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NOVEMBER 2011 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

RETAIL REVAMP

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makeover of Fazio's
Frets and Friends

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Mike Fazio: "We
were able to build
the store just the
way we wanted
it to be."





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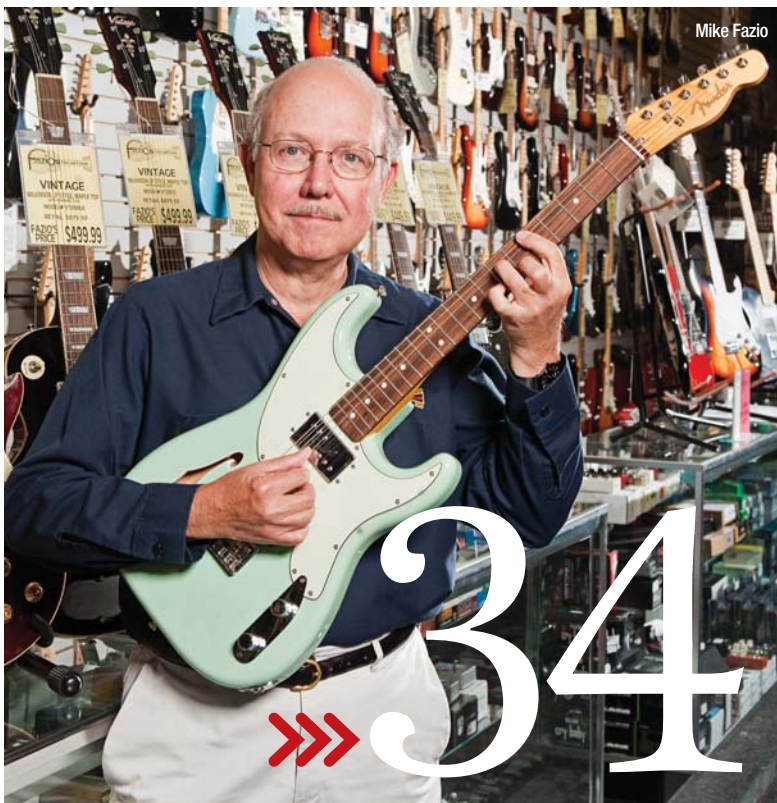
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ALLISON ROBERTSON The Donnas

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INSIDE



Mike Fazio

Photo by David Torrence

34 | TOTAL RETAIL REVAMP

Mike Fazio of Fazio's Frets and Friends didn't let the threat of eminent domain hold him down. Now running the dealership of his dreams, he explains how he keeps music lessons profitable and the importance of creating a family-like atmosphere.

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

LACEY ACT MYTHS

Much has been said about The Lacey Act since the feds' raid on Gibson last August. Some claim the environmental protection law will land retailers in jail for selling guitars made of pre-2008 harvested wood; that musicians transporting said instruments across state lines will be arrested and hauled off to prison in droves; that retailers will be responsible for documenting the genus and species of wood for every guitar they stock.

Folks, this just ain't gonna happen.

Mary Luehrsen, NAMM's director of public affairs, has been involved in educating the music industry on Lacey Act requirements since the law's amendment in May 2008. As she explained, there are aspects of The Lacey Act that could make these actions "theoretically illegal" but not practically enforceable.

Jim Goldberg, NAMM's legislative advisor and founder of Goldberg & Associates, added, "I don't think, as a practical matter, those holding pre-2008 wood should have major concern because, just as they may not be able to prove legal harvest, the government can't demonstrate illegal harvest."

And what does The Lacey Act mean for your average instrument maker? In short, more paperwork. It's a pain, but it's not the end of manufacturing as

we know it. It may be a necessary evil, too. In his blog at the Forest Legality Alliance's website, Taylor Guitars President Bob Taylor discussed his support for the The Lacey Act's general intent, as it aims to curb illegal logging.

"We fill out the paperwork required, and we present our business as an open book," he wrote. "The cost isn't so much for us. It's not an unbearable added burden, and we're happy to do the extra administrative work."

C.F. Martin Chairman and CEO Chris Martin called The Lacey Act "a wonderful thing" in an interview with National Public Radio. "I think illegal logging is appalling." He added that compliance is "tedious, but we're getting through it."

Understand, I'm not saying The Lacey Act is perfect. Since its amendment, it's fraught with a lack of clarity. Luehrsen pointed out that this creates a changing compliance environment that can make abiding by the law tricky.

To fix this, she and other NAMM representatives have been working behind the scenes with regulators and members of Congress. In early November, NAMM and several industry VIPs are also hitting Capitol Hill to advocate for more clarity in the law.

That trip is now closed, but you can still get involved. Join NAMM's Import Export Task Force by e-mailing importexport@namm.org. Attend the group's meeting at the upcoming winter NAMM show. This coalition will give you the right message to deliver at the right time to your congressional representatives. As Luehrsen said, "We will go back to the table again and again or for as long as it takes until we get this right for the music products industry." **MI**



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LETTERS

Big Thanks From Big Bang

I would like to take this opportunity to thank *Music Inc.* for the excellent coverage Big Bang Distribution received in the September 2011 article “Big Bang Theory.”

I'd like to suggest that the relative health of the drum accessory business is an indication of just how important music is to people.

Music continues to evolve, and musicians continue to create in good times and in not so good times. I've always seen Big Bang's role, and the role of music industry manufacturers, distributors and dealers in general, as developing and providing the instruments and accessories that allow both of those things to happen all the time.

Bob Kasha
President
Big Bang Distribution

Looking Ahead to Next Year

I'd like to thank *Music Inc.* for reporting on my Retail Print Music Dealers Association (RPM-DA) convention presentation on how to choose strategic sponsorship opportunities (“Print in the Post-Recession Era,” July 2011).

What a terrific surprise to see it featured in that way. I was quite touched and very honored that you would choose mine to write about out of all those great presentations. I guess now that I have had my 15 minutes of fame, I can retire to the Bahamas.

There have been so many sad stories on the RPM-DA board this year, with the heartbreaking loss of our fellow board member Gwen Bailey-Harbour, as well as Gayle Beacock tragically losing her father in a cycling accident in



**‘Anyone not upholding Internet retail taxation needs to get out of the way.’
— Paul Scott**

early August. Shortly after that, Washington, D.C.-based Middle C Music's Myrna Sislen also lost her father.

It's hard to know how to feel. I hope that this is the end of the sad times for everyone. I know we are going to have a wonderful conference next year in Los Angeles. I only wish Gwen could

have been around to see it happen in her hometown. We will truly miss her.

Christie Smith
Long & McQuade
Vancouver, B.C.

The Taxing Issue at Hand

Our store, San Diego Drum Shop, is the first new dedicated drum shop to open in the western region in many years, according to our drum vendors. We now see why after being in business for only two months. You don't know how bad the pretty girl's breath is until you dance with her.

Within the first few weeks of opening, we stopped doing business with two major drum companies for business practices that are not acceptable to a small

American retail business.

What's fair about not collecting taxes in an open and free market? Nothing.

Anyone not upholding the need for Internet retail taxation needs to get out of the way. I think it's an utterly unacceptable, un-American business policy, and you won't see it in other industries.

Your magazine should be leading the charge on the Internet retail sales tax issue. Let's change it around for the next 10 years.

The issue needs to be addressed, so you don't have to run any more articles on how American-owned stores — that's right, not Chinese — can't compete by having to charge mandated taxes when other retailers don't.

Paul Scott
San Diego Drum Shop
San Diego

Staying in Tune

I would like to respond to the letter “Get in Tune” in the October 2011 issue.

Here at Reverend Guitars, we feel it is our responsibility to set up and provide a playable instrument for our dealers to show to their customers. All Reverends are set up at our facility in Livonia, Mich., by Zack Green, a guitar tech with 20-plus years of experience in both retail repair and manufacturing. All are ready to go to the showroom right out of the box.

Ken Haas
General Manager
Reverend Guitars

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RETAIL

STEVE'S MUSIC STORE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

RETURN OF THE SUPERSTORE

At a time when most retailers are scaling back, Michael Kirman's embracing square footage.

In fact, his company's in full-blown expansion mode. Steve's Music Store, a three-location Montreal-based dealership, is currently adding onto its Toronto store, a move that will grow the facility to roughly 25,000 total square feet.

"The opportunity to expand next door came up," said Kirman, Steve's vice president, noting that the neighboring space previously housed a Guess store. "People are going to laugh, but we have 1,200 square feet in acoustic guitars, and it's just not enough space. Our bookstore also needs more space, and there wasn't enough space to show band instruments properly."

And for Steve's Music, the Toronto store's not unique. The company's flagship location in Montreal occupies an entire city block, with multiple entrances and a maze of departments. ("It's a 100-year-old building with the old brick," Kirman said. "It just feels so rock 'n' roll.") The company's third store, in Ottawa, boasts 18,000 total square feet. And each one is packed with gear.

