mark Ragin
CEO and Owner
St. Louis Music

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RETAIL

ASTRO AUDIO VISUAL LIGHTING | BY JEFF CAGLE

SPINNING 101

DJ culture has gone mainstream. For proof, look no further than business conventions, sets between concerts and, of course, weddings, where DJs can be found spinning tracks.

But going from DJ hopeful to professional is a process wrought with uncertainty. Unless you happen to be among the 500 students at the Astro Mix Lab at Astro Audio Visual Lighting in Glendale, Calif.

Company owner Craig Merrick has been providing Los Angeles area DJs with equipment since 1974. For years, aspiring DJs would figure it out on their own, and he saw himself simply as a supplier. But when this historically closed-off community began infiltrating the mainstream, so did questions like, "How can I get into this?"

"Basically, the sales guys who were DJs themselves were sometimes giving customers advice, but that was pretty limited," Merrick said. "You can only do so much if you spend an hour with a guy, and you can't really teach them any techniques. I started seeing the need developing as it was happening."

Kenny Smith, a *Music Inc.* contributor and Mix Lab consultant,



Students in the Astro Mix Lab

Photo by Jayme Eberly

said he sees a DJ school being a way to help DJs find a clear path from point A to point B.

"You could learn how to do these things, but there weren't any clear steps to help you get gigs or do whatever it was that you wanted to do," he said.

Group classes at the Astro Mix Lab last six weeks, have eight students each and cost roughly \$300. Astro offers private sessions, as well, and the curriculum is tailored to an individual's needs. Beginner-level classes assume students don't

know anything about DJing.

"We go over the basics in the class and get students familiar with the gear — terminology, what the cables are, what the mixer is and how it works, and the technical aspects of how to connect everything," Merrick said. "From there, we get into really basic techniques and some music theory — how to pick your music, how to mix different types of music, counting beats, genres, etc. It progresses all the way up to learning different types of scratching techniques

and some of the tricks that you do with performing."

Students moving onto advanced courses will also learn everything from talking with clients to dealing with contracts to working a crowd.

"We teach them the entire spectrum of the business in the industry and give them insight into the culture," Merrick said.

THE LAB

Merrick makes the most of his space. With 6,500 square feet, Astro Audio Visual Light-

ing packs in a retail division that sells DJ and pro audio gear, a rental department, light and sound showrooms, a contracting division, a service department manned by two full-time techs, and a production division for event staging setups.

For years, Mix Lab's space served as a record store. The drop in vinyl sales relegated it to a storage area — a move Merrick acknowledged wasn't an effective use of Astro's limited space. The idea for the Mix Lab blossomed.

"We put a lot of thought and planning into the classroom and how the store is laid out," Merrick said.

The Mix Lab has eight individual workstations, and students can choose between two setups: a traditional vinyl turntable or digital CDJ equip-

ment. The instructor's station features an overhead camera that feeds to a video projection on a big screen, so students can learn about hand placement and crossfader technique.

"So you've got a close-up shot showing what he is doing, and he can also step down and walk around to all the different workstations and make sure everyone is on the right track," Merrick said. "The space was totally transformed and went from being negative cash flow to a positive cash flow, while creating something substantial and creative in the process."

THE RECITAL MODEL

Without any traditional advertising, Astro gets the word out about Mix Lab by hosting monthly DJ battles. These usu-

ally consist of up to 10 DJs who compete to win prizes. Smith said it's not uncommon for former students to come in — and win.

"We've had students who couldn't DJ at all," he added. "They just came to us with the idea, 'I want to learn to DJ,' and have gone through the program over the past year. [They] are getting paid gigs now and do these battles and come in and win."

Merrick has found that the battles, like recitals, bring people into the store. He said Mix Lab's signage alone also generates student interest.

"We get a ton of business from people who just happen to be passing by and are interested," he said. "It reinforces to us how unique [the DJ school concept] is when people walk in and say, 'Gee, I didn't know there was

such a thing.'"

Merrick added that DJ schools are an untapped opportunity for fellow music retailers, especially pro audio sellers. The schools create new musicians and build customer loyalty.

"I hope other people try it and are successful with it because there is way more demand than there is supply for this," he said. "There are way more people who are interested in things like the Astro Mix Labs than there are places for them to go."

"When you help people fulfill their dreams and assist them with what their passion is, of course they're going to want to do business with you. We're there to help these people fulfill their desire for what they want to do, but you're not going to do that by just selling somebody a box." **MI**

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EVENT

Korg Gives All-Access

Korg recently hosted Kronos All-Access Parties at music dealerships across the United States to support the launch of the company's new flagship workstation. These consumer-oriented one-day events let attendees experience the Kronos firsthand and included musical performances and open discussions. Korg's Kronos crew was on hand to provide live demos and answer questions. The parties were held at Washington Music Center, Alto Music, Bellevue American Music, Bananas at Large, Ken Stanton Music, Corner Music, Cascio Interstate Music and two Sam Ash Music locations.

"Our Kronos All-Access Party was a great event — great turnout and an impressive product," said Larry Garris, owner of Corner Music in Nashville, Tenn. He's pictured above at the keyboard with (from left) Korg's Aaron Barnhart and Terry Brady with Corner Music's Russell Cox.

VENUES

Grand Reopening

Grand Central Music of San Luis Obispo, Calif., has announced plans to move to a new store in late August. According to Grand Central Music owner Dan Ernst, the new store is located in a more affluent neighborhood than the previous store. It's a smaller location, which he said will lower overhead and better fit what he called the company's "new business model."

"A move always sparks interest in your business," Ernst added.

VENTURES

Chippewa Opening

A String Above opened in downtown Chippewa Falls, Wis., this past April. The 1,000-square-foot guitar shop, owned by CJ White, also offers music lessons. White told *Leader-Telegram* that she plans to cover the walls with album covers.

Jesse and Roxie Amoroso



Photo by Chris Stradon

COWTOWN GUITARS | OWNERSHIP

COWTOWN'S NEW LEADERSHIP

Cowtown Guitars in Las Vegas recently changed hands from owner Mark Chatfield to longtime customers and employees Jesse and Roxie Amoroso, a husband-and-wife team.

In 2002, Roxie helped rebuild Cowtown's website. Instead of asking for payment, she requested a 1971 Les Paul Custom for Jesse, her then-boyfriend. Jesse began working for the shop two years later and helped manage it when Chatfield went back on the road with Bob Seger and The Silver Bullet Band.

According to Roxie, she and Jesse aim to continue "carrying the same high-quality vintage instruments that Mark himself groomed us both to look for" and "always have our eyes peeled for the next cutting-edge product that will keep Cowtown Guitars current in this ever-changing industry."

"In 2011, when our good friend Mark Chatfield told us he was selling Cowtown, both of our hearts were heavy," Roxie said. "But Mark, being Mark, had a plan. He made us an offer we couldn't refuse. We didn't just buy a

A husband-and-wife team take over Cowtown Guitars in Las Vegas

guitar shop. We are buying a big, inanimate member of the family. Cowtown Guitars means so much to so many people, and we are no exception. It feels like we've been given more than a thriving business. We've been given an opportunity. We've been given a *gift*."

In July, Cowtown Guitars also teamed up with local businesses and organizations to help children in need. Customers who brought in donations of food, hygiene products and clothing were entered in a drawing to receive a free gift, which included strings, tuners, accessories and guitar polish.

"The number of homeless children in our community is nearing 6,000 kids," Roxie said. "Help is needed now more than ever."



WILLIS MUSIC | EXPANSION

Willis to Open Seventh Store

On July 21, Willis Music announced plans to open a new retail superstore at Cincinnati's Kenwood Galleria. It will be the company's fourth store in the Cincinnati area and seventh overall. The new location will be a full-line retail operation with a large sheet music selection, an expanded band and orchestra instrument section, music lessons studios, and an auditorium.

"We hope that by opening a store in the Kenwood area we will fulfill a need that has been long overdue," said Kevin Cranley, president of Willis Music.

NAMM'S NEW CHAIRMAN

In related news, NAMM appointed Cranley as its new chairman at Summer NAMM on July 23. He succeeds Tom Schmitt, president

and chairman of Schmitt Music, who finished his two-year term.

Along with his work with NAMM, Cranley has served as a board member of the Retail Print Music Dealers Association and a trustee of the American Classical Music Hall of Fame and Museum. He's also a member of the Northern Kentucky University College of Business Advisory Council, Alliance of Independent Music Merchants and Music Teachers National Association, among other groups.

"I am honored and humbled to be elected as NAMM's chairman," Cranley said. "In this position, I look forward to assisting our association and its 9,000 member companies in spreading the pleasures and proven benefits of making music."



Kevin Cranley outside the new Willis Music store in Cincinnati

Solid Adirondack Spruce Top
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CLOSING

Drum HQ Shutters Doors

On July 7, Drum Headquarters in St. Louis closed after 30 years in business. The drum and percussion specialty shop had been owned by Rob Birenbaum until he sold it to longtime employee Jim Uding in 2005.

Uding cited a “perfect storm” of factors contributing to the store’s closure, including “epic negative economic conditions” and “accelerating changes brought on by technology.” According to a *St. Louis Magazine* article, a major highway near the store was also closed for two years after he purchased the business. At its peak, Drum Headquarters had 11 employees, but by February of this year, just Uding and one part-time employee ran the shop.

“I’ve been part of Drum Headquarters since 1983, so this is not an easy announcement to make,” he wrote on the company’s website. “But I’ve done everything in my power to keep the doors of Drum Headquarters open, and it is no longer possible.”

RESTRUCTURING

Daddy’s to Downsize

Manchester, N.H.-based combo chain Daddy’s Junky Music recently announced that it will close seven of its 19 retail stores. These locations include Albany and Syracuse, N.Y.; Stamford, Conn.; Peabody and North Dartmouth, Mass.; Portland, Maine; and Warwick, R.I.

A statement from the company said the closures are “in response to changes on the retail landscape.” Daddy’s also plans to devote more resources to its online presence.

“Daddy’s was most successful when we had 12 retail locations within reasonable proximity to our headquarters and warehouse,” said Fred Bramante, Daddy’s CEO and founder. “Many markets have changed, and it no longer makes sense to service those markets with retail storefronts. We have identified seven such markets and will move to close those locations in the near future.

“We will provide a better presentation in markets where our experience tells us a brick-and-mortar presence still works for Daddy’s. Our online presentation will continue to play a larger role and, in tandem with our 12 stores, presents the appropriate format to service our customers and position Daddy’s for success in the future.”



Instrumental Music Center owners Leslie and Mike Faltin

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CENTER | GROWTH

INSTRUMENTAL EXPANSION

Instrumental Music Center (IMC) opened its second location Aug. 1. Like the company’s flagship retail operation, the new 2,100-square-foot store is located in Tucson, Ariz., and features band and orchestra instruments, guitars, basses, ukuleles, drums and percussion, print music, gifts, and a range of accessories. It also offers instrument rentals and repairs.

Leslie Faltin, IMC’s co-owner, said she worked with Bank of Tucson to launch the new store.

“The adjustments that we made at the beginning of the recession have allowed us to remain strong and thriving

throughout this economic downturn,” Faltin said. “The current business climate offered an excellent opportunity to expand our market base into an underserved area of Tucson.”

Grand-opening events began on Aug. 4 and included a mini music festival, raffles and giveaways.

“We are thrilled to make our store easier to access to the west, central and north areas of Tucson,” Faltin said. “Previously, our customers would have a long drive if they happened to live on the northwest side. This expansion will allow us to offer our services to more musicians and students.”

FULL COMPASS SYSTEMS | EVENT

FC HELPS RAISE \$200K FOR CIRCUS WORLD

Full Compass Systems of Madison, Wis., sponsored the Circus of Chefs ... The Gala 2011 on June 26. Company owners Jonathan and Susan Lipp, in cooperation with Baraboo National Bank co-chairs Meriin and Jenele Zitzner, organized and staffed the event. Several Full Compass employees also participated in the gala, helping with everything from designing the program book to assisting with setup and teardown to providing technical support.

Bringing in more than 600 guests, the eighth annual gala raised more than \$200,000 for the Circus World Museum, a site owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society that focuses on preserving the history of circus entertainment and memorabilia.

Circus clowns and performers, as well as live jazz, entertained attendees as they dined and viewed roughly 900 auction items. The event included free martinis and gourmet food from 33 local restaurants.

SWEETWATER | PROMOTION

No Flash in the Pan for Sweetwater

Sweetwater Sound of Fort Wayne, Ind., recently posted the 100th episode of the Sweetwater Minute.

Launched in 2009, the Sweetwater Minute is a weekly video show hosted by Mitch Gallagher, Sweetwater's editorial director. It features gear demos and updates; tours of the Sweetwater facility; and interviews with artists, producers and engineers. The show is posted to the company's Facebook and YouTube pages, and according to a statement from Sweetwater, episodes have received as many as 100,000 hits. Joe Satriani, Stanley Clarke, Kenny Aronoff and David Grissom are just a few of the artists who've appeared on the show.



Sweetwater's Mitch Gallagher (left) and producer/artist Alan Parsons between filming the 100th episode of the Sweetwater Minute



The grand-opening celebration at Guitar Center's new Wilmington, Del., location

GUITAR CENTER | EXPANSION

GC Hits 220 Retail Stores

As part of its recent expansion, Guitar Center has opened two new stores, bringing its total number of retail locations to 220.

On June 16, GC opened in Wilmington, Del. The 14,525-square-foot store is located in a no-sales-tax zone and features GC Garage, which offers on-site guitar repair services. On July 28, GC opened its 220th store in Huntsville, Ala. The 14,202-square-foot location features Guitar Center Studios, the company's on-site music lessons and rehearsal facility. Like the Wilmington store, the Huntsville location has a GC Garage.

To celebrate the openings, GC hosted

grand-opening-weekend events that featured savings and gear giveaways.

GC PROMOTES TWO

The company also recently announced two key promotions. Glenn Noyes has been named director of category management for drums and percussion. He joined GC in 2007 and has 24 years of retail experience. Guitar Center Professional, the company's outside sales division, also named Rick Plushner vice president. He joined the Guitar Center organization in September 2005 as general manager of GC Pro.



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Note from Joe

NAMM U and NAMM U Online

Attendance at NAMM University sessions at Winter and Summer NAMM continues to surge but online participation has not.