"I'll say we have the largest selection in the industry, and that is what brings everyone in,"



Photo by Madelon Kulmech

Michael Kirman

Steve's Music Store snags customers with mammoth locations that keep growing

said Kirman, whose father, Steve, founded the store in 1965 and still remains involved in its daily operations. "Once we get people in the store, the personality of

our staff and the personality of the store hopefully hooks them and sinks them."

LUST FOR INVENTORY

In a way, the Canadian musical instrument market is more suited to such large-scale indie superstores than the U.S. market. E-commerce only accounts for about 5 percent of Steve's Music's business, which is mostly combo with some school music and print music. "Except for major cities, it's too expensive to ship to small towns, whereas in the States you can ship to wherever

for a nominal fee," Kirman said. His biggest competitors are other independent music retailers and Long & McQuade, Canada's biggest MI retail chain at 52 locations. (Compare that to Guitar Center, with its 200-plus stores.)

"Customers do a lot of research on the Web," Kirman said. "But a musician still needs that feel for a guitar. They still want to pick it up and try it."

Here, Steve's Music's deep selection makes it a draw. The Montreal store boasts more than 1,000 guitars in the electric guitar area alone, without any duplicate

models, according to Kirman. And that doesn't account for backup in the warehouse.

"There's no repetition of the same model," he said. "We'll have a white Strat on the floor and maybe five different colors in the warehouse."

He acknowledged that maintaining high stock levels is "a daily battle," but Steve's Music's new 20,000-square-foot distribution center in Montreal helps keep inventory organized — and lets the company take in more containers from overseas, as well. Kirman also credited the company's five-person purchasing department for staying on top of product trends and buying efficiently. "The guys are really good at picking what's going to be hot," he said. "It's *all* having the right people."

He added that he sees the company's management team as "the second-tier part of purchasing." "They do a lot of pre-screening and work with reps and pass the information along to purchasing."

DOUBLE WHAMMY

But relying on physical locations can be a challenge, especially when you've suffered as much damage as Steve's Music.

When the G-20 summit came to Toronto in June 2010, protesters torched two police cars in front of the shop — one 10 feet from the outside wall. The heat melted the store's sign and cracked its windows. According to Kirman, the government has only paid a quarter of what it owes to the retailer for property damage and business interruption.

"We probably claimed for over \$80,000, and the government's willing to pay \$20,000," he said. "It's a loss to us, but we'll fight it, and we'll eventually get paid."

But the biggest blow to Steve's

came from Mother Nature. Earlier this year, the Ottawa building's landlord put a temporary cover on the roof to accommodate construction next door. When a storm came through in July, it blew the cover off, sending torrents of rain into the building all night. The water destroyed the P.A. and DJ departments, as well as part of the drum department, totaling a quarter million dollars in damaged inventory, according to Kirman. The warehouse was spared, but the store is currently operating at 15-percent capacity.

"When I got there the next day, there was over 2 feet [of water] on the roof and about an inch to an inch and a half on the second floor and a half-inch on the ground floor," Kirman said.

The store had to be emptied, and since it's in an old building, environmental issues have slowed repair. The good news? Insurance will cover expenses and loss of business. (Luckily, Kirman purchased business interruption insurance last year.) That said, the store won't be fully operational until the holidays.

"They had to take out all the slatwall and all our wall finishings to get to the concrete behind it to properly dry it," he said. "I'll take a guess that this is an over \$1 million claim — well over."



It's hard on a store that sells itself on its vibe, but in the meantime, Steve's can fall back on the staff's professionalism. In particular, Kirman credited the work of the Ottawa store's manager, Peter Andruchow, in helping with recovery efforts.


"He's in on his days off checking on the store, coordinating with the insurance companies," Kirman said. "Our staff are all musicians, and they're just great dealing with the public and other musicians. Somehow, it just gets across — the right vibe." **MI**


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DENTON, COTTIER & DANIELS | BY HILARY BROWN

COMMUNITY CONSCIOUS

As a child, Jim Trimper was kicked out of an Erie County Fair booth for trying to play a Hammond organ. Thirty-five years later, as general manager of Denton, Cottier & Daniels, he stumbled upon the same gruff salesman.

"I told him the story and said, 'If you ever do that in here, you will be fired on the spot,'" Trimper said. "Children are allowed to play any instrument in here."

In 1983, Trimper took over the business entirely, which now consists of two stores in Getzville and Rochester, N.Y. He's enlisted his daughter, Michelle Wlosinski, to handle marketing and community relations, and his son, Jim Trimper Jr., commandeers the service department. Since taking over, Jim Sr. has "completely changed the décor inside and out," but his "something for everyone" mantra still resonates. According to Wlosinski, it's this mantra that has kept the world's oldest Steinway dealer successful.

"I really think it's one of the biggest things that's sustained us," Wlosinski said. "We're always trying to draw in different types of people."

FAMILY-FRIENDLY PROGRAMMING

Over the past year, the dealership's salon-style 60-person concert hall has hosted "Glee" mini-camps and concerts featuring the music of The Beach Boys and The Police. The staff of 10-15 employees is currently gearing up for a holiday-season Harry Potter event after completing fundraising efforts for the Amherst Symphony Orchestra. Wlosinski explained that the dealership at-



From left: Jim Trimper Jr., Michelle Wlosinski and Jim Trimper Sr.

Steinway's oldest dealership succeeds with new-school community marketing

tracts younger families without straying too far from the interests of classical music aficionados.

Her strategy also translates to the sales floor, where the company's merchandising plays to techno-savvy shoppers. Directly inside the window-paned storefront is a Story & Clark player piano equipped with iPad-activated Pianomation technology. A screen also displays musical notation as potential customers demo wares in the store's robust

Roland digital piano section.

"We want the people that go to the symphony, but we also want people that go to arenas and stadiums," Wlosinski said.

COMMUNITY EFFORTS

How does Denton, Cottier & Daniels keep interest up and costs down? It's about "giving back to the community," Trimper said. The store regularly reaches out to universities, nonprofits, churches and theater groups. For example, it recently partnered with New York's Chautauqua Institution, which hosts a nine-week arts education program. The dealership rents Steinway pianos to the facility and subsequently sells them at discounted prices.

Wlosinski said relationship-building with local businesses is crucial to maintaining low-budget, year-round programming. A recent luxury gift shopping

event, which showcased products from 25 local vendors, garnered a vast new clientele for the store without breaking the bank.

"We went into it knowing that we didn't want to spend a lot of money, and we didn't have to," Wlosinski said. "We had the luxury food and wine vendors here, so those little things we didn't have to pay for. The Philharmonic was selling subscriptions, and someone played piano. It was really culture and retail coming together. All we had to do was a Web blast."

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS

Those Web blasts, along with a well-maintained digital presence, help Wlosinski give personality to the Denton, Cottier & Daniels brand. But it's the reciprocal generosity of local businesses and cultural institutions that plays a critical role in the dealer's promotions.

"If I post an event or a contest or something, within a minute, I'll see someone share it for me," Wlosinski said. "Everyone in the cultural community in western New York is our friend. We automatically share what they're doing and vice versa."

And according to Trimper, some of the greatest camaraderie comes from the Keyboard Insights Group, an organization of national piano dealers that meets biannually to discuss business strategies. The group has inspired many of his unique, finance-friendly ideas.

"We talk numbers, we talk sales training, we talk every aspect of the business," Trimper said. "And we hope to increase our business with the way the economy is." **MI**

WHITE HOUSE OF MUSIC | OUTREACH

White House Opens to Music Educators

On July 25, 40 music teachers gathered in White House of Music's recital hall for Total Music Educators Workshop. The free event, held at the retailer's Waukesha, Wis., store, featured a day's worth of sessions on topics ranging from music advocacy to time management.

In the past, White House of Music hosted Total Music Educators Workshop as a three-day paid workshop. According to Chris White, company president, the dealership opted to make it a free event this year "as school budgets and support was unclear." The day was billed as "a complimentary thank you to music educators" for

their "dedication and determination in these challenging times."

Mary Luehrsen, NAMM's director of public affairs and government relations, hosted the opening session on music advocacy. Following a store tour and lunch, Bill Gray, owner of BGE Financial, discussed creative ways music educators can stretch their budgets. White also held a session on time management, and Lance Koehler, the company's general manager, taught attendees how to organize cables and P.A. gear. The event closed with a discussion from Michael George, executive director of Wisconsin Center for Music Education.



Chris White

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- David Grissom

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RENOVATION

World Music Remodels

World Music Nashville recently began a massive remodeling project. It will take place in several stages, according to a statement from the Nashville, Tenn.-based retailer. The store and music lessons department will remain open during the project, and the company is offering special deals on product to get it out of the store.



Cache Bash Demolition Derby

EVENT

Promotional Smash

KSM Music and KSM Guitars of Logan, Utah, hosted its 15th annual Cache Bash Demolition Derby on Aug. 20. The company used the event to highlight its products and services by handing out information and free music-related items to the roughly 5,000 attendees. Several vendors co-sponsored the derby, including D'Addario, DigiTech and Zildjian. Ibanez, Ovation and Samick also contributed guitars for prizes.

AWARDS

Yamaha Honors Top Piano Dealers

Yamaha's Keyboard Division recently named the winners of its TouchStone Sales Promotion, a Web-based contest that lets retail salespeople enter and track their sales of specific Yamaha pianos online. Winners included Tony Santucci of Piano Distributors, Gordy Martin of Menchey Music, Chris Lee and Julia Jeoung of Hanmi Piano, and Joe Rondinelli of Classic Pianos. Yamaha flew them on an all-expenses-paid vacation, featuring Yamaha facility tours in Tokyo, Hamamatsu, Kakegawa and Kyoto.

"Yamaha has an exceptional dealer base that works hard to ensure their customers' satisfaction," said Mark Anderson, Yamaha Keyboard Division marketing director. "The TouchStone program was our way of giving back, and we're thrilled that it turned out to be a huge success."



From left: U.S. Small Business Administration's Karen Mills with Full Compass' Susan and Jonathan Lipp

FULL COMPASS SYSTEMS | AWARDS

FC EARNS SBA 100 HONOR

Full Compass Systems was recently inducted into the Small Business Administration (SBA) 100, which recognizes 100 businesses that have received assistance from the SBA and grown to create 100 jobs or more. Full Compass is one of only two businesses from Wisconsin to receive this honor.

As part of the company's induction, Karen Mills, administrator of the SBA, recently visited the new 40,000-square-foot Full Compass headquarters, which houses more than \$12 million in inventory and a staff of more than 180

employees. Jonathan and Susan Lipp, Full Compass' owners, participated in the SBA 7(a) loan program in the early 1980s, which helped them acquire a larger facility, increase inventory and hire more employees.

"We are grateful to the Small Business Administration for their assistance and are thrilled to be recognized as one of their success stories," Susan said. "More importantly, we take great pride in the people we employ at Full Compass, and we strive to create a wonderful place to work."

JACOBS MUSIC | HONORS

JACOBS RECEIVES HIGHEST STEINWAY AWARD

Philadelphia-based piano dealer Jacobs Music has received the Steinway & Sons Partners in Performance Dealer of the Year Award for the second consecutive year.

"It's a great honor to win this recognition even once, but it's more remarkable to win it two years in a row," said Chris Rinaldi, president of Jacobs Music.

The 111-year-old retailer competed in the Major Metropolitan cities category with Steinway dealers in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston and Washington, D.C. Jacobs Music also has stores in Willow Grove and Whitehall, Pa.; Cherry Hill and Lawrenceville, N.J.; and Wilmington, Del.

"Our association with Steinway & Sons leads us to service some of the world's most legendary artists, which is not only a wonderful opportunity but a responsibility we take very seriously," said Al Rinaldi, chairman and CEO of Jacobs Music.



Al Rinaldi

KEYBOARD CONCEPTS | VENUES

Keyboard Concepts Moves

After 29 years at the same location, Keyboard Concepts has moved its flagship store to a new Sherman Oaks, Calif., location. Owners Dennis and Bobbie Hagerty, along with partners Jeff and Cheri Falgien, made the move earlier this year when owners of the current location began a major redevelopment project.

Located down the street from the original dealership, the new store will feature specific areas for service and rebuilding, print music, entry-level pianos and keyboards, performance pianos, and a performance space.

This summer, Keyboard Concepts initiated a major sale to reduce inventory before the move. It will continue to offer a wide selection of new and used Yamaha, Clavinova, Disklavier, Bosendorfer, Schimmel and Knabe pianos, as well as used Steinways.

“Despite the rotten economy, Keyboard Concepts is doing well,” said Dennis Hagerty, company president. “We will continue to evolve the company to the new-reality business levels. All four of our locations have extremely dedicated professional managers and staff.”



Dennis Hagerty (left) and Jeff Falgien

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CLINICS & APPEARANCES

Batio Hits Bill's

Shredder Michael Angelo Batio recently kicked off the launch of his Dean MAB1 Armorflame guitar with a workshop at Bill's Music in Baltimore. The event included an informational clinic, Q&A session, and meet and greet with the guitarist. According to a representative with Bill's Music, Batio stayed until he signed the very last autograph.



+ LANG DRAWS CROWD

This past summer, Grammy-winning artist Jonny Lang and his band stopped by Daddy's Junky Music's flagship location in Boston. They performed a free 30-minute set for fans, and afterwards, the standing-room-only crowd was treated to a meet and greet with the blues guitarist.

"The last time Jonny did an in-store with Daddy's, he was a 16-year-old kid just starting out," said Daddy's Artist Relations Director Candi Bramante. "He's now a multiplatinum-selling, Grammy-award-winning artist, and we could not have been more honored that he chose to spend his day with our customers."

+ JONES REVEALS MIKING SECRETS

On July 21, Full Compass Systems of Madison, Wis., in cooperation with Sennheiser, hosted an audio recording clinic with Grammy-award winner Leslie Ann Jones. Visitors traveled from as far as California for the event, where she shared her decades of expertise. Jones is the first female chairperson of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' board of trustees, and her film credits include "Apocalypse Now," "Dead Man Walking," "Zodiac" and "Cars 2."

Throughout the clinic, Jones fielded questions and shared insights. She spoke about the early influence of her parents on her musical growth and her choice to move from performing to recording music. Jones also discussed microphone techniques for recording live musical performances.



RHYTHM TRADERS | EDUCATION

MEINL DONATES TO RHYTHM TRADERS

Meinl Percussion recently donated more than 20 samba instruments to the education program at Rhythm Traders in Portland, Ore. The retailer hosts a Saturday Samba School, as well as workshops and master classes. Rhythm Traders also offers group lessons in various forms of global percussion, including drum set, djembe and Afro-Cuban congas.

"All of our teachers are super excited," said Brad Boynton, owner of

Rhythm Traders, about Meinl's donation. "It's not just for our in-house lesson program, but [it's] more of an instrument library to be used by many of our local samba groups and school teachers. Most local schools don't have all these exotic instruments, and that's where we had to step in."

Mitch McMichen, president of Meinl USA, said he considers Rhythm Traders to be a "focal point for music education in the Portland area."

HOLLYWOOD PIANO | OPENING

Hollywood Piano Reopens After Revamp

Hollywood Piano hosted an official "re-grand opening" of its Burbank, Calif., headquarters and showroom on Sept. 23.

Established in 1928, the family-owned dealership recently underwent a six-month remodeling project that included the addition of a high-end piano display area, recital area, Roland Foresta display and dedicated rental piano showroom.

Hollywood Piano has also incorporated the 50-year-old Hollywood Sheet Music into its facility and constructed a classroom for the Radco Music and Wellness Center. The retailer continues to support music and arts education philanthropy, as well as many of Southern California's orchestras and movie studios.

The store now features a high-end piano display area, recital area



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Note from Joe

The Chaotic World and Why It Will Be So Good to See Everyone in January...

Like many of you, I'm a junkie for the news. First, I start with the usual websites: CNN, Fox and *USA Today*. Then I read our local business journal, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*—and for a more global perspective, the *London Economist*. I read every industry trade magazine cover-to-cover, and there are also several industry newsletters, blogs, NAMM's Daily News brief (let us know if you'd like to be on the list), as well as an endless stream of Member e-mails on the latest news of the day (thanks, George!).

And, in the past two months (I'm writing this on September 30), I've been to Beacock's Music in Washington for a memorial service to honor founder Dale Beacock, to Skip's Music in Sacramento for his *Stairway to Stardom* concert, to Canada for NAMM's Executive Committee meeting (thanks Kevin, Larry, Mark and welcome Robin!), fishing in Montana with 28 of the industry's brightest luminaries (thanks again for

the invite, Hyman), to Estonia this week speaking with music and arts education policy leaders from 64 countries, and today in Moscow to meet with Members and hold a press conference to launch NAMM Musikmesse Russia.

I guess my point is (you were wondering if I had one!) that even after all of this information overload and communication with hundreds of NAMM Members, there is still no clear consensus as to where the economy or our industry is headed! In my opinion, there's only one place where you can really get a sense of the future and that is at the NAMM Show.

I believe our industry as a whole is much smarter than any one industry sector, company or individual. The opportunity to come together in Anaheim and see new product trends, hear the topics being focused on at NAMM U and compare notes with our friends and peers is priceless. The future of your business and our industry is based on making good decisions. None of us can change the primary trend of the stock market, get Congress to work more efficiently or figure out what to do about Greece or the Euro Zone, but we can decide how we will steer our companies through the chaos. I've said it many times: Going to the NAMM Show is likely to be the best investment you'll make all year.

On behalf of the NAMM Board and staff, we wish you the best for the holiday selling season and cannot wait to see you all in January!