Since introducing the NAMM U Breakfast Sessions and the Idea Center Sessions a few years back—and, more recently, the Hands-On Training (HOT) Zone—attendance has increased substantially. The combination of the most important topics, as chosen by our Members, and quality presenters representing the very best of the industry have resulted in consistently packed rooms and provided great value to those businesses trying to get an edge on the hyper-competitive landscape in music retail today.

To help support NAMM Members and empower them throughout the year, we have also created NAMM U Online, this website features some of the best offerings from the shows, as well as, extensive courses on financial management by Alan Friedman and retail sales by George Hines. You can choose from sessions on technology, lesson programs and social media. In addition, you'll find short videos of industry leaders sharing

some of their best ideas and tips for success. While the site continues to be a work in progress, it offers a lot of great, interactive content designed to help our Members grow their businesses. However, Member traffic on the site has been so light, it makes us wonder if we're missing something.

The premise of the NAMM U sessions at the shows has been simple: ask our Members what they want and then give it to them. The results have been outstanding. But with NAMM U's online offerings, we've not seen the same level of participation. Is online education—at your fingertips whenever you want or need support—important to our retail community? And, if so, how can we adapt the NAMM U Online content to be more meaningful for you and your staff?

Many of our Members have created informative websites that feature product and company content. Others have educational sites with online music lessons, and even basic information on instrument repairs. NAMM University and NAMM U Online are different; they're designed specifically to provide relevant, high-value and industry-specific education programs for NAMM Members. And while the sessions at the shows are accomplishing that mission, in my opinion NAMM U Online has not.

Please check it out at www.namm.org/nammu and give it a spin. Then call or drop me an e-mail with your thoughts and ideas. We want to make NAMM U Online as important to your success as the sessions offered at the shows. With your help, I know we can achieve that!

Joe Lamond

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO

Get Connected with NAMM U Online



NAMM U Online is a convenient supplement to the standard NAMM U Idea Center Sessions you see at the shows. It offers additional ideas, useful tips and a fresh way of looking at your business.

The website is packed with great information that you and your staff can access at any time and features topics such as sales, marketing, finance, retail, lesson programs and technology.

Plug into this valuable Member resource at namm.org/nammu

NAMM®
University



NAME NAMM News September 2011 No 2011

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

90,114

Registrants

1,417

Exhibiting Companies

90

Countries Represented

4

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ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

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Partners with Suzuki strings
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SUPPLY

BOSPHORUS, ZILDJIAN | BY SARA FARR

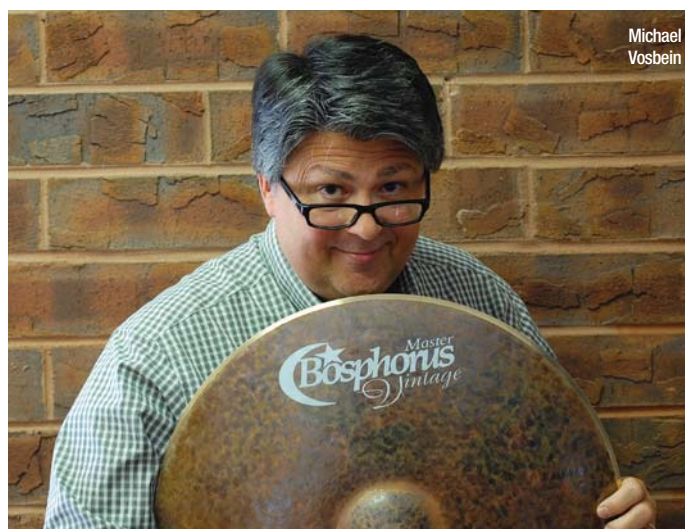
STAKING A DIGITAL CLAIM

Digital technology has yielded new levels of sonic clarity, but when it comes to how musicians use those sounds, the industry is anything but clear. So says Michael Vosbein, co-owner of Cymbal Masters and president of Bosphorus USA.

With the rise of third-party acoustic drum sample collections, Vosbein argued that drum and percussion companies need to get on the bandwagon and start releasing branded products under their own names.

“Right now, if someone were to record and sound-sample a Bosphorus cymbal, they could show a picture of each cymbal, identify it for exactly what it is and sell it as such, without my involvement or permission,” he said. “Nor would I have any control over the quality of the sounds. This has some big implications for the industry, and I thought it was important for Bosphorus to jump on our own digital destiny.”

So, roughly two years ago, the company partnered with drummer Stanton Moore and developer John Emrich to create Stanton Moore MIDI Groove Library and Stanton Moore Cymbal Sample Library. The products, released through Platinum Samples, are compatible with BFD2, BFD Eco



Michael Vosbein

and general MIDI files.

Moore, who hand-picked his cymbal sounds and performed his own grooves for the project, said he's pleased with the results. The products give musicians “a way to spread their voices to an even broader audience” and let artists still work with him “if the real me is not logistically or financially viable.” And, Vosbein added, customers can use these sounds and grooves in their own recordings royalty-free since artists are compensated via the sale of the products.

ZILDJIAN'S ENTRY

Bosphorus isn't alone. Fellow cymbal maker Zildjian also got into the game early this year with the well-publicized launch

of its Gen16 project.

Gen16 encompasses several digital products, including the Gen16 Digital Vault Z-Pack, Groove Packs, AE Cymbals and AE Racks. According to John Roderick, Zildjian's vice president of new business and product development, the company introduced Gen16 to expand outside of its core business and deliver a range of products that could be used in varied settings.

“The goal of Gen16 is to develop and market a new generation of groundbreaking, advanced music technologies,” he said.

Roderick added that Zildjian treats the Gen16 division as a way to tap into a broader customer base. Still, such items as the Gen16 Digital Vault (also

released in BFD2 format but through FXpansion) also appeal to drummers because they feature unreleased Zildjian products and sounds recorded from the company's “reference cymbals” — cymbals made directly from the master cymbal. And some of these “sounds” would not have been otherwise available.

“This is stuff that people can't get,” said Emrich, who also produced and recorded the sounds for Gen16's Digital Vault project. “The end-user for the Digital Vault gets to play cymbals that nobody gets to touch, ever. And because I'm working in the vault, there are cymbals [in the collection] that were never released.”

NEW RETAIL MODEL

This presents new opportunities in the market. Vosbein noted that these products have benefits to dealers and manufacturers alike — nothing ever goes out of stock, and the marginal cost of reproduction is zero. That said, the technologies raise a lot of questions as to how digital downloads will intertwine with the traditional delivery models at brick-and-mortar stores.

“The problem at this point is that a lot of dealers don't understand it,” Vosbein said, adding that the market is also amorphous in terms of its user base. And

while studio musicians and hobbyists have long been using such products, they often don't purchase them at traditional MI stores.

"The key, to me, is that the recording industry has already gone this way, with regard to acceptance of software, and sooner or later, in addition to hardware, I think all of us in the percussion industry are eventually going to be in the virtual delivery business, primarily to non-drummers," Vosbein said.

"So if a dealer wanted to sell this stuff, there's any number of ways I can do it: I can set him up with gift cards or any vehicle we can come up with that delivers a serial number. Maybe I'm overstating it, but I see new percussion products distributed in new ways to new users as a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing."

Vosbein stressed that he's sensitive to issues that could arise when a digital project involves a drummer who endorses products from multiple manufacturers. That said, he believes that barriers in the content produc-

tion available digitally at a lower price point.

"I can see why there's some hesitation in the industry," Vosbein said. "What does it cost to do this, and are we going to recoup it?" "Should we put our brand out there in the digital universe?" "What's the role of the artist and signature products?"

"It's very exciting to be making up the ground rules as we go along. If we, as per-

cussion manufacturers, don't embrace this, somebody else certainly will. In fact, they already are doing so. With an eye to the future, I think dealers should reconsider their stance on digital products, especially software. I've always been and will remain a straight-ahead acoustic jazz guy, but the digital revolution is here, and we must respond to the needs of our customers." **MI**

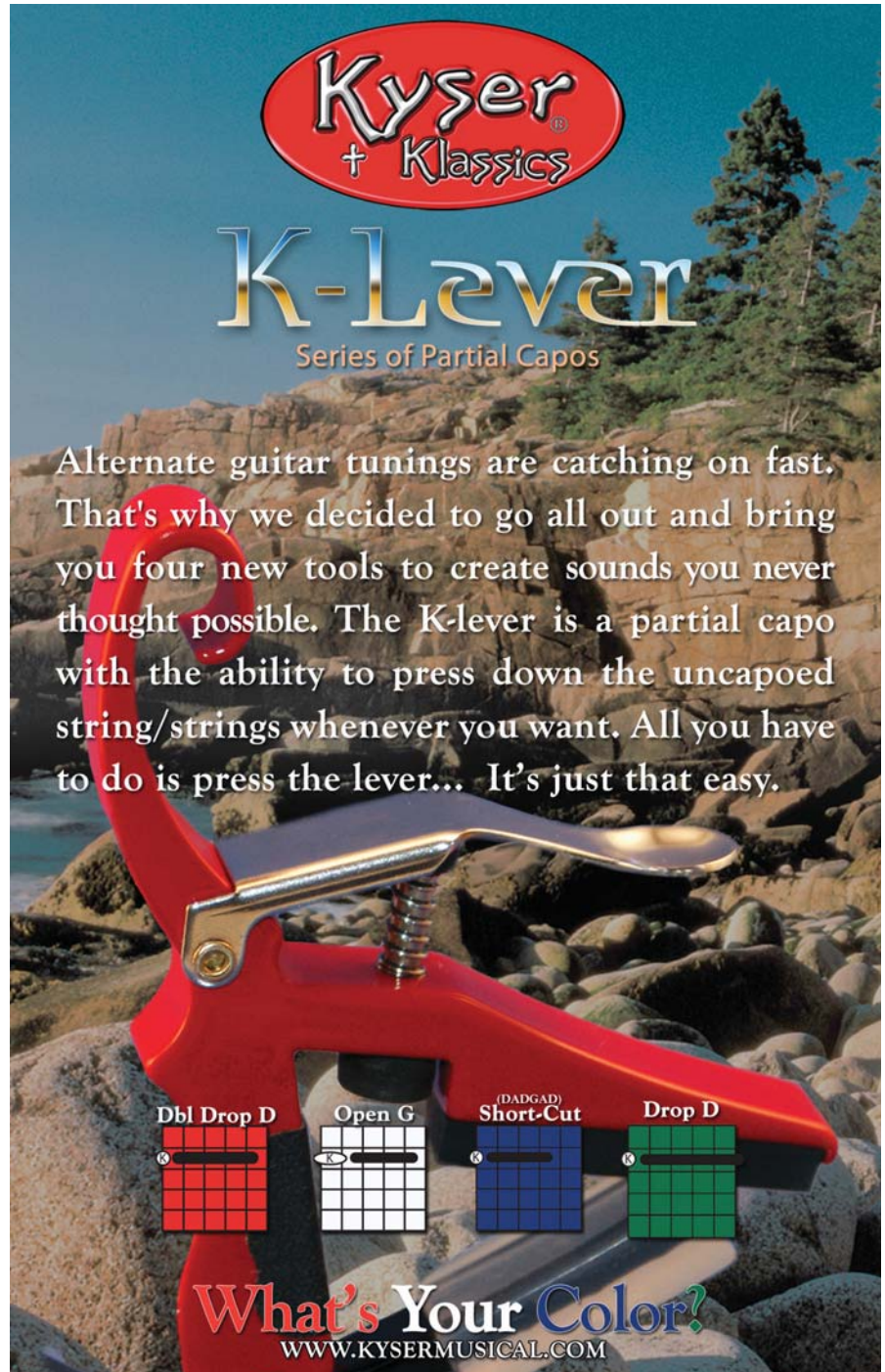
Michael Vosbein of Bosphorus challenges fellow percussion suppliers to assert ownership of their brands in the digital domain

tion and delivery business will eventually break down. He mentioned that Peter Erskine, a Zildjian and DW artist, has embraced this genre and delivery model. Virtually Erskine, from Bosphorus distributor Cymbal Masters, has no physical media whatsoever — and was designed that way. Vosbein said that by partnering with Cymbal Masters, Erskine was able to represent multiple companies he endorses faithfully with high-quality samples, each of which he played himself.

"It's truly a 21st century delivery model for a 21st century product," Vosbein added.

CALL TO ACTION

Of course, some drum and percussion companies may not want to record the sounds of high-dollar items and make them



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BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION | BY SARA FARR

BIG BANG THEORY

When Easton-Bell Sports approached Bob Kasha about developing a synthetic drumstick in 1992, the Southern California retailer was wary.

“Synthetic drumsticks had failed so poorly that I thought it would be an uphill battle,” said Kasha, who owned two-store retailer ABK Rocks at the time. “But I did [eventually] agree to try them, and when I did, I thought, ‘Hey, these aren’t too bad. They actually feel pretty good.’”

Kasha became the sticks’ distributor, using the network of music industry contacts he’d acquired during his 20 years as a dealer. By 1994, he realized he needed to make a choice: retail or distribution. And so the universe experienced its second Big Bang.

Big Bang Distribution, that is.

“We were having problems with some of the major companies,” he said. “They didn’t want to buy from Big Bang when they knew they were supporting my retail stores.”

In 1997, Kasha bought the Ahead drumstick line and turned it into a Big Bang exclusive. Since then, Big Bang has extended the Ahead brand name into other areas, including cases, snare drums and accessories. Of the roughly 40 different product lines Big Bang Distribution currently carries, Kasha estimated that about half are self-branded and/or self-developed. Some of the company’s most well-known products include the Ahead drumstick line, Ahead Armor Cases, Metrophones and Bass Drum-O’s.



RETAIL EMPATHY

When Kasha considers a new product, it undergoes a rigorous evaluation that starts with a very basic question: Is this something a drummer would be interested in?

“You really have to look at a product and say: How much can we get for this product? How much is a consumer willing to pay for this product? Is it something that they need? Is it something that’s easy to manufacture? Can we get the packaging done? Is it going to be well-engineered, so it has a long life?”

And his 20 years as a store owner help him empathize with retailer grievances, particularly selling direct. “I know what it felt like to have a company sell direct to one of your consumers,” he said. “I hated [vendors] who

Big Bang Distribution’s Bob Kasha on picking items, treating retailers right

were so greedy that they had to sell to one or two customers to make an extra \$2 or \$3. They would be smarter to refer to a dealer and get that dealer to order more from you and have your product always being shown.”