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO

Make It Count at the NAMM Show

With so much to do and see, it's important to make every moment count—whether it's walking the floors to see all the newest products, catching a NAMM U session or networking with your peers. Get ready to “gear up” for the year ahead at the NAMM Show, January 19-22. **Here's what Members had to say about previous shows...**

EXHIBITORS

“Our booth was packed from day one, and our dealers had a level of energy and enthusiasm I found very exciting.”

RICK YOUNG • YAMAHA CORPORATION

“The show has been great. We have been packed like crazy since the show opened or even actually a little beforehand.”

KRISTINA HODGSON • SHURE INC.

“I'm sensing a lot of optimism in the market. We've been very crowded and done very, very well. I really see a shift coming.”

LARRY URIE • PRS GUITARS

RETAILERS

“The NAMM Show is our industry's family reunion! It's our chance to catch up on what's been going on.”

PETE GAMBER • ALTA LOMA MUSIC

“I actually just scoured the show, front to back and Hall E as well and found a lot of new products!”

GAYLE BEACOCK • BEACOCK MUSIC

“I think the show helps every size of retailer. Being face-to-face with your vendors is so important to show you're serious.”

RICH PIRES • HERREID MUSIC

NAME NAMM News November 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.

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ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

- > **Ron Manus**
Featured in *The Washington Post*
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Named Forestone's U.S. distributor
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Ramps up for drum month
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SUPPLY

KORG I Q&A

GOING APP

Last May, Korg's iElectribe app reached the No. 1 position in the App Store's music category. Not bad for a company that's never been a big player in the software market.

Music Inc. Editor Zach Phillips caught up with Michael Bradley, Korg's director of marketing, to discuss the opportunity in apps for Korg and the music industry at large.

Highlights:

Phillips: *Korg's already making a name for itself in the app market. Why are apps an important product category?*

Bradley: First, they provide an opportunity to build the Korg brand outside of the immediate MI community in a way that's inviting to mainstream consumers, even if they don't actively play an instrument. And in the case of our iElectribe Gorillaz app, where we partnered with acclaimed virtual band Gorillaz, we were able to expose the band's fan base to music making, as well.

This branding pays dividends as consumers become more familiar with the Korg name through this and other mainstream promotion efforts



Michael Bradley

Korg uses apps to expose its brand to first-time customers

we engage in, and when the time comes for them to step up and more actively pursue their interest in music making via hardware products, they will already know and trust the Korg brand.

Phillips: *An Electribe is a \$350-\$500 product. An iElectribe app, on the other hand, sells for \$19.99. How do you reconcile this? Do you believe app sales will eventually lead to hardware purchases?*

Bradley: The apps aren't meant to be replacements for the hardware products that established musicians are already purchasing. As a branding tool, their benefit in turning musicians on to our brand, and even our historic products, is huge.

For instance, our iMS20 app enables people to get all the great sounds of Korg's classic MS-20 analog synth. Former or current

musicians checking it out may rediscover all those sounds they loved from yesteryear, decide it's time to get back into actively playing and finally trade in that old keyboard of theirs to purchase something new and cool.

There is without question an enormous pool of players who are not reached through our traditional marketing channels. The app world is a way to bring them into the Korg family for the first time or to welcome them back. That interest in our products will lead to sales, not only of apps but of our hardware products on display at retail.

Phillips: *There are retailers who say, "We can't make money with apps." What's your response to them?*

Bradley: I would encourage them to look at apps as Korg's investment in their future, with long-term dividends from non-musicians who may at some point pursue their musical interests more seriously, as well as existing musicians who are reinvigorated by the apps and inspired to update their gear rig.

Phillips: *Any future apps you can discuss?*

Bradley: Korg certainly has plans to stay in the apps market. Anything is possible. **MI**

ALFRED | COVERAGE

Alfred's CEO in Washington Post

The *Washington Post* featured a Q&A with Alfred's CEO, Ron Manus, in the Sept. 21 music education report. Gathered from a music industry-wide panel of experts, the special feature looked at the importance and academic benefits of music education, including input from educators, music manufacturers and associations, along with artists Jason Mraz and Barry Manilow.

The music education report brings awareness of the current state of music in education, while reinforcing its importance, revealing current actions taken to advance the general cause and sharing ways people can get involved.

All the articles featured in the special issue supported the top three music education facts recognized to date: performing music exercises the brain, cutting music programs does not save money and music learning can lead to increased cognitive functioning.

"Music changed my attitude about school, and my grades went up [and] so did my self-esteem," Manus said. "Science backs my statement. I'm constantly sharing this with skeptics, and especially with those affected by music education budget cuts, and point them to the study [featured on] supportmusic.com conducted by the NAMM Foundation." alfred.com



Ron Manus

'Music changed my attitude about school, and my grades went up [and] so did my self-esteem. Science backs my statement.'

— Ron Manus

AWARDS

Chosen by the People

Oasis Humidifiers recently received an *Acoustic Guitar* magazine Player's Choice Award, which was voted on by thousands of the magazine's readers. The awards were announced in the October issue of *Acoustic Guitar*, on acousticguitar.com and on *Acoustic Guitar*'s new Gear Showcase website, gearshowcase.acousticguitar.com. oasishumidifiers.com

ACQUISITION

Babbitt Purchases Bernard

Jj Babbitt has purchased the Bernard Portnoy line of clarinet mouthpieces.



"We've been making mouthpieces for Bernie Portnoy for over 40 years," said jj Babbitt President and COO Rocco Giglio. "We are not going to change a thing about them. We plan on continuing the exact design and quality of this superb mouthpiece line."

Portnoy mouthpieces are designed for intermediate, advanced and professional players. The line includes hard rubber models in E-flat, B-flat, alto and bass clarinet. jjbabbitt.com

DISTRIBUTION

Mapex Chooses Yorkville

Mapex Drums has appointed Yorkville Sound as its exclusive distributor in Canada.

"Adding Mapex to our family of brands is an exciting opportunity for Yorkville," said Doug Davies, vice president of Yorkville Sound. "It fits extremely well with the other prestigious lines we carry and gives Yorkville an opportunity to expand into the drum business with an innovative and well-proven line." mapex.com

HONORS

And the Award Goes to...

The TEC Foundation for Excellence in Audio recently announced the nominees for the 27th Annual Technical Excellence & Creativity Awards, which will be held Jan. 20, 2012, at The NAMM Show in Anaheim, Calif. Co-presented by the TEC Foundation and NAMM, the TEC Awards honors outstanding achievement in product innovation and sound production. A full list of nominees can be found on the TEC Foundation's website. tecfoundation.com

FENDER | OPENING

FENDER UNVEILS VISITOR CENTER

Fender fanatics from around the world can now get a firsthand look at the company's history and manufacturing processes.

On Sept. 15, the Scottsdale, Ariz.-based supplier inaugurated the Fender Visitor Center, an 8,600-square-foot celebration of its legacy. Located in Corona, Calif., the center sits adjacent to the company's U.S. manufacturing facilities, which visitors can now tour for free as part of the Visitor Center experience.

Inside the building, guests are treated to interactive displays, historic instruments and the Fender Hall of Fame, as well as a retail shop where visitors can design and purchase their own instruments.

And according to Fender CEO Larry Thomas, the company built the Visitor Center as much for its employees as it did Fender enthusiasts. He told this and more to *Music Inc.* Editor Zach Phillips in late September. An edited transcript of the conversation:

Phillips: *What is the purpose of the center?*

Thomas: I spent a long time walking through the Corona factory, and I was just amazed by what they actually make there. They take big sheets of plastic, and they stamp out pickguards on machines. They drill it out, and they put the foil on the back for the grounding. They actually stamp out the plates that they make the bridges from for Telecasters and Stratocasters. So I'm seeing all these processes, and it's just blowing me away.

I thought with this Visitor Center, I can honor the employees in the factory by showing all the



Inside the Fender Visitor Center

stuff that we make.

I needed to find a way, frankly, to return the soul of Fender to Corona, if you will. I needed to find a way to make the factory the center of the company again.

And Fender makes hundreds of products. Most music stores only carry a fraction of these models. So I thought, "Wouldn't it be great if you could go to one place, and you could actually see each of these instruments and hold them and play them and decide for yourself whether this is the guitar for you?"

Phillips: *Along with the museum, what's a standout attraction at the Visitor Center?*

Thomas: We have a wood room. It smells like cedar when you walk in. We have all these painted bodies sitting there. And a guy can choose a neck because we have a whole rack of necks.

So you, as a guitar player, can grab a neck that feels good, and you can walk over and pick out a body. And you can basically put a guitar together on a bench. You can pick up a pickguard as-

sembly — we have them in all different colors. You can order a guitar right there.

That guitar, unlike a custom shop guitar, is made on the factory floor. It's our regular production stuff. But if you can't afford a custom shop guitar, you can get one of our production necks, which to me are absolutely just as good.

Phillips: *What's your message to local Fender retailers who say, "They're selling guitars at the Visitor Center and taking away my business?"*

Thomas: Let's say you're a dealer in Los Angeles. You can run a contest in your store, and you can offer the winner of that contest a trip to the Fender Visitor Center. You can send your salesman down with them, and when they build that customized guitar, it's going to be priced so that you can make a margin.