When a customer calls Big Bang to buy a product, employees ask for his or her favorite local dealer. The staff rep then calls that dealer to set up a sale. “When you support your stores, they support you,” Kasha said.

That strategy became particularly important when the economy started heading into a recession. The accessories market saw a rise as customers scaled back purchases of kits, custom-designed drums and other expensive items. Not surprisingly, Kasha said his company’s sales are up this year over last year.

He remains sensitive to retailers’ budgets and has incorporated free freight and “fill the box” deals with specials, such as baker’s dozens or buy-two-get-one-free product mixes. Big Bang also stocks all the products it sells and ships most orders within 24 hours. Kasha acknowledged that this means “inventory levels have to be kind of high, but we do a lot of forecasting and maintenance on our inventory.” He added that “a dealer only has so much floor space. If they know they can get your product right away, they’re going to talk about it.”

INVALUABLE ADVERTISING

A recently posted YouTube fan video begins with a short drum solo and segues into an unprompted love letter to Big Bang’s Ahead Armor Cases. Kasha, an early advocate of Internet advertising, said such “candid, self-made promotional things, where people just feel so excited about the product that they have to talk about it and do a video on it,” are an invaluable, free form of advertising.

“Being patient in this industry, especially if it’s with a product that’s not like the iPod, just knowing that something can go a long way can pay off enormously,” he said. “Certain products don’t just happen overnight.” **MI**

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EVENT

Godin Presents Montreal Guitar Grand Prix

Godin Guitars will present this year's Montreal Guitar Grand Prix. The free event is open to guitarists of all ages and takes place Oct. 1–2 in Montreal.

The Festival International de Jazz de Montreal, which aims to encourage music making among the masses, established the Montreal Guitar Grand Prix to promote and develop the talents of local guitarists and let them showcase their talent onstage in front of an audience.

The contestants are asked to perform in a maximum of two categories of their choice, which include classical, acoustic, jazz and blues/rock. Prizes include musical equipment supplied by Godin Guitars, Steve's Music Store, Marshall Amplification, DigiTech and Samson. grandprixdelaguitare.com

AWARD

Mel Bay Honored

A ceremony inducted the late Melbourne (Mel) E. Bay as a 2011 St. Louis Walk of Fame honoree on June 30. The event included the unveiling of a bronze star and biographical plaque located in front of 6178 Delmar in St. Louis, across the street from the Moonrise Hotel.



Arthur McDonnell, mayor of Kirkwood, Mo.; William Bay, owner of Mel Bay; Susan Banks, Bay's daughter; and May Bay, Bay's wife, were on hand for the ceremony.

The St. Louis Walk of Fame is a nonprofit organization meant to advance the knowledge, awareness and appreciation of St. Louisans and their accomplishments. melbay.com

MUSIC GROUP | DISTRIBUTION

Music Group Finds Canadian Distributor

Music Group has appointed Intellimix as its distributor for the Behringer and Bugera brands in Canada.

"Intellimix is the perfect partner for Canada," said Uli Behringer, CEO of Music Group. "We are thrilled to have an extremely well-respected local distributor dedicated to the region." behringer.com

+ ON THE BEAT

Vic Firth's new West Coast office

Vic Firth has opened its new West Coast artist relations office at CenterStaging in Burbank, Calif. The new office is situated in a hotbed of artist-related activity, with some of today's top bands and artists rehearsing on-site daily.

"We've officially become a bicoastal operation," said Joe Testa, director of artist relations for Vic Firth. "This move not only allows us to service our current artists much more efficiently but also to scout out new, up-and-coming talent quickly."

The West Coast office will feature a showroom area with on-hand inventory, a media lounge, and a photo and video studio.

"Our artists are family, and now we have another place for them to come home to," said Vic Firth, company president.

"A key to creating the right tools is knowing the needs of the people who use them.

"With this great step forward, we will continue to do that better than anyone in the business." vicfirth.com

PMC RECEIVES NAMM FOUNDATION GRANT

The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) is one of 35 recipients nationwide to receive a NAMM Foundation 2011–2012 program grant.

The PMC's "PERCUSSION! The Rhythm of Life Through Making Music" funding will help further develop and grow of the organization's current Percussion In The Schools and Roots of Rhythm programs.

"Speaking for the entire PMC membership and its officers, we are thrilled to receive NAMM Foundation funding for these two extremely important programs that bring percussion into so many schools and connect with teachers at all grade levels," said Karl Dustman, PMC's co-executive director. playdrums.com



Taye Goes Viral

In support of its Snare Drum Center program, Taye Drums has released a Snare Center promotional YouTube video, which is also featured on the company's website. The video showcases seven of Taye's most popular snare drum models demonstrated by artist Gary Stanionis.

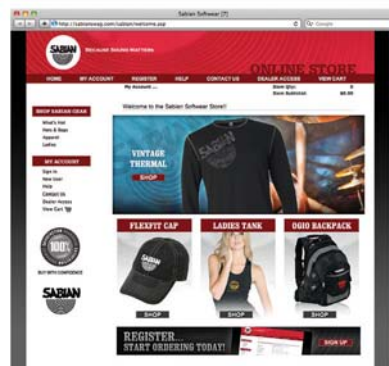
The Snare Center program was designed to put Taye's three most popular snare drum series into key dealers across the country.


These drums include a Studio series wood hoop snare and variations of Taye's MetalWorks Brass Shell and Stainless Steel Shell snare drums. tayedrums.com

SABIAN'S GOT SWAG


To mark the debut of its latest clothing designs, Sabian has launched a new online clothing and swag shop. Featuring men's and women's clothing, hats, and bags, sabianswag.com makes it easy for shoppers to purchase and wear Sabian gear.

"Simple, hip design at a great price was the ultimate goal when launching our new Swag Shop," said Sabian's Robert Mason, who spearheaded the initiative. "It was important to us that we streamline our clothing line, offering fashions that we know people want to wear. We gained valuable insight from a number of our artists. Additionally, market research told us there was demand for the style of clothing we're now making available." sabianswag.com







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GIBSON | LEGAL

Gibson Sues Saga Owner

Gibson recently sued Richard Keldsen of Saga Musical Instruments, alleging his company violated Gibson's trademarks. According to a complaint filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, Saga sells products synonymous with the Gibson name, including the Les Paul and Flying V guitar designs, and intentionally misused its trademarks.

"The two companies are in conversation to wind this up," said Ron Bienstock of Bienstock & Michael, Saga's legal counsel. gibson.com; sagamusic.com

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MUSIQUIP | PARTNERSHIP

Ashdown Names U.S. Distributor

Musiquip has been appointed the new U.S. distributor for Ashdown Music and the British company's two primary brands: Ashdown Engineering and Hayden Guitar Amps.

"Having the chance to represent a proven leader like Ashdown, while introducing an exciting, younger brand like Hayden to the American market, is a fantastic double opportunity," said John Kelley, Musiquip's general manager. musiquip.com

APPOINTMENTS

PMC's New Officers

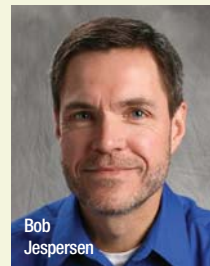
The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) has appointed Bob Jespersen and David Jewell as executive officers. The four PMC officers serve as equal co-executive directors, each responsible for specific areas of guidance and direction.

Jespersen is the regional sales manager for KMC Music. His 30-year career with KMC includes diverse sales and customer service management positions throughout the United States.

Jewell is the marketing manager of Yamaha Drums. He was with Milano Music in Mesa, Ariz., for more than 14 years and has spent the past 13 years with Yamaha.



David Jewell



Bob Jespersen

Sam Laurin of Indianapolis and Kathy Black of Portland, Ore., have been elected to the **Music for All** board of directors.

Hilary Brown has been named contributing editor of **Music Inc.** magazine. Brown is a former *Music Inc.* intern and editorial assistant. She's also a seasoned musician and a graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.



Hilary Brown

Audio Engineering Society (AES) recently announced that Roger Furness, AES executive director since 1994, will step down from his position at the end of the year. An AES member since 1975, Furness has served as section chair, vice president AES Europe and AES president.

Samick has hired Jeremy Colas as quality assurance manager and master luthier.

Front-of-house engineer Greg Price has joined the **Waves Audio** Waves Live Division as a product specialist.

WorxAudio Technologies recently appointed Chris Rachal to the newly created position of sales administration and support manager.

SHURE | AWARDS

Shure's One of Chicago's Best

Shure has been named one of "Chicago's 101 Best and Brightest Companies To Work For" by the



National Association for Business Resources (NABR). The award was established to honor companies that recognize associates as their greatest asset.

According to a statement from Shure, its policies and best practices in human resource management made it a company with imagination and conviction. Shure previously won the award in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

"I am very pleased that Shure has received this honor again," said Sandy LaMantia, president and CEO of Shure. "Our associates are certainly the best and brightest. We would not be able to deliver our legendary products without their hard work, creativity, passion and commitment." shure.com

CONN-SELMER | PERSONNEL


Strike at Conn-Selmer Facility

On July 26, employees with Local 2359 of the United Auto Workers (UAW) went on strike at Conn-Selmer's Eastlake, Ohio, manufacturing facility.

The company's labor contract with the union expired on Feb. 15, and hourly employees have been working without a contract ever since.

According to a statement from Conn-Selmer, the company anticipates it will be able to meet most customer needs for several months with its existing finished goods inventory, production from its Indiana brass instrument facility and foreign sources.

"The company has been negotiating in good faith with representatives of the UAW for the past six months," said John Stoner, president of Conn-Selmer. "In light of the economic environment, we believe we put a fair offer on the table. While we have reached agreement in many areas, we are still divided on some issues. We hope to resolve the situation as quickly as possible." conn-selmer.com



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Jim Eaton

ST. LOUIS MUSIC | PARTNERSHIP

SLM PARTNERS WITH SUZUKI

St. Louis Music (SLM) recently became the exclusive distributor of the Nagoya Suzuki violin line in North, Central and South America.

Effective immediately, all sales of the Japanese string instruments throughout the Americas will be arranged through SLM.

"It was just last year when we secured the honor of distributing these fine instruments in the United States, so we are pleased to be further trusted to bring them to more players throughout the Western Hemisphere," said Jim Eaton, vice president of SLM.

"Key is our ability to invest in inventory, and we have already made a substantial commitment in stocking Nagoya Suzuki products here in our St. Louis warehouse."

According to Eaton, the central shipping location; advanced logistics capabilities; and experience of the SLM management, sales staff and shop personnel influenced the decision. stlouismusic.com

GEMEINHARDT | ACQUISITION

Angel Picks Up Gemeinhardt

On June 25, Angel Industries acquired all assets of Gemeinhardt, including its Elkhart, Ind.-based manufacturing facility. During the past few years, Gemeinhardt has been managed through Angel Industries in Taiwan.

According to a statement from Gemeinhardt, the acquisition restores stability to the company and provides confidence and investment for future product developments.

"We have been working [toward] this day for the past few months with the goal of introducing these new arrangements seamlessly and thus ensure continuity for our manufacturing, staff, customers and suppliers," said Dave Pirtle, president and CEO of Gemeinhardt. "This really is great news for Gemeinhardt." gemeinhardt.com



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Inside**SHOWS**

2011 Summer NAMM attracted 10,898 total registrants, a 13-percent dip from last year's show.

- > Attendance at NAMM University Breakfast Sessions rose 27 percent compared to last year.
- > The public day on Saturday drew 1,133 showgoers.

SHOWS



2011 SUMMER NAMM | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

MID-YEAR RECHARGE

2011 Summer NAMM, held July 21-23 at the Nashville Convention Center, revealed a show in transition.

Although Summer NAMM's still a trade fair, it's become more a mid-year industry meeting. It's a forum where the who's who of music product retail gather to learn and exchange ideas while ramping up for the critical fourth quarter. And it looks to be moving further in that direction.

Summer NAMM redefines itself as a mid-year industry meeting

The numbers alone demonstrated this shift. Convention attendance took a hit, down 13 percent at 10,898 total registrants,

but NAMM University had never been stronger. At show close, NAMM reported a 27-percent spike in attendance at NAMM U breakfast sessions, the daily keynote seminars.

The inaugural Top 100 Best Dealer Awards also brought new energy to the show's second night, filling the Renaissance Nashville Hotel ballroom with eager retailers. Senseney Music of Wichita, Kan., won the Dealer

of the Year Award, which company head Lori Supinie called "the ultimate honor." And Saturday's public day also saw an

1. Ace Products Group's Jesse Grossmann (left) and Dave Andrus; 2. Bernie Williams entertains showgoers before the "Best In Show" session; 3. From left: Cordoba's Amilcar Dohm-Melendez, Jay Morrissey and Dave Hager; 4. Country-rock songstress Elizabeth Cook performs at the opening of D'Addario's new Nashville artist relations office; 5. Electro-Harmonix's Mike Matthews gets decked out in Indian garb to show off the new Ravish Sitar pedal; 6. From left: NAMM's Joe Lamond, Levy's Leathers' Harvey Levy and Schmitt Music's Tom Schmitt, who finished his term as NAMM chairman at the show; 7. Outgoing NAMM YP President Zach Frederick presents an award for best bull riding at the Summer Rodeo Event; 8. Martin's Chris Martin

attendance increase, with 1,133 reported showgoers.

More so than the winter NAMM show, Summer NAMM also gives small retailers the opportunity to hobnob with high-level supply executives. Yamaha Senior Vice President Rick Young was one of many cruising the show floor to make himself accessible to attendees.

"The show for Yamaha was very good," he said afterwards. "We properly sized the booth to show all departments that are germane to the summer show dealers that attend, and we did all the prep work to make sure that we had good traffic and spent quality time with all of our current dealers that came for their appointments."

NICHE MARKETS

The convention suggested that niche products are faring well in the marketplace. Cordoba's sales rose 50 percent year-to-date, according to Dave Hager, the company's national sales manager. He attributed the bump to Cordoba's specialized product: nylon-string guitars designed for steel-string players making a transition.

"We're diving into this area that we feel has been underrepresented as a whole with MI retailers," Hager said.

He added that ukuleles are still a growing category for his company. The rest of the show mirrored this trend. Martin showcased eight new models, and Ace Products Group unveiled the first line of RB Continental uke cases.

"We've been getting asked for them by a lot of our customers," said Dave Andrus, Ace's director of sales and product development.