We are selling direct there. You can buy T-shirts and other stuff. And frankly, I'm hoping that in the next two years, you'll have a brochure in all the ho-

tels up and down California. So if you come in from Iowa and you go through the factory tour because you're a Fender fanatic and you decide to custom-build a guitar, we'll sell you that guitar direct, too.

But I think that the messaging of the brand is going to enrich the relationship the dealers have with the company. We didn't open [the center] to sell guitars.

Phillips: *You already have a lot of dealers to do that.*

Thomas: That's right. But on the other hand, we do have a need to control our brand and the messaging of the brand. Because I could never get the dealers to brand the products fully the way we want to as a manufacturer. This gives us the opportunity to do that.

If you look at Apple or Nike or some of these other companies that have done this, they have all had to do something in order to convey their message to the end user. And in the end, I think it's been something that's helped the brand. **MI**

ST. LOUIS MUSIC | DISTRIBUTION

SLM Takes on Forestone Japan

St. Louis Music (SLM) was recently named the exclusive U.S. distributor of Forestone Japan, a synthetic reed manufacturer with deep gains in Asia and Europe. The reeds are a mixture of polypropylene resin and cellulose wood fiber, and more than 50 percent is bamboo.

"The quest for a synthetic reed that really responds to the player has been elusive," said Craig Denny, SLM executive. "But as a player myself, I've found the reeds offer everything quality traditional reeds offer but with a consistency that hasn't yet been achieved."

Forestone's president, Lars Huesler, said he's happy with the partnership between his company and SLM.

"This partnership with St. Louis Music was given the green light this summer and marks the next step in the company's rapid growth," Huesler said. "Since we entered into a partnership at the 2010 Musikmesse Frankfurt, things have moved forward fast.

"We're extremely excited because we desired to be in the U.S. market, and all we needed was the right partner." stlouismusic.com



WEBNEWS

Los Cabos Goes Mobile

Los Cabos Drumsticks has launched a mobile-friendly version of its website. Visitors who access loscabosdrumsticks.com using a mobile device will automatically be redirected to the mobile version, designed to make navigation and accessing content easier.

"We wanted to make a version of our website that offered the easiest possible navigation to mobile phone users," said Matt Carter, director of marketing and artist relations for Los Cabos Drumsticks. "Mobile phones are expected to surpass desktop computers as a means of accessing the Internet within the next two years, and we've been noticing an ongoing increase in mobile traffic to our home page."

The new website features easy-to-navigate icons for touch screens, video content and a complete scrolling product listing.

"Over the coming months, we're planning to include some exclusive mobile-only content and social media interaction to cater to our growing online community," Carter said. "We're pretty excited to explore the possibilities that exist in terms of mobile content." loscabosdrumsticks.com



LANIKAI DEBUTS ONLINE STORE

Lanikai Ukuleles has unveiled an e-commerce store hosted by Shopatron. The online store partners with Lanikai's retailers across the United States, letting them fulfill online orders as long as they have the product in stock.

"We are very excited to be able to take advantage of this opportunity," said Product Manager Drew Lewis. lanikaiukules.com



PRIMACOUSTIC | PARTNERSHIP

PRIMACOUSTIC NAMES NEW REP



Primacoustic has named EDA Pro as its manufacturing representative to the contractor marketplace for the Southeastern United States. EDA Pro will be responsible for Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

"EDA Pro Group is proud to represent Primacoustic in the Southeast," said Mark Adams, EDA Pro's president.

"Their range of acoustical products complements our line

card and greatly contributes in our quest to offer a complete solution for our dealers."

Steve Dickson of business development for Primacoustic said he's looking forward to working with EDA Pro.

"We are thrilled to be working with Mark and his team and look forward to reaping the benefits afforded by such a professional and well-established company in the territory," he said. primacoustic.com



Michael Daugherty

HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

HAL LEONARD TEAMS WITH MICHAEL DAUGHERTY

Hal Leonard has gained exclusive worldwide distribution rights for the entire catalog of musical publications from Grammy winner Michael Daugherty, a highly commissioned, performed and recorded composer.

The deal covers all of Daugherty's orchestral, band and chamber music, published by Peermusic Classical and Boosey & Hawkes — both of which are distributed by Hal Leonard — as well as all of his new compositions moving forward, published by Michael Daugherty Music.

"I'm very pleased to be working with Hal Leonard," Daugherty said. "The Hal Leonard administrative team is easy to work with and provides a personal touch, which is greatly appreciated by composers and consumers alike. This will be the first time that all of my music, published by different publishers, is available under one roof. I am greatly looking forward to a harmonious pairing for years to come." halleonard.com

MARTIN GUITARS | PARTNERSHIP

MARTIN FEATURED IN UPS CAMPAIGN

Martin Guitars was recently featured in a video that's part of the UPS Global We Love Logistics campaign. Online at atthenewlogistics.com, as well as the UPS Facebook page and YouTube channel, Martin Guitars' story looks at how logistics helps to create Martin's acoustic guitars and strings and get them into the hands of players.

"One of the most important aspects of our operations is making sure we ship each instrument efficiently, accurately and safely to our dealers and customers around the world," said Chris Martin, Martin's chairman and CEO.

Since its launch in 2010, the campaign has leveraged case studies of key customers to show the power of logistics within a business. martinguitar.com



APPOINTMENTS

Industry Veteran Joins ESP

MI industry veteran Jeff Moore recently joined ESP Guitars as its vice president of sales.

"We're very excited to welcome Jeff to the ESP team," said Matt Masciandaro, ESP president and CEO.

In his new role at ESP, Moore will oversee sales for the ESP and LTD brands. He comes to ESP with more than 20 years of experience serving the MI market. After holding sales and management positions in manufacturing and retail, Moore spent nine years at Fender. Most recently, he was vice president of sales and marketing for Breedlove and Bedell Guitars.



Jeff Moore

Peavey President Mary Peavey is the newest appointee to the Mississippi Arts Commission's board of commissioners.

Sandra Kilpatrick Jordan of **Sandra Kilpatrick Jordan Consulting** has been elected to the Music for All board of directors.

Renkus-Heinz recently appointed **Ladd Temple** to the position of technical sales manager.

Teac America has promoted Paul Jenkins from vice president of sales for Tascam to senior vice president for Teac America. Jenkins will also serve on the board of directors.

Andy Tamulynas has been promoted to integrated media marketing manager at **Vic Firth**.

Lorenz has promoted Kris Kropff to president of the company's music publishing divisions.

NAMM has tapped Causby Challacombe as its new di-

rector of membership.

Musiquip has hired Tommy Wilson to the newly created position of business unit manager for the MI Group.

Dave Hetrick has joined **American Music & Sound** as national sales manager for Beyerdynamic, Fostex and Alpine.

Scott Leslie has been appointed director of engineering for Harman's **JBL Professional**.

Bosch Security Systems' communications systems division recently named Bob Rieder as its new product marketing manager for pro sound install.



Bob Rieder

sell drum stuff?

Then get ready for a lot of new customers!

The Percussion Marketing Council is creating new drummers. And this holiday season, we're giving them an extra incentive to visit your store by offering them a FREE Beginner's Pack containing a pair of drumsticks and bonus book or DVD.



PMC members are your partners in growing your percussion business, and have created a number of programs to help you do it. How about five International Drum Month retail ideas tips that will get you excited from the start?

Visit PlayDrums.com/ide to learn about these and other programs designed to bring new customers into your store.

Get with the Program!

Coupons for the free Beginner's Pack will appear in various publications or may be downloaded from PlayDrums.com and returned directly through the PMC.

There's one small catch: Your store must participate in the PMC program. When you do, that's your opportunity to meet and create or attract new customers.

contact the Percussion Marketing Council.



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We're Building Your Market, But You Need To Get Involved. Visit www.playdrums.com for complete program information on:



ROOTS OF RHYTHM
An excellent teacher's resource for students that connects drums and drumming with academic subjects like math, science, geography, and world culture. www.rootsdrum.com

PERCUSSION IN THE SCHOOLS
Real Hit Club Program's drummers, Chad Smith, performed for over 1,000 students of PMC's 2010 PITS assembly at Penn State Harrisburg High School in Middletown, PA.



Learn how these programs benefit you or how to get involved at www.playdrums.com or email info@percussionfund.com

PMC | EVENT

PMC Celebrates International Drum Month

The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) is celebrating its 16th annual International Drum Month this November with a special program that serves two purposes: create more new drummers and provide an incentive to have them go into their local music stores or drum shops.

Aspiring drummers will have the opportunity to receive a free Beginner's Package, which includes a pair of drumsticks and an instructional book or DVD designed for beginners. The drumsticks are provided by Pro-Mark, Vater and Zildjian, while the instructional materials are provided by Alfred, Hal Leonard and Hudson Music. The coupon is available through a number of consumer magazines or by visiting PMC's website playdrums.com.