But those were just a few trends seen at the show. To learn about the five biggest trends at Summer NAMM, read on ...



1. Yamaha's Armando Vega (left) and Rick Young; 2. Casio's Mike Martin; 3. From left: Two Old Hip-pies' Jeff Moore, Tom Bedell and Colin Besancon; 4. Retail Up's Gordon O'Hara; 5. From left: The Music Link's Misha Guiffre, Scott Thompson and Mark "Chris" Lekas; 6. Hal Leonard's Brandon Lorenz (left) and David Jahnke; 7. Brubaker's Kevin Brubaker (left) and Andrew Papicchio; 8. Markku Nikkila (left) and Neil Lilien, who were at Summer NAMM, in part, to represent Tonal Innovation Center (Tonic) — which explores alternative and sustainable musical instrument materials; 9. Fishman's Corey Congilio (left) and Chris DeMaria with the new Loudbox Artist; 10. From left: Samick's Tony De La Rosa, Glenn Derringer and Marshall Moody; 11. Souldier Straps' Jen Tabor; 12. Monster Music's Brian Reardon (left) and Contemporary Music Center's Menzie Pittman; 13. From left: Alfred Music Publishing's Carol Cuellar, Kathy Johnstone, Bryan Bradley, Antonio Ferranti and Michael Finkelstein; 14. Numark's Jeff Fortin

1. SMALL IS THE NEW BIG

Music retailers cruising the show floor found new opportunities in thinking small. This went double for large retailers.

School music giants Tom Schmitt of Schmitt Music and Mark Goff of Paige's Music both praised the performance of their pro shops — small boutiques within their larger retail operations. At his dealership, Goff has three: Encore Orchestral Strings, Chops Percussion and Indy Flute Shop. Schmitt has a saxophone shop and new trumpet boutique. And both said they see possibility in expanding the concept.

Then, less than a week after Summer NAMM, Daddy's Junky Music announced a downsizing of its retail operations. The Manchester, N.H.-based combo powerhouse reported it will shrink from 19 to 12 stores. As Daddy's founder and CEO Fred Bramante commented, "Daddy's was most successful when we had 12 retail locations within reasonable proximity to our headquarters and warehouse." He added that an expanded online presence and fewer stores offers "the appropriate format" to "position Daddy's for success in the future."



Schmitt Music's saxophone pro shop

Middle C Music's Myrna Sislen discusses the AXL USA series guitar, which is assembled in the United States



2. U.S. ASSEMBLY

A new term wove its way into industry parlance at Summer NAMM: assembled in the U.S.A. And in post-recession America, where consumers want U.S. quality but are weary of parting with big bucks for U.S.-made, the concept might just stick.

For example, "Best In Show" panelist Myrna Sislen of Middle C Music chose AXL USA series electric guitars as one of her winners. "This guitar is an American-assembled Stratocaster," she said. "The body and the neck are imported. The fretting and the electronics are done in California. My guys love this guitar."

The instruments are distributed by The Music Link and retail for \$399.

3. WOMEN RULE

On July 22, NAMM's inaugural Dealer of the Year award went to Senseney Music, a school music retailer fronted by Lori Supinie. On the surface, it looked to be little more than a respected dealer getting its due. But that same weekend, West Music President Robin Walenta became the first woman ever elected to NAMM's executive committee. Then, the "Best In Show" panel featured not one but two female judges. As one of those judges, Myrna Sislen of Middle C Music, commented, "The glass ceiling has been shattered."

In no uncertain terms, women have ascended to new levels of leadership in the music product industry — a traditionally male-dominated group. Earlier this year, Mississippi Music's Rosi Johnson also took the helm of the National Association of School Music Dealers. Beacock Music's Gayle Beacock has been running the Retail Print Music Dealers Association since last year. Call it a sign of things to come?



Willis Music's Kevin Cranley and Senseney Music's Lori Supinie

4. BOUTIQUE ACCESSORIES

Pickboy's rosewood picks, which sell for \$5–\$6 apiece, have become a best-seller at Tobias Music in Downers Grove, Ill. At Summer NAMM, store co-owner Paul Tobias explained that he bought a batch of the picks and put them on display the morning they arrived. "The first guy in ended up buying 10 of the rosewood picks," he said.

"We have found that putting them right at the checkout counter seems to help. Customers are always going through the bin and pulling out four to five picks."

He added that paying "\$5–\$10 for some cool picks doesn't seem to be much of a problem for our customers."

Marc Harris of distributor Harris Musical Products also reported Timber-Tones, picks that sell for \$5 apiece, as his best-selling product so far this year. The exotic wood picks, according to Harris, appeal to cash-strapped customers who are putting off a big purchase.

"They want to go to their music stores and find something cool," he said. "Now, for five bucks — even though that's a lot for a pick — they've got something exotic."



Harris Musical Products' Marc Harris

5. PROMOTE OR DIE

As with retail, success at Summer NAMM went to those who made noise. Exhibitors beaming from high traffic and orders written spent the week before the convention sending out mailers, blasting e-mails and picking up the phone.

St. Louis Music (SLM) sent out roughly 500 postcards prior to the show. They promised a free Stage Gear microphone, valued at \$42, to dealers who stopped by the SLM booth. By the end of the first day, SLM CEO Mark Ragin was exhausted but overjoyed.

"When the show opened at 10:00, we literally had a line about seven, eight deep of people who came here first," he said. "We've had people continually coming back. And, of course, we show them other products [than the microphone]."

"We haven't broken for lunch yet. No one's left for lunch."

The theme rang loud and clear during the opening NAMM University session, "The NAMM Retail Summit." Panelist Chris White of White House of Music suggested all retailers create programs to drive traffic into their stores. (He has a booming music lessons program that brings customers in each week.) Or, as fellow panelist Gordy Wilcher of Owensboro Music put it, "Don't stand behind the counter!"



From left: St. Louis Music's Chris Meikle, Mark Ragin and Stan Morgan

NAMM[®] University **BEST** IN **SHOW**

The brightest new products at Summer NAMM were presented during the “Best In Show” panel discussion, held at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel on July 23 — the last morning of the show. Six music retail experts shopped the NAMM show floor to find the top gear in four categories and presented their findings in front of more than 350 NAMM attendees.



Tim Pratt
Dietze Music
Omaha, Neb.

Something Small:

Pick Punch LLC

Pick Punch

It's a fun product. You'll have all kinds of kids [as customers] — I guarantee it.

Planet Waves

NS Mini Headstock Tuner

This is so small. You can put this on the back of your guitar. It swivels all the way around. You can actually clamp it to the headstock and hide it.

Gotta Stock It:

Hal Leonard

The Real Worship Book series

This book has all kinds of fresh stuff in it. It's not just old standards. The changes are good. It's fully licensed. We've done well with all the other Real Books. Retail is \$29.99.



Companies To Watch:

Gold Tone

Gold Tone has banjos of all kinds, including a banjo bass, 10-strings, banjo ukes and a banjo guitar. They are making a buzz, and they are really something to keep your eyes on.

Best In Show:

Casio

CTK 7000 & WK7500 keyboards

I was absolutely blown away by these keyboards. I can't wait to get them in the store.



Liz Reisman
Creative Music Center
Monroe, Conn.

Something Small:

Pic Stik

Pic Stik Pick Holder

It's a plastic gizmo that clips right onto a guitar strap. It has an adhesive, so it doesn't slip down. It's \$6.95. And they all come with picks.

Gotta Stock It:

Connolly Music

K&M Guardian 3 & 5 guitar stands

This is about 4 pounds. It folds up. It's padded. It has nice rubber and is protective. I can also use it in the store as a display item.

Harris Musical Instruments

Celebrity In-Ear Buds

I have a lot of students who come in and are looking for something they can purchase quickly without mom and dad's approval. These come in Pink Floyd, Kiss, Elvis and Sex Pistols. It's a great blister pack, and the MSRP is \$15.

Companies To Watch:

Maple Leaf Strings

I absolutely love these cases. Their cello cases come in unique, traditional colors. If you show an African safari case in your store, people are going to be like, “What else is here?” They might take a unique buyer, but they are going to liven up the store.

Best In Show:

Kala

S-U-B Series U-Bass

The S-U-B Series U-Bass comes in sunburst and black, and it fits in the [airplane] overhead compartment. Every bass player should have one.



Brad Boynton
Rhythm Traders
Portland, Ore.

Something Small:

**Score Marketing
Drum Stackerz**

It's basically a display method for all of you who don't have space on the showroom floor. It's a way of stacking kits. You get a whole set. They have a list price of \$28.80, and it'll pay for itself the first time you don't have to discount a drum set [because it got damaged when stacked].

Gotta Stock It:

**Hal Leonard
Rudimental Jazz by Joe Morello**

It's a classic. It was originally published in 1967. Joe passed away earlier this year and has been on a lot of magazine covers recently.

Companies To Watch:

Gon Bops

They launched the Mariano series, and they are fundamentally different from the rest of the pack. They have some new artists this year. This company is going to be around for a while and definitely one to watch.



Best In Show:

**Yamaha
DTX500 series electronic drums**

I chose the DTX500 series because they have a lot of the features that high-level drum sets have. These drums are great for recreational drummers. The series has 427 voices, 50 preset drum sets and over 40 songs to play with.



Myrna Sislen
Middle C Music
Washington, D.C.

Something Small:

**Corporate Printing
Ron Centola's Quintessential
Guitar Chord Pickin'Tionary**

This is very, very, very, very small. The binding on this is really good.

Gotta Stock It:

**The Music Link
AXL USA series electric guitars**

I like companies that don't have minimums. I like companies that have good margins. This guitar is an American-assembled Stratocaster. The body and the neck are imported. The fretting and the electronics are done in California.

Companies To Watch:

Goldfish Guitars

Younger and younger children are being brought in to play bass and guitar. There aren't good instruments for these kids. The Bassfish is a nice bass.

Best In Show:

**Hal Leonard
Taylor Swift music books**

My choice is the print genre. Print is the one thing where our margins are really good. I chose the Taylor Swift series of books because I can't keep these in my store.

**Hal Leonard
Rhythms Of The Game
by Bernie Williams, Dave
Gluck & Bob Thompson**

This book will help parents and students understand that if athletes take music lessons in addition to sports they are going to be better performers in both areas.



Chris Basile
South Jersey Music
Sewell, N.J.



Something Small:

**PreSonus
AudioBox 22VSL**

It takes all the great features of the StudioLive series mixers and puts them into an interface box that is USB 2.0.

Gotta Stock It:

**Galaxy Audio
AS-900 wireless in-ear
monitor system**

Galaxy Audio's another great company that stands behind independent music retailers.

Companies To Watch:

Spector

The MSRP starts around \$599, and they are beautiful, nice quality basses for that price point.

Best In Show:

**Bedell Guitars
The Heritage series
acoustic guitar line**

All of the Bedell guitars are quality-controlled in Oregon, and they are good, solid spruce guitars.

**Pro-Active Websites
iBuy Business Commerce Platform**

With iBuy, if store owners remember at night after dinner that they forgot to order, they can jump online at any time, put everything in one shopping cart, hit send and purchase everything from our participating vendors at once.



Pete Gamber
Alta Loma Music
Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.

Something Small:

**Hal Leonard
Glee Vocal Method
& Songbook**

In my store, books are a great product right now and are still moving well.

Hudson Music

**The Evolution Of
Jazz Drumming**

Most of my drum students are not jazz freaks, but they're interested in anything that's going to be exciting.

Gotta Stock It:

**Samick
Greg Bennett G series
acoustic guitar line**

I'm not a Samick dealer, but this may change my mind.

**Knowledge Of Music
Chromatic Music Tones
Playing Cards**

Music theory sucks. But these are playing cards. This isn't work.

Companies To Watch:

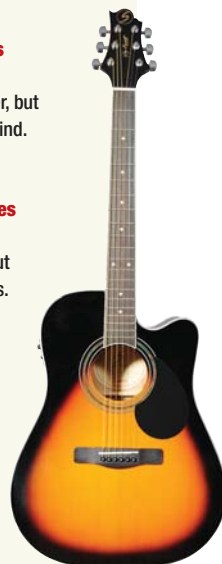
Bedell Guitars

This is an awesome guitar line. The instruments are beautifully made.

Best In Show:

**Stagg
Acoustic Guitar Packs**

The packs feature nylon and steel-strings and come in half, three-quarter and full sizes.



THOROUGHBREDS



IronHorse Head shown with DHX212 Cabinet

DarkHorse Head shown with DHK12 Cabinet

IRONHORSE

- 40-Watt All Tube Compact Head
- Operates in Fixed Bias or Cathode Bias Mode
- Simple Gain, Bass, Treble, Master Controls
- Three Stage Clean/Pure/Solo Mode Switch
- Hand Selected 12AU7 (x 1), 12AX7 (x2) and EL34 (x2) Tubes
- Series Effects Loop
- Selectable 4 & 8 ohm Outputs for Varying Cabinet Configurations
- Accepts Optional Two Button foot switch
- All Metal Chassis
- Made in Canada

DARKHORSE

- 15-Watt All Tube Lunch-Box Head
- Operates in full Power (6V6) Mode or Low Power 2-watt (12AU7) Mode
- Simple Gain, Bass, Treble & Master Volume Control Set
- Brit / USA / Pure Switch for the Tone Stack
- Uses Hand Selected 12AX7 (x2), 6V6 (x2), and 12AU7 (x1) tubes
- Versatile Speaker Outputs
(allows Dark Horse Head to drive Varying Cabinet Configurations)
- All Metal Chassis
- Made in Canada



QUARTERHORSE

- 25-Watt Two-Channel Guitar Amp in a Compact Stompbox Format
- On-Board Digital Effects (Tape Echo, Tremolo & Reverb)
- Standard 1/4-Inch Speaker Output Jack Direct Connects to Cabinet
- 1/8-Inch TRS Headphone Jack with Speaker Simulation (*Doubles as Line Out*)
- Rugged Die Cast Enclosure
- Made In Canada

WARNING! This is NOT a Stompbox - It's a 25-Watt Microamp!

Traynor

Visit www.traynoramps.com for more information on the DarkHorse or any Traynor product.
Distributed in North America by Yorkville Sound

IDEAS

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INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

GUEST SERVICE

The word “service” is so cliché. We use it in our ad copy, brag about it on the sales floor, leverage it as the ultimate weapon in a competitive market. We say, “Sure, you can get a better price elsewhere, but with us, you get service.”