"This is a no-strings-attached offer to the consumer," said Dave Jewell, PMC executive committee member and marketing manager of Yamaha Drums. "To receive this package, the beginner simply visits a local music store and has the coupon validated by the store. An authorized store signature and attaching a store business card to the coupon is the entire validation.

"This provides the store a great chance to turn that person into a new percussion customer." **{playdrums.com}**

TRIBUTE

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

Moray McMillin

Moray McMillin of EAW has passed away from cancer. He was 58. "We are all just devastated," said Jeff Rocha, president of EAW. "Moray was one of the unforgettable characters that make up this industry and a consummate professional. He was a true friend, a person you [couldn't] help but want to spend time with. So full of life. I'm heartbroken." McMillin joined the EAW UK sales office in 2005. He's survived by his wife, Antonella, and his two sons.

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IDEAS

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THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

MANAGING THE RECOVERY

Three years ago, I wrote two columns on dealing with the Great Recession, one on managing expenses and the other on motivating staff. I took my own advice, and like others who used the downturn as an opportunity to overhaul their operations, we're still in business.

We were foolishly exuberant in the good times, and we paid the price. But we're emerging from the recession with an improved balance sheet, leaner operation and better team than before. The only things we have less of are employees, debt, competitors and inventory. Still, as we enter recovery, there are specific things we can and must do to make the most of it and, hopefully, avoid repeating past mistakes.

The 2007-'09 recession was the longest and deepest in the postwar period. It was also a different kind of recession, precipitated by a financial collapse and real estate speculation and perpetuated by political opportunists willing to prolong our suffering in the hopes of electoral benefit. Recessions caused by the banking sector historically have very slow recoveries.

Notwithstanding the de-



'More than 90 percent of our customers have jobs, have homes and are willing to spend, especially the wealthy.'

niers on TV and the Internet, the economy is growing, albeit slowly. More than 90 percent of our customers have jobs, have homes and are willing to spend, especially the wealthy. There's tremendous pent-up demand, and

there's also a huge demographic wave of retiring baby boomers headed our way who will inherit \$75 trillion from their parents during the next 10 years. They will need creative activities for their retirement. People are buying musical instruments every day, and they will continue to do so in increasing numbers.

When the economy is falling, it does just that. It falls straight down, sometimes with increasing velocity, and then bounces along the bottom. Recoveries are different. They begin slowly and go through fits and starts. Because we're climbing rather than falling, it's always a struggle. Growth eats cash. It doesn't start to seem easy until we reach a plateau near the top, and that's when we should start to worry. Instead, we project our growth into the future, and the cycle starts all over again.

THIS TIME IT'S DIFFERENT

We're having a different kind of recovery. Unemployment is going to be with us for a while. Manufacturing employment had been falling for 10 years prior to 2007. The recession was more the straw that broke the camel's back than the principal cause of our

current unemployment problem. And we have never had a sustained recovery without growth in public-sector (i.e., government) jobs. But the public sector is laying off workers faster than the private sector can hire them. Those wanting a smaller government are getting their wish, but at a huge cost. So no, we are not having a jobless recovery. Businesses are hiring, but they're not hiring as fast as governments are laying off.

The housing crisis is primarily caused by oversupply, which, of course, depresses prices. Little by little, that supply is being sold. Parts of the country, such as South Florida, are actually experiencing housing booms — or maybe boomlets. But it's going to take time to absorb all this excess housing inventory. And let's not overlook the good news: People snatching up deals on foreclosed properties or short sales have more money available to furnish them with such things as expensive musical instruments.

Naturally, unemployment and foreclosures make good fodder for TV news and are a powerful psychological drain. Coupled with the debt debate, all this bad news

has depressed consumer confidence. The sharp August drop in the Consumer Confidence Index was almost entirely the result of media coverage of the debt stalemate. Many of the smartest economists are now saying our biggest economic problem is a lack of confidence.

Unless there's a fresh catastrophe or scandal, certain elements of the media will predict pending economic disaster notwithstanding the facts. These experts have failed to predict every recession since World War II and have predicted dozens that never happened.

ATTITUDE, NOT APTITUDE

Business owners who buy into the bad news and wear it on their sleeves are like competitive swimmers who strap weights to their ankles. Wearing rose-colored glasses won't guarantee success, but it does no harm. Predicting failure, on the other hand, is likely to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Nothing has more impact on a dealer's success or failure than the attitude of the owner. Recently, we've heard from dealers who think they're in a recovery, and their businesses are improving. I've also spoken with dealers whose business is lousy, and they invariably blame the economy.

Hard-core retailers innately understand that the economic and political cycles are like the weather. They always exist, and we're hopeless to affect them. We must generate wealth when the sun shines, store some of it for a rainy day and batten down the hatches when storms loom on the horizon. The trick is to not repeat past errors when the sun shines again — to stay lean and reinvest at least some of the profits. And it's really hard.

Customer profiles are also dif-

ferent in this recovery. Americans in the top 5 percent, by income, now account for 37 percent of all consumer spending. Appealing to these high-fliers is no longer optional. They have different expectations for merchandise and merchandising, so we have to modify what we sell and how we present it. At the same time, the Internet has become a haven for shoppers seeking only the lowest price. This recovery will see weakest demand in the middle price range for most products.

Steinway's marketing department recently sent a "good news" e-mail blast after a pause of more than two years. It reported successful sales events in New York; Paramus, N.J.; and Detroit. (Yes, Detroit.) High-end buyers are definitely back.

We are starting this recovery with fewer competitors, and it's going to be pretty hard for new competitors to appear. If a new player does get in, he's going to be working on his own money, so he's likely to play a pretty conservative game.

There are specific things we can do to make this recovery easier and more profitable. And there are ways to avoid past mistakes as things continue to improve. (See "Recovery Plan" sidebar.) But it's our attitude rather than our aptitude that will determine our altitude. There is nothing to be gained by talking down the recovery, discussing debt or complaining about the government. There's much to be gained by providing an encouraging word. Don't defeat yourself and your staff with a depression mentality before you even open your doors and turn on the lights. **MI**

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

+ RECOVERY PLAN

- 1. RECOGNIZE THAT WE'RE IN A RECOVERY, AND SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS.** If your cable TV talking head is trashing the economy, change the channel. Make sure your employees know things are getting better, even if you have to tell them every day. Be a leader. If you have a wet blanket, shut him up or fire him. If you're the wet blanket, shape up.
- 2. TELL CUSTOMERS HOW GOOD THINGS ARE AND THAT YOU HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE.** Let them know that you appreciate them sticking with you during the difficult times and they can expect even better service in the future.
- 3. MAKE YOUR STORE MORE APPEALING TO HIGH-END BUYERS, BOTH WITH FACILITIES AND PRODUCT.** They demand service they can't get online, and they don't mind paying for it.
- 4. BE GRACIOUS ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE NO LONGER WITH US.** Gloating about former competitors or boasting will come back with a bite. Look for market opportunities created by their demise.
- 5. GENTLY NUDGE YOUR ADVERTISING BUDGET, BUT BE SMART.** Don't go back to the black holes of print and broadcast. Tweak your website, make more Facebook posts, take more pictures and shoot more video. Mail more targeted, timed offers to your in-house list. Come up with a coupon. (Coupons are hot right now.) Offer a gift card. Approach big sale events with caution. Be suspicious of anything proposed by a supplier.
- 6. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE FEWER COMPETITORS, AND PUT PRESSURE ON SUPPLIERS.** If they want their product promoted, make them come up with the money — or most of it. There aren't enough good music retailers, and there are too many suppliers. This is a great time to demand exclusivity and leverage emerging lines. Cherry-pick, push for terms and freight allowances, but don't buy anything you can't sell within 90 days. If you get a nasty supplier letter telling you what a lousy job you're doing, ignore it.
- 7. REFINANCE WHILE RATES ARE LOW AND WHEN YOU DON'T NEED THE MONEY.** This is a great time to replace a floor plan with a line of credit from a local bank. A LOC enables you to take advantage of cash discounts that help offset interest charges.
- 8. ANY BILL THAT DOESN'T OFFER A DISCOUNT SHOULD BE PAID WITH A REWARD-BEARING CREDIT CARD.** Costco has a free Amex card that pays back up to 4 percent, and Amex also offers a Plum Card that pays 1.5 percent, 10 days. The billing cycle can make this 1.5 percent 45 days. Lowe's has a card that pays 5 percent. Most routine expenses, such as utilities, can be put on automatic payment to a rewards card, saving time and money.
- 9. REVISIT ALL THE COST CUTS YOU MADE THREE YEARS AGO.** There are more to be gleaned. LED light bulbs pay for themselves in a year and save money for 10 years. The big-box office supply stores have coupons available all the time. Credit card processors are very competitive, and NAMM has a slew of other programs to reduce members' expenses.
- 10. IF YOU'RE NOT ALREADY USING A PAYROLL SERVICE, EVEN FOR JUST FIVE EMPLOYEES, IT'S TIME TO SIGN UP.** We've found that the savings on workers' comp insurance alone has saved us enough to pay the entire cost of our payroll service.
- 11. WRITE A NEW BUDGET, AND RECALCULATE YOUR BREAK-EVEN POINT.** If you don't know what it is, ask your accountant. It's your most important economic tool.
- 12. GROW WITH CAUTION. PROMOTE FROM WITHIN.** A fancy title, more responsibility and a little extra cash might yield more productivity than a new employee who will have to be trained and has, at best, a 50/50 chance of survival. Overtime is still a bargain compared to the cost of a new employee. If you're going to hire, employment is a buyer's market now. — **G.B.**

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

The Second Mouse

“The early bird catches the worm, but it’s the second mouse that gets the cheese.” Many of us in music retail have unintentionally taken heed of this cliché. The simple truth is life’s often easier when we lay back and watch others fight for the lead.

When Google AdWords first came out, I was plagued by the necessity to purchase expensive keywords for our stores, just to be heard above the din. More consumers were going to Google for location information, prices and places to buy their wares. Still, we pretty much skipped the initial AdWords incarnation, even though we felt left in the dust by behemoth companies with larger Web advertising capital.

But something significant changed.

Last year, Google initiated location-based marketing. Searches used to be “bigger is more powerful,” regardless of geography. But now, when you plug in consumer services and product words, Google leads you by default to nearby locations, based on the computer’s or smartphone’s IP address. This makes for a profoundly relevant search result for local businesses. If you haven’t already looked into setting up a Google Places page, I can’t stress enough the importance of spending time tagging this. It’s also very easy. Unlike Google AdWords (early bird), Google Places (second mouse) is free. It’s also much more relevant.

Speaking of early birds, did anyone plunge headlong into MySpace? Talk about falling off the planet. I’m just glad my time on MySpace was limited to after-hours personal fun.

Today’s hipper version, Facebook, has become a powerful tool for connecting with customers. If you haven’t taken the time to develop a Facebook presence, I can’t admonish enough what a powerful, low-cost tool it can

be to communicate with a targeted customer demographic. You can do a ton of stuff for free, and the cost per action on Facebook banner advertising is a historically unprecedented marketing bargain. Compare the relative empty-air futility of radio and television, aimed at the dispassionate masses, to the prowess of messages to only those with a registered inclination toward music.

STOCKING DANGERS

How about inventory? Tackling new lines and products is a perpetual gamble. You can’t afford *not to* smatter your shelves with the latest and greatest, but we all know today’s clearance bins are loaded with yesterday’s can’t-live-without products. Understand, I’m not suggesting we avoid purchasing new products — that would be asinine. But diving into uncharted waters without a life preserver is reckless.

The wife and I have a simple grocery store rule: Don’t walk the aisles with an empty stomach. (We’ll inevitably leave with more than we would have if we’d eaten beforehand.) NAMM shows can be the same way. So my fellow buyers, plan ahead of time using two principles: Buy only three to five untested, new major “toys,” and never buy anything you can’t unload above cost in six months. On our calendar, we faithfully review the new lines and gear, and failure to sell means liquidation, channeling this discretionary cash into the next new thing. In many cases, we’re only repeating the process, but you have to try new things. The key is to minimize early-bird products.

Avoid the trap. Be the second mouse. **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*.



It often pays to take a wait-and-see approach with new technologies, products



Tuner envy.

Not every tuner is precise enough to be placed on a guitar virtuoso's headstock.

Steve Vai. A true virtuoso.

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SAMSON

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Holiday Add-on Plan

When your music lesson students walk into class, they normally bring their instruments and nothing else. Your teachers and staff often have no idea what sort of gear the students need. How many trumpet students have played a Miles Davis classic but never used a mute? How many guitar students have learned “Hotel California” but never touched a 12-string guitar? How many have never even plugged into a stomp box? (Maybe that’s why your effects sales are down.)



Your lesson program is the perfect place to start selling add-ons. Make sure you use it to your advantage

How many don’t have a tuner, capo or even a music stand? And what about your woodwind students? Are they playing on an inferior mouthpiece setup? More of them are than you think.

Don’t wait for your students to discover gear on their own. If they find out about it somewhere else, chances are they will purchase it there.

Students usually come to their lessons, teachers do their thing and the students go home. Teachers don’t spend time on gear talk, most likely because they figure sales staff will handle it. However, your sales staff isn’t talking to students because they assume teachers will talk gear. Not a good scenario for fourth-quarter sales.

SURVEY SAYS ...

Here’s a solution. Create a student gear survey. You and your staff can ask students, using a form, what they own. You won’t know what they need until you find out what they already have. When you design your form, use open-ended questions for part of it and a checklist for the rest.

A sample gear survey for guitarists should ask what kind of guitar they play, as well as what kind of amps and effects they use. The checklist should include such add-ons as tuners, capos, cables and cases. For band instrument students, you can ask what brand of instrument they play, along with what mouthpieces, mutes, stands and cleaning supplies they own.

Tweak this form to your store’s specifications, and use the data to help develop a buying plan for your holiday accessory sales. If

you have 50 guitar students who don’t have capos, buy 20 to sell to them.

Use these lists to develop your accessory marketing for the holidays. Creating a top-10 list of products that guitarists should have is great to handout for your students.

Also, make a video of why capos are cool, and have one of your guitar teachers play parts of some popular capo tunes, such as “Here Comes The Sun.” Post these videos on YouTube, and play them in-store. Give each teacher a capo for his or her students to try. In fact, do that for all the items on your top-10 list.

Don’t forget about print music. Your students and teachers may not know what you have in stock. If they’re working on improvisation, make sure you have a print product for that.

E-mail your students’ parents a list of what their children could use to enhance their learning experience, and put a great-gift-ideas-for-the-holidays spin on it.

Remember: The only way to know what products you need to stock is to talk with the customers who use them most, the students. So start introducing them to the vast and wild world of add-ons. Otherwise, they’ll buy their gear where they discover it. **MI**

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



“Yes doctor, it’s been at least four hours!”

Eddy Finn has that effect.



* May cause sleeplessness, time loss and overwhelming joy. Can lead to positive mood change without warning. Consult a professional before attempting jazz chords.

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BY KATIE KAILUS

PHOTOS BY DAVID TORRENCE

FAZIO'S RETAIL REVAMP

When a new real estate development threatened Mike Fazio's store, the owner of Fazio's Frets and Friends fired back. The outcome? The dealership of his dreams

Mike Fazio found an unlikely ally in eminent domain.

Seven years ago, his shop, Fazio's Frets and Friends, became the target of a large real estate project. The developer wanted to expand its shopping mall onto the combo dealership's site in Ellisville, Mo. — just outside St. Louis. According to Fazio, he rejected the developer's first offer. That's when things got ugly.



Mike Fazio

{FAZIO'S FRETS}

"After seeing the low offer [the developer] made and knowing the city government wanted the development to go ahead, we realized that the threat of eminent domain was real," said Fazio, who has owned Fazio's Frets and Friends for the past 33 years.

He decided to hit back. He banded together with a group of local merchants and concerned citizens and spearheaded "Stop Eminent Domain Abuse in Manchester." The campaign brought attention to their cause through local media and rallies outside city hall.

"It made the general public aware of how this law was being used as a threat, and if we didn't agree with the offers, our property could still be acquired," Fazio said.

Ironically, it might've been the best thing that's ever happened to Fazio's Frets and Friends. Backed by the campaign, a condemnation law attorney and a "spotlight of public attention," Fazio finally received what he called a "generous offer" in January 2008. And that allowed him to open the store of his dreams.

"The end result has been phenomenal," he said. "We have a wonderful store here, now.

"Our new location is more easily accessible. We've seen a lot more traffic. What's nice is we've started with a blank slate, a big rectangle, and we were able to build out the store just the way we wanted it to be."

EXTREME STORE MAKEOVER

The outcome is a 10,000-square-foot paragon of combo retail. Large acoustic guitar and amp rooms showcase the top tier of music product brands. A bustling lessons program teaches 750 students each week. It adds up to a family-friendly vibe designed to



The Fazio's Frets and Friends team

appeal to pros and parents alike.

"We totally concentrate on the customer's needs and have enough depth in our knowledge, inventory and lessons to take care of almost any situation," Fazio said. "That's what makes us successful."

Located a few miles from the former location, the new Fazio's was previously home to a Hollywood Video. This worked in the music retailer's favor when it began remodeling. During the video store's going-out-of-business sale, Fazio and James Gast, Fazio's store manager, cashed in on some cheap fixtures, including several movie display holders. With the help of added slatwall, they turned the displays into their major accessory walls that greet visitors as they enter.

"They are not fixtures that look like anything else you've ever seen," Fazio said. "They give us the benefit of customers being able to walk in the store

and constantly having a visual of the entire place, yet we have massive amounts of inventory that is accessible. Plus, the fixtures came at a great deal."