The problem is, service doesn’t mean the same thing to everyone. Good advice from sales staff? Doesn’t mean what it did before Google. In stock? Overnight and free shipping have clipped the wings off this advantage. Instead, I encourage fellow retailers to consider the idea of the buying experience. Face it: Pricing can be an even match, but what brings customers back is how they *feel* during the sales episode.

If your prices are reasonably competitive, at best you can expect a customer won’t rule you out for a revisit. If the incident was pleasant, chances are even better for a future sale. In today’s retail, price and speed are commonplace, but *enjoying* the sales transaction is much less frequent.

THE CRUISE SHIP MODEL

In June, my wife and I had the pleasure of celebrating 25 years



Focus less on the idea of service, more on the buying experience

of marriage with a Mediterranean vacation on Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL). The trip was a seven-day lesson in the customer experience, from the other side of the counter.

What left the biggest impression was the conspicuous friendliness of the entire crew. Everyone, from the deckhands

to the captains, had marching orders to say “hello.” No matter the station, everyone was willing and wired to acknowledge, greet and make guests feel as if they were part of something significant. It was continuous but not canned. Unimpeachably sincere. The way cruise life ought to be.

I contacted Amanda Graham, NCL’s public relations manager, about this policy of friendliness.

“Being friendly, personable and guest-service-oriented is one of the requirements to work for Norwegian, regardless of the position,” she said. “Norwegian looks for individuals who are not only experienced and professional in their field but also have a passion for providing excellent service and enjoy being around our guests and making them happy. Guest-service training is a huge part of what our on-board training specialists do. We recently launched a fleet-wide program where over 11,000 people on-board were trained in our guest service standards and culture.

“Everyone in the Norwegian Cruise Line team, whether it’s from deck, engine or hotel, has signed a guest-service promise after going to our guest-service

training, where they commit to providing exceptional service, take pride in their job and provide a memorable cruise vacation for all our guests.”

NCL’s secret appears to be in hiring and constantly training.

REAL FRIENDLINESS

It was obvious that it was an employee-wide, top-down phenomenon. It should be the same in our stores, too. If we make customers feel welcome, they’ll want to cruise our stores again soon, as well.

We all have varying levels of tolerance on the receiving end of friendliness. We don’t like it to be insincere or cloying. On the giving end, we have to understand “friendly” means being alert and sensitive, but in the retail interaction, it must also strip conventional conversational barriers. But too often, we approach the sales floor as combat — a war for the customer’s money.

Instead of treating the sales floor as a battleship, let’s make it a cruise ship. **MI**

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

STREETWISE SELLING | BY KENNY SMITH

Qualifying Comes First

The Internet has empowered customers to prequalify themselves. They find out about products through search engines, videos, e-tailers and reviews, and they chat about gear on forums and Facebook. But as salespeople, we need to qualify every customer regardless of his or her online self-diagnosis. Even when customers ask for products by name, they need to be requalified. Here's how.



'As salespeople, we need to qualify every customer regardless of his or her online self-diagnosis.'

1. Keep it timely. Qualifying is an art that starts the moment you engage customers. And one of the keys to qualifying is to understand what the customer envisions being able to accomplish with the purchase. If you focus on finding out goals and desires first, you'll be headed in the right direction.

2. Narrow it down. Trying to demo every item in stock isn't qualifying. Customers will already be distracted by the sheer number of shiny toys in your store. The more products you show, the more confused customers become. Correctly qualifying in the beginning of a deal will help you thin the herd of products down to a few items.

3. Pinpoint the product. Qualifying involves asking questions to get customers talking about what they want and ultimately getting them to a product they'll buy. If you have a choice of items, steer customers toward the most profitable one.

4. Stay on target. There are millions of qualifying questions. The order in which you ask them is paramount. When qualifying, I'm looking for basic answers in order of importance. I may choose to slip in a personal comment or question to keep the conversation easy, but in my mind, I stay on target.

Category. What do they like? What have they been looking at so far that's caught their attention? If they have no idea, ask what kind of music they listen to.

Price. Which products fit their budget? Talking about money early on can be scary, so another way to find out is to use a bracketing technique. For example, "We have a complete range of acoustic guitars, from high-end customs to an excellent selection of economy models. Where would you like to start looking?"

Location. Are they local? This may not seem important, but

it is. Tourists can be flakes or manna from heaven, so be careful. Locals run the gambit and expect the red carpet.

Time frame. How soon do they want this? Many salespeople neglect to find this out early on and start discounting too early in a deal. If the customer's buying today, save discounting for the close, when you'll need it most.

Decision maker. Who's going to make the decision to buy? If it's more than one person, include them all in the conversation, especially if there's an uncle who's an expert on the subject.

5. Avoid pistol-whip qualifying. Don't fire off one question after another. Customers will feel as if they're being interrogated. My suggestion is to comment on the answer and give customers space to say more before asking another question. Once you get used to qualifying in a conversational way, you won't have to ask as many questions because customers will automatically fill in many of the blanks.

6. Pull a 180. If all else fails and customers don't like either of the first two items you've proposed, show the opposite, and see what they think. For example, if they're looking at the least-expensive item, show them the top of the line. Many times, this will get you on the right track. **MI**

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



EMD invites you to discover a world of instruments and accessories at the best prices.

In business we expect maximum choice. At EMD this is taken seriously. EMD offers the widest range of musical products under one roof, tailored for all ages, tastes and budgets. With a proven track record of high profitability for you, the Dealer, we pride ourselves on being your first port of call for all musical instruments and accessories. Our experienced and dedicated team are committed to providing fast, efficient, friendly service before and after the sale. Attractive deals, most favorable terms and utmost integrity are ubiquitous in all our transactions.

EMD. Experience the standard.



THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Converting Customers

My store, Alta Loma Music, recently participated in a national survey with roughly 200 other stores that offer music lessons. It yielded some interesting findings. One of the questions asked, “How did students first hear about your lessons program?”

According to the survey, our top area of discovery was through word-of-mouth, at about 36.2 percent, followed by existing customers for another product or service at 21.93 percent and Internet search at about 6.4 percent. That statistic surprised me. Our store pops up all over the place on Google, and we’re also on YouTube. We get lots of traffic on our Facebook pages, but only 6.4 percent have discovered us via the Internet?

What this told me is it’s a big mistake to overlook your existing customer base when promoting your music lessons program. These customers trust you for other products and services, so why not add music lessons into that mix?

For our store, this was the second-largest way students discovered our lessons program. But every dealership with lessons, even a dealer getting robust Internet search results, needs to focus on this area of promoting.

Every customer who walks into your store needs to hear your “music lessons program story.” Don’t assume existing customers even know you offer music lessons. And if they do know, don’t assume that they know much about the specifics of your music lessons. Your staff may assume that, but you shouldn’t.

To better market to these customers, consider these easy-to-implement tactics:

1. Set up a music lessons literature holder at each point-of-sale station. Have staff hand out the information, and have them tell customers about the program. Don’t stuff the info into bags. Hand it to customers. It’s important and valuable.

2. Put a brochure in every outgoing repair case or gig bag before a customer comes to pick up his instrument. When you open the case for the customer, tell him you’ve included some info on your music program.

3. Take advantage of band instrument rental nights. If

your rental info sheet has a blank side, put your music lessons information on it. Let everyone at the rental night know that you offer lessons for non-band instruments, too.

4. Market to back-to-school customers. You know the drill. When customers purchase back-to-school supplies for band and orchestra programs or guitar classes, let them know about your program.

5. Use the phone. Call your customers, and tell them about your lessons and events.

6. Use e-mail. If you’re having a music lessons event or you’ve recently hired a new voice teacher, for example, send out an e-mail letting customers know. Always link it to your store’s website and social media. Every e-mailer needs a music lesson blurb section.

7. Create a video of teachers demoing new product arrivals. Play the demo in-store, and use it to market the product and music lessons.

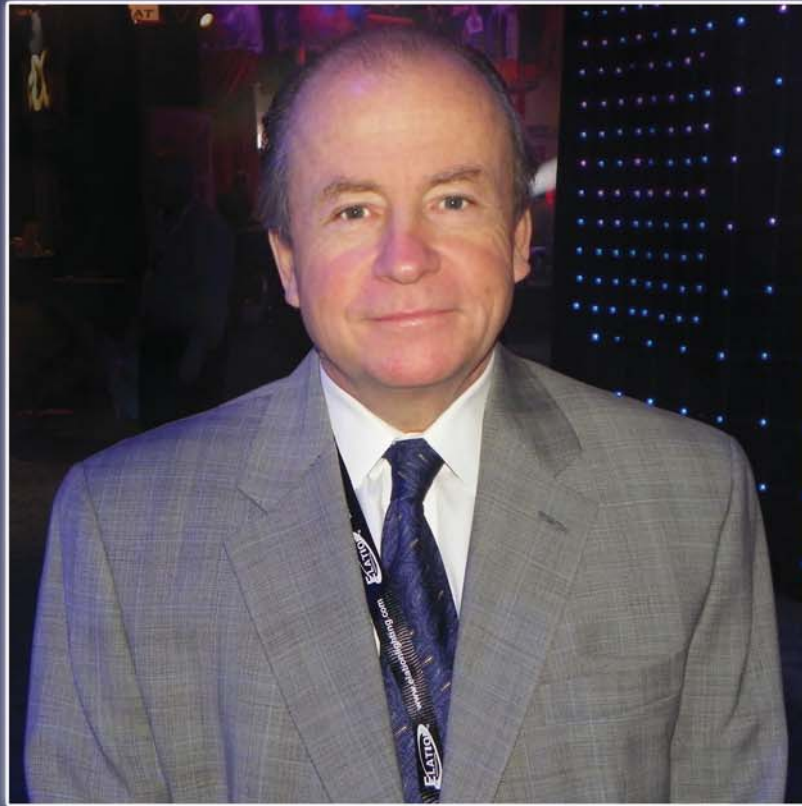
The sky’s the limit for promoting your music lessons program to existing customers. Just imagine what would happen if you raised that 21.93 percent to 30 percent? It would make a huge difference to your store and your program. **MI**

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



Seven easy ways to get more of your existing customers signed up for music lessons

Honoring The Life Of Michael Healy



1951 - 2011

He Looked For The Best In All Of Us
And Made Us All Better As A Result
His Talents Were Valued In Our Business
His Friendship Was Treasured In Our Lives



AMERICAN AUDIO



**ACCLAIM
LIGHTING**

THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

Digital Age Advertising

If you're like most business owners, you're closely monitoring every penny that goes out the door. Where I used to look at my P&L statements twice a quarter, I now look at them a few times each month and keep vigil on where we can cut back.

That said, one area I've always kept in my line of fire is advertising expenditures. I do believe print advertising builds brands and imprints a name and logo in consumers' minds, but I can't justify spending advertising dollars when I have no way of really tracking results. And I recently decided to do a little nonscientific research to back up my assumption that most people find my shops online.



MY FAIRLY UNSCIENTIFIC STUDY

Ninety percent of my ads promote my music lesson programs, so I wanted to track how new students were finding us. I began by revamping our student registration forms. In the area where we ask how customers found us, I listed all the magazines and papers where we'd run an ad for at least six months and asked customers to circle one. I even put in a few publications we didn't advertise in to see if people would circle whatever appeared at the top of the list.

At the bottom, I added "Walk-in," "Friend Referral," "Google Ads," "Non-Google Internet Search" and "Found Your Website Through Google." I also included "Have you visited our Facebook or YouTube pages?" I instructed staff to be vigilant in having customers complete this section of the form.

MY FAIRLY UNSCIENTIFIC RESULTS

After reviewing registrations from the past six months, my research indicated 53 percent of new students said they visited our website after finding us on Google. Eight percent said they found us by clicking on our Google

AdWords, and 4 percent said they were walk-ins. Only 4 percent circled "Non-Google Internet Search."

A whopping 24 percent said they were referred by a friend, while a mere 4 percent circled nothing and said they couldn't remember how they found us. Three percent wrote something illegible. No one indicated they'd been to our Facebook or YouTube

pages, even though several new students had "Liked" us on Facebook. And surprisingly, no one indicated seeing our print ads.

MY FAIRLY UNSCIENTIFIC CONCLUSION

People still read magazines, newspapers and local publications, even in the digital age. I see parents sitting in my waiting rooms reading papers and magazines and looking at ads, just as I look at ads in magazines and papers when I'm in waiting rooms.

With that in mind, I haven't cut our print ads, but I've taken a longer-term view of how we can make print media work in conjunction with online content. (For instance, I add QR codes to print ads that take people to our website and YouTube videos.) And I've redirected revenue from print ads I cut into more Google and Facebook ads.

Print ads are now teasers. You don't sell the product or service but use the ad to drive traffic to your website, where you close the sale with videos and images of the product.

Finally, I think it's safe to say my research provided one solid detail: Our online marketplace is the arena where you develop a two-way relationship with your customer, something harder to do with one-dimensional print ads. **MI**

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

A new strategy for integrating print and digital ads, based on my 'unscientific' research



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BASEMENT MIX | GARAGE MIX | GIG MIX | CLUB MIX | ARENA MIX

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Promoting a Company

The title of this article is purposely misleading. The people who most need to read this would skip right over it if the title had anything to do with the Internet. But now that you've started reading, I'm here to tell you that the Internet is critically important to the success of your company — and maybe even to your survival in years to come.

You've built a beautiful store with fabulous merchandising.

You've trained your associates well, and you have amazing systems to make your business hum. You have a great teaching staff and top-notch service department. But you believe that unlocking your front door in the morning is a terrible waste of time and a dangerous practice that might invite bargain-hunters or dishonest people. Of course, anyone serious about doing business with you will find a way, regardless of the deadbolt on your front door.

Ignoring the Internet, or doing it poorly, is like hanging a great big chain and padlock over your door.

If I had to do it over again, the Internet would have been the centerpiece of my company's sales and marketing efforts. I was one of those guys in the early days of the technology who said, "I just want an informational page because e-commerce is a race to

zero." Later, when I eventually added inventory to my site, I still thought online transactions were dangerous and figured people would call me if they wanted to buy. Wrong, wrong, wrong! And now that I've confessed my sins, I feel comfortable sharing some of the incredible miscues I've seen in our industry.

WEBSITE MISHAPS

When I visit a new city for my first round of sales calls, I do much of my research online. It boggles my mind that some people still have no Web presence whatsoever. News

flash: Most customers no longer use the *Yellow Pages*. They research their buying decisions online. And if you're not there taking control of your image, there are review sites, forums and third-party directories that will become your default image. Leaving your online personality to chance is like letting a *Yellow Pages* rep write your ad.

Of course, being there isn't enough. You have to do it well.

I've seen some unbelievable blunders on websites. When I make appointments to see dealers, I've learned to confirm their addresses. It only took going to a store once and finding a cigar shop to realize that some dealers have wrong addresses — or sometimes no addresses — on their websites. Sometimes, information is badly out of date. One dealer advertised a big Christmas sale. Unfortunately, I was reading the website in June. I can only wonder what year's sale it was. Then there are misspellings and poor grammar. Remember, this impression you're making speaks volumes about you. If you're careless online, will customers want to leave their prized instruments with you for repair?

There's more. I've seen countless empty inventory pages. I've seen links that go nowhere. I've actually seen wrong phone numbers and wrong store hours. But the worst had to be the store with a staff page featuring an owner who'd died several years ago.

Creating a great Web presence isn't a trivial job, and it needs to be part of regular business activities. I get it: For some, it's new and scary. But not taking the time to learn your way around the Internet is like not unlocking your front door each morning. **MI**

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



'Leaving your online personality to chance is like letting a *Yellow Pages* rep write your ad.'

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Rick Hamilton



Rick Hamilton
opened Drums
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as a small
drum-only
dealer. Twenty-
six years later,
branching
outside of
niche retail
into education
and new
markets has
been the secret
to its stability

DIVERSIFICATION



BY KATIE KAILUS
PHOTOS BY SHANE EAST

When Drums Etc. opened in 1985, there were roughly seven music stores located around the Lancaster, Pa.-based shop. Twenty-six years later, Drums Etc.'s one of two indie shops left, along with a Guitar Center. But owner Rick Hamilton's not sweating. He's found a recipe for stability in an uncertain market: diversification. And he's banking on it carrying him through another 26 years.

"The whole success of Drums Etc. has been diversification," said Hamilton, whose operation started out as a 900-square-foot drum-only store. "Our diversification with the lessons program and selling other kinds of instruments, I believe, has helped us a lot."

**ABE LABORIEL JR.****SIGNATURE SERIES SAL**

Long and thick giving Abe the power he needs. Gradual taper delivers great rebound and feel.

**STANTON MOORE****SIGNATURE SERIES SSM**

A slightly elongated tear drop tip that creates a great cymbal sound. Perfect for Stanton's infectious grooves.

Do you have the right stick
in **YOUR** hands?

**JOEY HEREDIA****SIGNATURE SERIES SJH**

Unique tip shape produces a range of sound depending on the angle from which it is played. Smooth, blended taper for Joey's high powered and super soft dynamics.

VIC FIRTH **VF**
LEADING THE WORLD
ONE PAIR AT A TIME

{DRUMSETC.}

Struggling in the beginning, Hamilton gigged at night to help defray the expenses of owning a new store.

"We were just trying to make it happen," he said. "I started the whole thing just being an interested player, just wanting to sell musical instruments."

At the time, independent drum manufacturers were setting the market on fire with a slew of innovative percussion products, according to Hamilton.

"Huge drum kits were in style — massive racks, clamps — and every drummer bought more than they knew what to do with," he said. "They spent thousands on their drum kits, and when they were finished, some of them would sell it all for a couple hundred bucks and start over creating and spending thousands more. It was a fun time for them and a fun time to grow a drum shop."

**'The whole
success of
Drums Etc.
has been
diversification.'**

By the 1990s, Drums Etc. had doubled its size, moving into a 1,800-square-foot space, which included two teaching studios. The lessons program began to pick up, and Hamilton decided to delve into selling a few guitars. And while business remained strong for Drums Etc. in the '90s, it wasn't until the store moved to its third — and current — two-floor, 6,000-square-foot location in 2000 that Hamilton saw a change.

"What I really wanted to do with this move is cultivate our teaching program," Hamilton

said. "I saw that a large part of our success was that we could breed new musicians and new customers and make [Drums Etc.] an exciting place to be."

THE POWER OF MORE

Hamilton added guitar and bass lessons to Drums Etc.'s studio offerings in 2003 and began selling more guitars, basses, amps, pedals and P.A. systems. The mallet and print music room, as well as the performance hall, weren't generating cash sales, so Hamilton converted them into a new guitar department. Suddenly, guitar lessons took off. These days, more than a quarter of the students in the program take guitar.

"Even at slow times, having the students walking through every week gave our store a good vibe," he said.

Hamilton said Drums Etc.'s guitar department has since performed "quite well," complementing the store's image and boosting the bottom line.

"It seems that given the popularity of the guitar, bass and drums that it is logical to incorporate them all together in one music store," he said. "When we opened the new guitar department, we offered guitar lessons immediately, knowing one supports the other. We had conveniently converted some dead office space connected to the guitar room into teaching studios.

"However, if I had not had those spaces, I would have built at least one or two small teaching studios within the guitar showroom space. I believe that the minimum floor space needed for teaching studios is well worth it."

Hamilton has focused, even obsessed, on the vibe of the teaching studios, so the area's comfortable for students and parents alike.

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Peter Erskine's hands and his drums.
Except **VIC STICKS.**

"The stick is everything."

Peter Erskine



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VIC FIRTH 
LEADING THE WORLD
ONE PAIR AT A TIME

* Drums Etc. Walk Through



+ STOREFRONT

Drums Etc.'s building, which previously housed an appliance retailer, came with a shipping dock and warehouse. The store is situated in the center of a residential area on the edge of Lancaster, Pa. — close to schools and along a main street that leads into town. A large billboard on the back of the store captures the attention of people driving into the city.



+ SHOWROOM

The company's showroom is designed to create excitement for customers' eyes and ears. Multiple textures, shapes and colors are used to make merchandising pop. (Notice the curved wooden stage and maroon ceiling, pictured above.) Displays get changed on a regular basis, and Rick Hamilton makes sure that merchandise is always kept clean and organized.



+ MUSIC LESSON STUDIOS

Hamilton created the teaching studios and waiting area from a storage space on the second floor. Each studio holds two complete drum kits; audio equipment; a large mirror, so students can see themselves playing; separate snare drums; and various hand drums and percussion. Each room also features an "on air" light on the outside for effect and a large red star on the door.

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+ BAND REHEARSAL ROOM

The band practice room was designed so musicians could practice in a clean, safe environment. Gear is provided, so band members can walk in, plug in and play. This also allows for easy teardown and setup. A large viewing window lets customers watch bands rehearse. Hamilton said customers are fascinated to see live rehearsals while shopping in the consignment room.

"I knew that [parents] were the ones who had to bring the kids to the lessons every week and sit there for a half-hour," he said. "I know how busy I am, and that can be daunting."

The waiting area now contains multiple tables and chairs for working or reading in privacy. It also has a television and video games, along with a foosball table and a spot for Drums Etc.'s staff to sell snacks.

The store's second floor houses the large waiting area, as well as four non-soundproofed drum lesson studios. Hamilton believes that live drumming adds to the ambience of the store.

"A lot of store owners say their stores need soundproofing," he said. "But for us, we want customers to know they are in the right place, and we want them to hear the players upstairs. It's part of the experience. We have a lot of visual things going on — a lot of video and sound at a reasonable level. And then we have the drums practicing in the background."

The studios are outfitted with different brands of drums and accessories, so customers and students can demo gear from the showroom.

"Each studio is finished nicely and provides a good first impression, so students feel they are in a very special place," Hamilton said.

He even lets students practice for free in any of the lesson rooms while they're unoccupied.

"This is a nice perk for some students that have issues with playing drums at home," Hamilton said.

BRANCHING OUT

Diversifying the lessons program isn't the only place where Drums Etc. has branched out. The store also offers repairs and a consignment room. Hamilton has even rented out a corner of the parking lot to a barbecue chicken truck.

"Anywhere I can find a stream of income for our store, I take it," he said, laughing.

THE CURE FOR THE COMMON SOUND

Who do the pros call for sound diagnosis?
 Ross Garfield, AKA The Drum Doctor.
 Drums are his passion and getting the most out of any kit is his speciality. You might call him, "Doctor to the Stars."
 Tell him you're looking for that classic aged Turkish cymbal sound and his prescription just might be Bosphorus, for the sound that Ross perfectly describes as "Dark and Pretty."
 And Ross should know... He's a doctor.

www.bosphoruscymbals.com

Bosphorus
Play One & Believe

{DRUMSETC.}

Taking on school percussion rentals has also proved profitable for the combo dealer. “Most of the items we end up renting are high-priced specialty concert instruments that we intended to sell but could not move,” Hamilton said. “There are not a lot of competitors that have four- or five-octave marimbas to rent, so we can charge what we need.

“The rental income has certainly contributed to our bottom line during the slow economy, and one day, we will sell the instruments as preowned [merchandise].”

Hamilton targets schools in the area hoping to gain students as customers once they finish their school programs.

“We want those young percussionists to see what our store is about,” he said. “The percussion packs are not a big part of our income. They are more of a way to get the

worry about setup and teardown. Plus, if band members need new sets of strings or sticks, they’re conveniently practicing in the middle of a combo store.

The room also doubles as a space for Drums Etc.’s rock camp. Open to all students in the private lesson program, the camp takes over three of the practice studios, and at the end of the weeklong program, the students put on a concert.

“We just held it two weeks ago, and it was very successful,” Hamilton said. “It always is. The kids have a blast with it.”

TOURS & TARGET MARKETING

While the rock camp, well, rocks, Drums Etc. doesn’t use it as a recruiting tool. According to Hamilton, word-of-mouth and the occasional print ad drive the majority of lesson sign-ups.

“We advertise our studios a few times a year,” he said. “Back to school is a great time to recruit students, as well as the holidays.

“I’ve tried everything when it comes to advertising. Lately, I’ve used a coupon clipper magazine, and that works well. I try to target the suburban area where I know most of our students are from.” Teacher photos and a list of rates on Drums Etc.’s website also help generate sign-ups.

While Drums Etc. is located on the edge of urban Lancaster, the majority of its business comes from the suburbs. Hamilton recently surveyed customers to find out where they were coming from and narrowed it down to two main communities. He then took out ads in those two communities’ local papers.

Target marketing aside, any customer expressing interest in Drums Etc.’s lessons program receives a tour of the store and teaching studio.

“When it’s time to take lessons, if they go to another place, they are probably not going to be given a tour,” Hamilton said. “We also hand out a paper that lists five main things you should know about taking music lessons. So basically, by the end of the tour, we make sure that if they are going to take guitar or drum lessons they are going to want to come here. Lesson traffic is attractive, and 200 students walking through each week is bound to affect our sales, too.” **MI**



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+ Drum Fills

BY HILARY BROWN

QUICK FIXES

* Simple ways to improve the sound and functionality of a drum setup without breaking the bank.

PEARL P902 DOUBLE BASS DRUM PEDAL

Even among the half-dozen double pedals displayed at Tim Kae's counter at Drum City-Guitarland in Wheat Ridge, Colo., the Pearl P902 has generated quite a buzz among the younger hard rock and metal set. Kae said he likes to emphasize the pedal's unique features — namely, the adjustable beater and footboard — as selling points. "It changes the feel of the pedal by moving it forward and back," Kae said of the footboard. "They're right in front of our stick display, so players can try them out all day."

TIGHTSCREWS Every time a customer comes into Mom's Music for drum kit maintenance, Max Maxwell asks if the heads are staying in tune. "If they say 'sometimes,' then they get TightScrews," Maxwell said. The nonloosening tension rods fit onto several different brands of drums and can be used with both wood and metal hoops. They also keep tuning consistent without changing the look of the kit.



CYMPAD These cellular foam pads are incrementally sized, letting drummers tailor the sound of their cymbals without sticky, messy tape or adhesives. They're ideal for drummers looking to isolate cymbal vibrations, increase articulation or play in quiet environments, and for retailers, they're highly merch-able. Donn Bennett of Donn Bennett Drum Studio in Bellevue, Wash., keeps a jar of Cympads at the counter. He's also created an "A/B display" for side-by-side comparison of kits, with and without Cympads.

KICKPORT By adding low-end and extra punchiness and clarity, KickPort has become a must-have for many drummers looking to color their sound. Donny Strofollino at Alto Music in Middletown, N.Y., places a KickPort in the resonant head of a bass drum to demo it for customers, while Donn Bennett tapes a "Kick Me!" sign to the front of his KickPort-equipped drum display. "Once a customer hears them, they're pretty much sold," Bennett said.



STUDENT-FRIENDLY



OFFWORLD PERCUSSION PRACTICE PAD

Steve Nelson of Dallas-based Lone Star Percussion attributed the success of the 14-inch Offworld Percussion Practice Pad to its growing popularity on YouTube and Facebook. "A masked man on YouTube was pushing it real hard, and everybody wanted to know what he was playing," Nelson said. It's garnered a following among drum corps and marching band students, but Nelson identified third-year players as the quintessential customer.

STANDOUT STICKS

Two different pairs of sticks, two different customers — same add-on potential.

LOS CABOS RED HICKORY DRUMSTICKS

Terry Green of Eastside Guitars in Greenville, S.C., has enlisted the help of his three instructors to promote Los Cabos' Red Hickory drumsticks. But they're not just a "student thing," Green said. "We have several pros switch over to them — people that come in and say they've been going through a lot of sticks."



VIC FIRTH CHOP-OUTS

Tim Kae has found a best-seller in Chop-Outs. With a rubber tip and elongated taper, the sticks work without a practice pad. He keeps a pair on the counter. "I show [customers] right on the desk the bounce that you get, and then I hand the sticks to them so that they can try them out." Kae also said that Chop-Outs are perfect add-ons for any level drummer.



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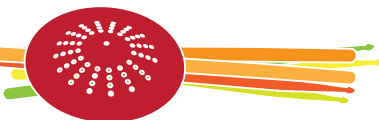
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ETYMOTIC ER-20 EAR-PLUGS

Ear protection is an easy sale for Houston-based Percussion Center's Mike Henry. "Everyone is aware of the damage loud sound has to your hearing," Henry said. "Recommend them to everyone!" Donn Bennett recommends the ER-20s because of their natural sound, discrete look and comfort. "They basically keep the volume down to a safe level without overmuffling the sound," he said. With their lower noise-reduction rate than standard earplugs, the ER-20s permit a fuller frequency rate, and their triple-flanged design provides a tight yet comfortable seal.

GATOR PROTECTOR CASES

Gator's Protector cases are incredibly durable options for school drum lines, and Jeff Huffman at Chops Percussion in Indianapolis said the company's customer service makes mass-ordering effortless and efficient. "They get the cases to us to be able to get out to the customer very quick," he added. "They get it done and give honest accurate answers, if there's any kind of wait at all." Gator's new Artist series Protector cases feature G-Flex foam and a synthetic wool interior for extra protection.

ROC-N-SOC DRUM THRONE

Mike Henry said Roc-N-Soc's ergonomic drum throne is an "easy sale if you recommend customers try them out." Retrofitable to most drum hardware, the Roc-N-Soc throne features a cutaway saddle for reduced leg fatigue and improved circulation. A variety of saddle seats and rockers also reduce stress on the lower back.

VIC FIRTH STEREO ISOLATION HEADPHONES

Donny Stroffolino displays Vic Firth's sound isolation headphones at the top of a multipurpose accessory wall that houses everything from cymbal felts to rod sticks. "There really is only one other isolation headphone that we carry in this department, and this one way outsells [it]," Stroffolino said. Along with reducing ambient outside noise, the Vic Firth Stereo Isolation Headphones reduce overall noise levels by 24 decibels, allowing for seamless recording and monitoring situations.

VATER DRINK HOLDER

"The Vater drink holder is made by a reputable company known to make high-quality drumsticks," said Wes Faulconer of Explorer's Percussion in Kansas City, Mo. "They are also made of metal alloy to take the punishment of going from gig to gig." The 3 1/2-inch-diameter opening is wide enough to hold most cups and sport bottles and attaches conveniently to cymbal stands via an adjustable knob.



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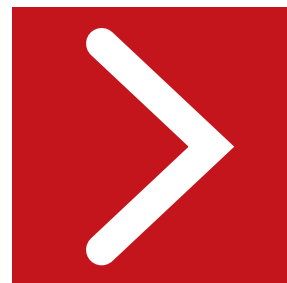
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GEAR



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Four Square

Alesis has unveiled the PercPad, a four-pad electronic percussion instrument. The PercPad features four velocity-sensitive electronic drum pads, an external kick input and high-quality internal sounds. Drummers can place the compact PercPad on a standard snare drum stand or mount it to other stands or racks using the Alesis module mount. MAP: \$99. alesis.com

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Gretsch's new Renown Purewood Wenge six-piece shell pack features seven-ply, 100-percent African wenge shells finished in a high-gloss lacquer. The wenge shells produce a deep, low and rich overtone with superior projection and clarity. The set also includes 30-degree bearing edges, chrome hardware, die-cast hoops and Evans USA heads. MSRP: \$4,155. gretschdrums.com



BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION | S-HOOP

Hoop Dreams

The new S-Hoops from Big Bang Distribution are designed to upgrade the sound and performance of any drum or drum set instantly. The hoops feature a low-angle extended flange that makes them stronger than rolled steel hoops for even, gap-free tuning yet lighter than die-cast hoops for a full, open tone. bigbangdist.com/shoop



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Latin Percussion has taken its Timbale Cowbell and finished it with Carlos Santana's new *Abraxas* album cover art. The graphics are embedded into the finish of the bell. The cowbell features a rich, full-bodied sound that has remained a prominent element of Santana's music for decades. The bell mounts to any 3/8-inch rod using LP's forged eye-bolt and wing nut clamping system. MSRP: \$65. latinpercussion.com



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SABIAN | THE MIX

In the Mix

Sabian has unveiled The Mix, a collection of mixed-series cymbal sets sonically matched in the Sabian Vault. The series includes the Basement Mix, which is designed for the serious beginner and features a mix of B8 alloy cymbals. Garage Mix is a first step into B20 cast cymbals. The Gig Mix is ideal for the weekend warrior or house-of-worship player and features a mix of B8 alloy and Xs20, while the Club Mix includes all B20 cast cymbals in brilliant finish. The Arena Mix is designed for the professional player and blends modern bright and modern dark sounds for the big stages. sabian.com



PEARL | TRIPLE SHAKER

Shake It Up

Pearl has launched the Triple Shaker. The 6-inch rectangular aluminum shaker provides three unique sounds: shake, click and swish. The combination of shot and rods within the shaker lets players rotate the body and isolate each sound or play them together, producing an additional sound. The Triple Shaker features a bright red metallic finish with black end caps. MSRP: \$44. pearldrum.com

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remo.com

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GEAR >

ES, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

LÂG GUITARS | TRAMONTANE

Uke Fluke

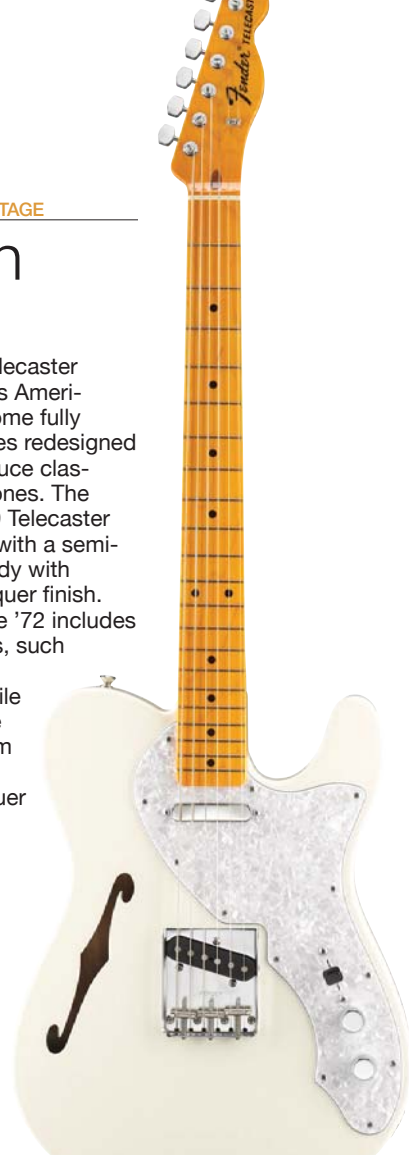
Lâg Guitars has expanded its Tramontane line to include three new ukulele series. Consistent features include die-cast machine heads with satin-black oval buttons, an arched-back design and a solid rosewood fingerboard with nickel frets. Each instrument features an inspired rosette design and comes with a padded gig bag. MSRP: \$194–\$444. lagguitars.com



FENDER | AMERICAN VINTAGE

American Beauty

Fender's newest Telecaster guitar models in its American Vintage series come fully equipped with features redesigned and revoiced to produce classic 1960s and '70s tones. The American Vintage '69 Telecaster Thinline is equipped with a semi-hollow mahogany body with F-hole and gloss lacquer finish. The American Vintage '72 includes period-correct details, such as a semi-hollow ash body with F-hole, while the American Vintage '72 Telecaster Custom includes a solid ash body with gloss lacquer finish. fender.com



REVEREND | THE MANTA RAY 390

Versatile Ax

Reverend's new Manta Ray 390 2011 Limited Edition is a warm semi-hollow guitar that's versatile enough to handle jazz, rock or blues. The three P-90s, violin flame maple top and Bigsby B70 create a big, responsive tone. The guitar features a korina body and locking tuners. reverendguitars.com





EAGLE MOUNTAIN STRAPS | EMLI1BK

Locked & Loaded

Eagle Mountain recently introduced the EMLI1BK Eagle Mountain Lock-It strap. It features a strap lock mechanism, Lock-It, built into each end piece. The Lock-It holds the strap tightly around the guitar's strap buttons, preventing slipping or falling. jhs.co.uk



LEVY'S LEATHERS | ZOMBIE GUITAR STRAPS

Night of the Living Dead

Levy's Leathers' new straps celebrate the zombie. Each 2-inch cotton guitar strap is printed with an original design and features a leather end piece that's shaped to complement the design. The straps are available in six different designs. levysleathers.com



VOX | AC15C2

Vox's Twin Combo

Vox has added the AC15C2 Twin combo amp to its AC Custom series of tube amplifiers. This enhanced version of the AC15C1 adds a second speaker. The AC15C2 Twin offers normal and top boost channels, tremolo, spring reverb, an effects loop, and footswitching capabilities. voxamps.com



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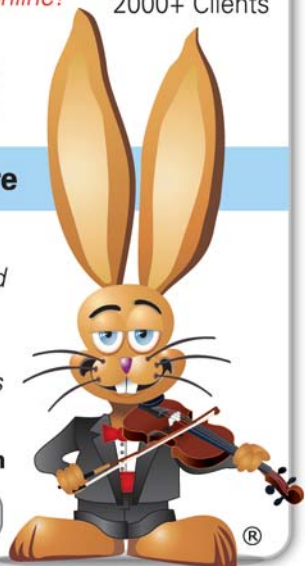
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GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

DIGITECH | WHAMMY DT

Double Whammy

DigiTech has released the Whammy DT pedal. The new unit adds a host of capabilities, including drop tuning, capo tuning and true bypass. The Whammy DT lets guitar and bass players instantly modify their tunings without having to change instruments or bother with awkward tuning adjustments for the next song. The Whammy DT can drop down or capo up seven half-steps or an entire octave. MSRP: \$449.95. harman.com



AMPTWEAKER | TIGHTROCK DISTORTION

Tight Distortion

Amptweaker has launched the TightRock Distortion pedal, bridging the gap between the company's TightMetal and TightDrive pedals. The TightRock's tone isn't quite as heavy as the TightMetal but features a higher gain range than the TightDrive. The pedal includes an EQ with PlexEQ setting and a gain boost switch to go from TightDrive levels of gain up to metal lead tones. The noise gate has been tweaked to allow for smoother solo use. Like the TightMetal, the pedal automatically adjusts its own threshold via the gain controls. amptweaker.com

SKB | WATERTIGHT CASE

PRS Gets Waterproofed

SKB has introduced the 3i-4214-PRS watertight injection-molded guitar case. It fits most PRS styles and is molded of polypropylene copolymer resin. The case features a water- and dust-proof submersible design that's resistant to corrosion and damage. MSRP: \$249.99.

skbcases.com





DUNLOP | MXR BASS COMPRESSOR

Super Bass

Dunlop's new MXR Bass Compressor features all the functions of a classic recording studio compressor in a compact size. Its controls include attack, release, ratio, and input and output, letting players fine-tune their sounds from subtle peak limiting to hard, squashed compression. Its transparency allows for full dynamic range to shine through until the signal reaches the compression threshold. jimdunlop.com



VINTAGE GUITARS | V6MRHDX

Love in the Air

Vintage Guitars has released The Vintage Summer Of Love V6MRHDX, a nod to an iconic guitar played by Jimi Hendrix. Its body and parts have been aged to simulate years of onstage use. jhs.co.uk/vintageconguitars.html

3RD POWER | AB CHANNEL SELECTOR

Best Foot Forward

3rd Power has unveiled its first foot pedal switching device, the AB Channel Selector. This rugged, hand-wired pedal gives guitarists a quick way to switch between two discrete output paths from one input source. MSRP: \$129. 3rdpower.com


A large advertisement for Brubaker Musical Instruments' "The Brute" bass guitar series. The background is black with the brand name "Brubaker" in a large, white, stylized font at the top. Below it, "THE BRUTE" is written in a bold, white, blocky font, with "BRUBAKER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS" in smaller text underneath. Three bass guitars are shown: a white one, a red one, and a black one. To the right, a quote from Kevin Brubaker, master luthier, is displayed: "We're obsessed with tone and quality and we know THE BRUTE will create the musical words you want to say." Below this is a small photo of Kevin Brubaker playing a bass guitar. At the bottom right, there is a "For Dealer Info" section with the phone number "call: 732-919-6200" and social media icons for Facebook and YouTube. The AP logo is in the bottom left corner.

Brubaker

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AP

Brubaker Brute Series is a Division of AP International. For More Information, Call 732-919-6200 or visit www.brubakerguitars.com



COMMUNITY | M-CLASS

Super-sensitive

Community has expanded its M-Class line with two new stage monitors, the MX8 and MX10. Handling 300 watts and 500 watts respectively, the 8-inch MX8 and 10-inch MX10 use Community's proprietary coaxial driver units. These monitors feature high sensitivity, permitting the use of smaller power amplifiers to obtain high output levels. Precision-engineered internal crossovers eliminate the need for biampification, further reducing the overall system cost. communitypro.com

GEMINI | RS-415USB

Gemini Gets Loud

Gemini has unveiled the RS-415USB, a loudspeaker that combines quality audio with a built-in USB and SD media player. This lets users select and play tracks directly from a memory card or USB storage device. The RS-415USB's player section features an SD card slot and a USB port, along with controls for play/pause, stop, repeat and track skip. MSRP: \$349. geminidj.com



GENELEC | 4000 SERIES

Monitor Mania

Genelec recently introduced the 4000 series, a range of two-way active loudspeakers. Both models in the 4000 series, the 4020 (pictured) and the 4030, are integrated with an enclosure design and Genelec's proprietary Minimum Diffraction Coaxial (MDC) mid/high driver technology. They're also fitted with Phoenix screw terminals, common with leading products in the A/V sector. This ensures an easy, secure connection and interference-free, professional-quality sound. genelecusa.com



EAW | MICROWEDGE SERIES

Feedback Suppressors

EAW has added to its MicroWedge series of stage monitors. The MicroWedge8 and MicroWedge10 are small-format continuations of the MW line. The monitors are ideal for applications that demand inherent feedback stability. eaw.com



PROPELLERHEAD | REASON 6

Reason 6 Debuts

Propellerhead Software has announced Reason 6, which combines all the features from Record. Reason version 6 adds audio recording and editing, along with Propellerhead's mixing console with modeled EQ and dynamics on every channel.

Propellerhead has also debuted Reason Essentials, the successor to Record. Reason Essentials contains a selection of customizable instruments and effects in a virtual rack. MSRP: Reason 6, \$449; Reason Essentials, \$299; Reason 6 Upgrade, \$169. propellerheads.se



GATOR CASES | ROLLING SPEAKER BAGS

Rockin' 'n' Rollin'

Gator Cases' new rolling speaker bags boast a tough nylon exterior with a dual-zipper design that lets large, bulky speakers be easily loaded. They feature a structured foam base, thick 10-mm side foam, a pull-out handle and recessed wheels. New additions to the line include the larger GPA-715 for most 15-inch loudspeakers; the GPA-712-SM, designed for compact 12-inch loudspeakers; and the GPA-712-LG, designed for 12-inch speakers. gatorcases.com



TC-HELICON | VOICELIVE 2

Going to Extremes

TC-Helicon has released VoiceLive 2 Extreme Edition, an enhanced microphone pre-amp. Offering twice the looping memory, VoiceLive 2 features greater transparency, new Extreme Edition presets and a new appearance that includes an extruded aluminum chassis. The VoiceLive 2 Extreme Edition's on-board looper now records for twice the loop time compared to the original version. This lets singers build layers of vocal loops up to 30 seconds in stereo instantly. tc-helicon.com



ALTO PROFESSIONAL | ZEPHYR

Triple Attack

Alto Professional recently launched three new live sound mixers, including the Zephyr ZMX52, ZMX862 and ZMX122FX. The ZMX52 is a small-format live sound mixer featuring eight overall inputs and two-band EQ. The ZMX862 provides six channels and eight inputs with three-band EQ. The ZMX122FX is an eight-channel mixer with 12 total inputs and three-band EQ with two aux sends. MAP: ZMX52, \$49; ZMX862, \$69; ZMX122FX, \$119. altoproaudio.com



PRESONUS | AUDIOBOX

Out of the Box

PreSonus has debuted the AudioBox 22VSL, AudioBox 44VSL and AudioBox 1818VSL (pictured). All three AudioBox VSL-series interfaces offer high-end audio quality thanks to high-headroom, Class A XMAX pre-amps with 48-volt phantom power. The units also feature 24-bit, 96-kHz converters with 114 dB dynamic range and PreSonus' loud, clean and clear headphone output. All three models also provide MIDI I/O and zero-latency monitor mixing. presonus.com

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V-MODA | TRUE BLOOD LINE

Sookie's Choice

V-Moda has unveiled Revamp metal in-ear headphones. They're part of the V-Moda for True Blood line. The headphones feature active flex detachable sport earhooks for a secure fit and are compatible with audio devices with a 3.5-mm port. **{v-moda.com}**

ZOOM | H2N

Portable Prowess

Zoom's new H2n features five studio-quality microphones on-board. The portable recorder's design offers four recording modes: mid-side stereo, 90-degree X/Y stereo, and two-channel and four-channel surround sound. The recorder features a 1.8-inch backlit LCD display for clear monitoring and a built-in reference speaker that lets the user play back recordings on the spot. MSRP: \$199. **{zoom.co.jp}**



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PIANOS & KEYBOARDS



CASIO | KEYBOARDS

Casio's New Trio

Casio has released three new keyboards: the CTK-4200, LK-280 and WK-225. These models are ideal for musicians of any level who are looking to compose. They feature a five-song and six-track recorder, ideal for capturing original music. The keyboards deliver 600 built-in tones, including stereo grand piano tones. The 180 built-in rhythms provide a full range of accompaniment or individual drum patterns. MSRP: CTK-4200, \$249; LK-280 and WK-225, \$299. casio.com



ACE PRODUCTS | STEEL KEYBOARD STANDS

Cold Steel

Ace Products has introduced a series of single- and double x-braced steel keyboard stands, along with an add-on tier with a locking mechanism for integration with any Struktur keyboard stand. Available in black, gunmetal and white, these single- and double x-braced stands incorporate a locking height-adjustment clutch with the trigger located high at the top, giving the player quick and easy access. MSRP: single-braced stands, \$69.95; double-braced stands, \$89.95; keyboard tier, \$49.95. aceproducts.com



HAMMOND | SK-1

The Voice

Hammond-Suzuki USA has launched the SK-1. Weighing just 15 pounds, the instrument features a range of organ voices, along with a variety of wind, brass and synth voices available in the Extravoice division. A built-in USB-reading music player is also included. MAP: \$1,995. hammondorganco.com

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RS BERKELEY | FREEDOM
ADJUSTABLE CLARINET
BARREL

Freedom Rings

RS Berkeley has launched the Freedom Adjustable Clarinet Barrel. Manufactured in the United States, the mouthpiece is ideal for large- and medium-bore Bb clarinets. Made from anodized aluminum alloy, the Freedom Barrel adjusts from roughly 60–70 mm. Its mechanics let it remain stationary during adjustment, so players can tune in any situation. rsberkeley.com



YAMAHA | YPC-62R

Ride the Wave

Yamaha recently introduced the YPC-62R professional piccolo. The new wave-cut headjoint offers a gratifying response and wider dynamic range. A split-E mechanism has been added for fingering ease, and a ribbed key post construction adds strength, while maintaining accurate key action. The YPC-62R is ideal for any flutist who doubles on the piccolo. yamaha.com



ADAMS | VIBRAPHONE BAGS

All Packed Up

Adams Voyager Frame marimbas, vibraphones and xylophones have new custom case sets designed to protect all parts and simplify transportation.

The vibraphone bags are a new addition, while the marimba and xylophone bags have been updated. The Adams Soft Bag set features heavy-duty ballistic nylon shells, heavy-duty nylon handles, shoulder straps and integrated wheels.

pearldrum.com





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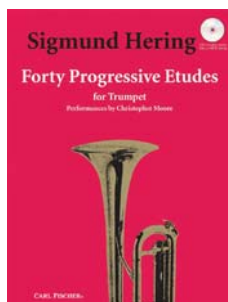
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CARL FISCHER | ETUDES

Etude, Dude

Carl Fischer has released Sigmund Hering's *Forty Progressive Etudes*. The book contains 40 etudes that are perfect for the trumpet. Ideal for intermediate students, the etudes are organized in a progressive manner, challenging students as they improve. The book includes a CD that contains MP3 recordings of all etudes. MSRP: \$17.95. carlfischer.com



AIM GIFTS | ACCESSORIES

Gift-worthy

Aim Gifts has added new accessories to its gift product line. The latest additions include sunglasses cases, a music note zipper pouch, an aluminum water bottle, music theme mints and a magnetic note/pen holder. aimgifts.com



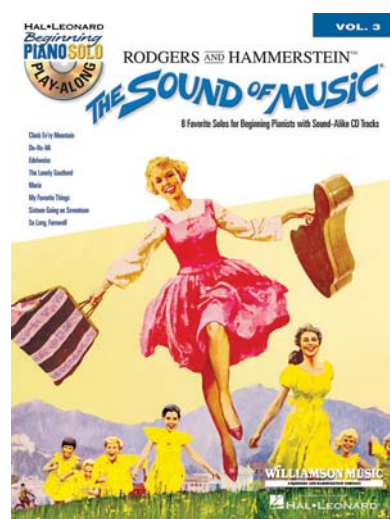
ALFRED | MOBILE DEVICE METHOD

Mobile Music

Alfred's new *Making Music With Mobile Devices* is an instructional resource guide from Course Technology PTR. The book teaches how to use modern-day electronic devices for music making while on the go. The guide reveals how to incorporate such mobile devices as the iPhone, iPod Touch, Korg DS-10/DS-10Plus and Nintendo Gameboy. It also discusses integrating them into home recording for use with software, such as Pro Tools and Ableton Live. MSRP: \$29.99. alfred.com

HAL LEONARD | BEGINNING PIANO
SOLO PLAY-ALONG SERIESThe Hills
Are Alive

Hal Leonard has published the first three volumes in its Beginning Piano Solo Play-Along Series: *The Beatles Hits*, *Disney Favorites* and *The Sound Of Music*. Each book comes with a CD of orchestrated arrangements, and the music in the books matches these recorded orchestrations. *The Sound Of Music* title features such songs as "Do-Re-Mi," "Edelweiss" and "My Favorite Things." halleonard.com

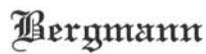
OPTEK MUSIC SYSTEMS |
GUITAR PRO 6 FRETLIGHT READY

Fret Ready!

Optek Music Systems recently released *Guitar Pro 6 Fretlight Ready*. This program lets guitar players view tablature while watching the fingering positions light up on their Fretlight's fretboard. Players can download a limitless number of guitar songs, all of which can light up a Fretlight guitar. The program includes light-up tablature in tab, chord diagram or scale mode and lets users create and edit scores quickly. MSRP: \$79.95. fretlight.com/guitarpro



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CHAUVET | SWARM 4

Serious Swarm

Chauvet has released Swarm 4, a quad-colored LED effect light. The Swarm 4 includes four 2-watt LEDs for maximum color options and boasts eight rectangular lenses that split the effect into hundreds of razor-sharp beams. The motor rotates back and forth at variable speed, creating ever-changing effects by alternating multicolored beams. Swarm 4 can be controlled using four channels of DMX, built-in automated programs or sound-activated programs.

{chauvetlighting.com}



AMERICAN AUDIO | VERSADECK

Versatile Versadeck

American Audio's new Versadeck MIDI controller is a two-channel unit and comes bundled with Virtual DJ LE software. The Versadeck features two MIDIOLOG channels, is MIDI- and analog-switchable, and comes equipped with two USB slots for thumb drives or hard drives. The unit includes two line inputs for hooking up external CD players or other RCA input devices. The controller also boasts a large VFD display. MSRP: \$739.95. {americanaudio.us}



RELOOP | JOCKEY III

Reloop's Latest

Reloop has introduced the Jockey III Master Edition, its new flagship Traktor Pro controller, audio interface and stand-alone digital mixer. The Jockey III enables control of all four Traktor Pro decks thanks to its classic mixer-style smart deck switching system and includes 90 fully assignable MIDI controls designed especially for Traktor's advanced functions, such as hot cue points, smart loops, effects and track browsing. On the audio side, the included interface features two pairs of phono/line inputs to connect CD players or turntables. MAP: \$699.99. {reloopdj.com}

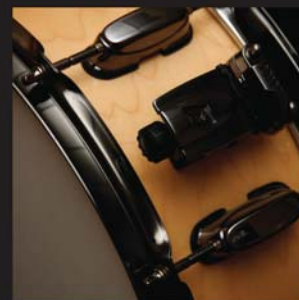
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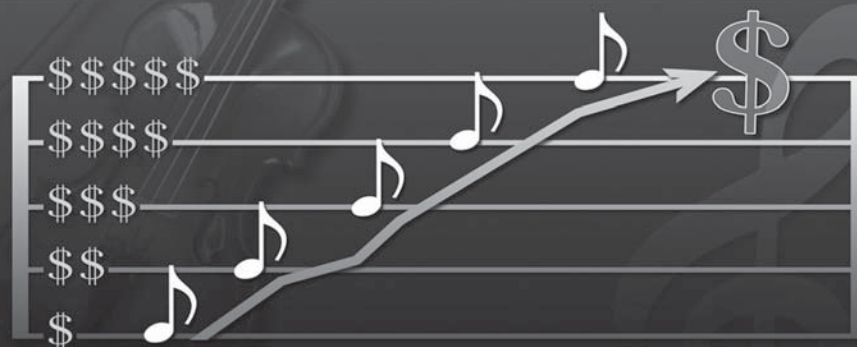
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Sharon Bechor

Rock and Soul
New York

The Novation Dicer is perfect for someone who has a lot of gear and is looking to add a little toy. It controls cue points and loops and comes as a pair. One pair will work on CD turntables and [standard] turntables. It can be MIDI-mapped to most DJ software. We have it here on display, and we also have videos of people using it, just to show customers what they can do with it. The Dicer is great for almost all of our customers.

We also have a huge section of our store with all these different bags, where people can try and compare the sizes of each of them. Some people might need to hold a mixer, and others might not.



Tom Capo

KpoDJ
Oakland, N.J.

Uplighting, such as The Puck by Blizzard Lighting, is a best-selling add-on. Uplighting packages are typically sold retail to DJs for about \$90–\$100 apiece, and DJs typically rent them out to clients for weddings or parties for around \$35–\$45 apiece.

Uplight packages usually include 15–25 fixtures. They look great around the room, and they pay for themselves after two or three events.



Greg Beaty

Extreme Pro Sound
Miami

They're going to need the case, and they're going to need whatever their favorite headphones are. Everybody needs headphones. There are three pairs I recommend. The top three for pro DJs are a Pioneer HDJ-2000, the Allen & Heath XD-53 and the Sennheiser HD25-1 II.

And then you've got all these other things like UDG bags. A lot of guys get into bags because they have specific interfaces, and they'll find a bag that'll fit their records or CDs, their headphones — all that stuff. Some of these DJs don't even carry their gear. They go to the club, and all of it's there. They just come in with their small bag, their UDG bag, and they're good to go.



Bernie Fryman

Audiolines
Chicago

What are your **best-selling** DJ and lighting add-ons?

Most DJs are using computers these days and a number of dual-transport CD players. First, there was something called a frame-accurate dual-transport CD player. After that, manufacturers made CD players that played MP3 discs, so you could have 150 songs on a CD. But no one is buying those anymore either.

Now, every DJ has to have a laptop, but where does the laptop go? It can either go on one of these flimsy stands that start at \$29, and DJs work all the way up to the unflimsy ones, which [cost roughly] \$140 dollars.

More people are opting for a small case to put everything else in at

one time. We sell Odyssey Flight Zone cases with the glide style. That's the big deal now. Everybody wants a [glide style] case, so they can have their computer sliding up and down in front of them on top of the mixer. That's the big thing. The rack in my office has a laptop on top of a glide style case. When we bring someone to see it, they look at it and say, "That's what I want!"

Everyone's looking for small. Very few DJs have trucks or vans anymore. Everybody's trying to get smaller and lighter weight and still play as loud.

The hottest lighting thing we have going is called the Pocket Nebu-

la. It's made by Blizzard Lighting out of Milwaukee. We always have a pile of them in the office with one turned on. They sell for about \$89.95. It's a green laser, which is more sympathetic to the eyes than red. Customers buy them for their party rooms or backyards because it's affordable. It's got a little tripod.

The other add-on is MI Tee cable testers. Every couple of months, we run a special on these things. They're about \$40 discounted. Professional DJs have it in their heads that they need a cable tester because, if there's something wrong, they want to know how to troubleshoot.

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The Graded Hammer (GH) weighted keyboard on the YDP181 and YDP161 offers a true piano feel, while the Graded Hammer Standard (GHS) keyboard of the YDP141 delivers the graded action teachers recommend for building proper playing technique. For more information, visit www.4wd.it/arius2.

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Arius YDP141



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