To the right of the entrance, Fazio's climate-controlled acoustic room boasts a hardwood floating floor created from a Pergo-type product with thick foam, helping cut down on outside noise. On the walls hang a deep stock of Taylor, R. Taylor, Bourgeois, Goodall, Breedlove, Santa Cruz and Martin guitars.

"We try to go with the standards obviously, but we also try to get guitars that are a little more unique," Gast said. "Customers like that."

The amp room is soundproofed and features metal doors with rubber seals. This way, musicians can crank an amp at stage volume without disturbing fellow shoppers.

"The original drawing for this room was an 8-foot ceiling, and we thought, 'Wait a minute. Let's

make it the height of the rest of the store, so we can put the high-end electrics here,'" Fazio said.

LOADED LESSONS

The company's lessons program brings 750 students through the doors on a weekly basis for guitar, bass, drum, banjo, voice, piano and violin instruction. And unlike many music retailers who use lessons solely as a traffic-generator, Fazio said his program has proven to be a profit center in itself.

"Once at a NAMM show, I went to a roundtable session about lessons," he said. "The first speaker stood up and said, 'Lessons are a loss leader, and we don't make anything on them.' My jaw was hanging open because I couldn't believe what this man was saying. The next person said almost the same thing — that the program just gets people into the store. Finally, the fourth or fifth person stood up and said, 'Well, I don't

know what is wrong with me, but I make a lot of money with lessons.' And I stood up and applauded. I was astonished because you can do it."

So how is Fazio profiting from his program? Through its sheer volume of students. And he generates that volume with a creative showroom layout, introductory workshops and a bevy of education programs for all types of music makers.

The 15 lesson studios are located at the back of the store, so students have to walk through the entire showroom and acquaint themselves with merchandise before reaching their rooms. Likewise, customers shopping in the store see the lessons taking place firsthand.

"We have strategically laid out the lesson rooms as part of

the display floor," Fazio said. "So every single student has to walk through the display twice every week.

"While [our sales staff] is showing an instrument to other customers, there are students around that are hearing this. They are some of our major buyers, too, and they are constantly looking at our inventory while waiting for a lesson."

The store also offers hour-long "one-evening classes," such as Jazz Progressions for the Rock Musician, designed to introduce potential students to different styles and techniques. Plus, Fazio's Frets and Friends offers group lessons and a year-round rock academy, both held in a large soundproofed group lessons space. On the occasional Saturday, the company opens

'Music lesson students are some of our major buyers, and they are constantly looking at our inventory.'

the doors to this performance room, so shoppers can hear the students play.

"These programs are great because they give [students] an opportunity to work with an instructor, do it structured and then give a performance," Fazio said.

The group lesson room is

also home to the store's clinics, which Fazio's usually holds twice a month. These vary from manufacturer-sponsored events with artists to songwriting seminars put on by local college professors. Fazio said such events are an easy way to get new traffic into the store, and he even turns to his own family for help with them.

"My son is a chiropractor, and he has developed a short program called Playing For Longevity that shows what players can do, as far as stretching, player positioning and helping them play into their 90s," he said.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY OPERATION

Step into Fazio's break room, and you feel as if you're standing in the middle of a friend's kitchen. The room has

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{FAZIO'S FRET}

a coffee pot, bean grinder and kitchenette, along with a TV and toys for employees' kids to play with when they stop by — and according to Fazio, they stop by frequently. It may seem trivial, but Fazio credited his store's success to this family-friendly atmosphere, which comes from the top down.

"My children came here a lot, and now a lot of the employees' kids stop by," he said. "They are family, and they are treated like family. I hope they all feel it, and I think they do."

That quality is transposed to customers, as well. Fazio's has many regulars who are greeted by name when they enter the store. Fazio said knowing your customer and his or her playing ability is crucial to making sales, especially with beginning

musicians.

"Knowing your customer and recognizing that they are starting just like we did at one point is important," he said. "[Our industry is] totally niche, but it's the realization that specialty retailing can be [like] an exclusive country club, where if you don't have membership, you're not invited. We see it in all industries. We could totally baffle an entry-level person with jargon and acronyms. That's the wrong way to handle it, and we don't handle it that way here."

Fazio creates this environment partly by making sure his staff are both generalists and specialists. "When we have a customer who is interested in recording gear, we point them in the direction of James because he's an audio engineer," Fazio

said. "He's the go-to. We have specialists in each department, but we are all generalists.

"It's interesting. With lessons, you see the entry-level people and the hobbyist-level people, and that's one type of customer. And then you have the pro-level or the high-end customers, and that's another type of customer. And then you have the intermediate level. We are blessed that our staff can handle all of them. That's a tricky thing."

"We all work together, meaning that there is not one job in this store that Mike hasn't done or that I haven't done," Gast said. "Whether it's cleaning bathrooms or whatever — there is nothing that we ask of our guys that we don't do ourselves. To this day, we run split shifts here. Every person in this store works two

nights a week, and the rest are days, including myself and Mike until recently.

"Plus, we reward our employees. They mean a lot to us, and we want to keep them here."

And Fazio's something-for-everyone showroom also gives customers a feeling of belonging. In this, he's found a silver lining in his ordeal.

"I wouldn't wish this long, difficult process on anyone but jokingly say I now have a Ph.D. in condemnation law from the university of street smarts," he said.

"However, the end result for us was phenomenal, and we got to start from scratch when building it. While I say to my friends, 'Be careful what you wish for,' we do have a beautiful place here, now." **MI**

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+ FAZIO'S FRET'S AND FRIENDS WALK-THROUGH

A glimpse inside the 10,000-square-foot store



AMP ROOM

Guitarists can test amps at stage volume inside the amp room. "The original drawing for this room was an 8-foot ceiling, and we thought, 'Wait a minute. Let's make it the height of the rest of the store, so we can put the high-end electrics in here,'" Fazio said.



FULL SHOWROOM

Fazio's showroom features track lighting and a black floor to accent its stock. "We have accessories up front and lesson rooms in the back," Fazio said. "We wanted to have a flow to the store. We saw this building was a big, open rectangle, and we thought this would be perfect for what we want to do."



GROUP PERFORMANCE ROOM

The group performance space features professional lighting, along with the neon sign that hung at the old location. On the occasional Saturday, the room's doors are opened, so students can serenade customers while they shop — further showing what the lesson program offers.



ACCESSORY DISPLAYS

Former video store shelves have been reconstructed into accessory displays that showcase small goods without obstructing views of the store. "[We thought], 'Let's throw away all the racks that come on the shelving and put slatwall on the sides of them and create our own,'" Fazio said. "It's not a fixture that looks like anything else you've ever seen."



ACOUSTIC ROOM

Fazio's acoustic room features a floating floor and year-round humidity control. The space is jam-packed with a deep inventory of acoustics, including Fazio's biggest line, Taylor Guitars. "We try to go with the standards, obviously, but we also try to get guitars that are a little more unique," James Gast said. "Customers like that."



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Art of the Add-on

BIG-DOLLAR STRATEGIES FOR MAXIMIZING ACCESSORY SALES



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+ Tune Up

Clip-ons breathe new life into the tuner category.

SNARK TUNERS This relative newcomer to the industry has wowed retailers and customers alike with its affordable (around \$20) clip-on tuners that, as one dealer put it, yield “more than 60 points” margin. Ed Nystrom of Effingham, Ill.-based Samuel Music has sold them to everyone from guitarists to ukulele players. He commented that the tuners have “quickly outsold every tuner we’ve ever stocked” for their vibrant colors and large display.

All Snark retailers agreed the best way to sell a unit is to include it with a guitar demo. Aaron Rathbone of Atlanta’s Dirt Cheep Music even unwraps a tuner, as if it’s a given the customer will buy it.

“First, we explain that because it uses vibration to tune, it is more accurate overall, but it is especially accurate because the customer can tune even if the room is noisy,” Rathbone said. “Then the customer sees the design, as we show how fast the tuner reacts to scales and how brilliant the display is. We close the sale by simply saying, ‘Once you’re finished, the person next to you can tune by flipping the switch from vibration to microphone.’”

“Sometimes, they buy two. Sometimes, someone else overhearing the demo buys one.” snarktuners.com



KORG PITCHCLIP PC-1

With a \$20 street price, the Pitchclip boasts bang-for-the-buck value with its discreet design and easy viewing.

Chris Basile of South Jersey Music in Sewell, N.J., keeps Pitchclips attached to different guitars in his showroom as a display technique. And even though he singled out “any guitar or bass player” as the target customer, Basile said the tuner will appeal to just about every musician since it’s chromatic. korg.com

KALA KC02 During the past two years, clip-on tuners have taken off at Dan Ernst’s dealership, Grand Central Music of San Luis Obispo, Calif. The Kala KC02 is his best-seller, with its host of uke-friendly features. Single-button operation accesses ukulele C and D tuning, as well as chromatic mode. Speaking to the popularity of the tuner, and clip-ons in general, Ernst said, “The needle doesn’t bounce all over the place, and the display changes color when the instrument is in tune.” kalaukulele.com

+ Tone Enhancers

Items made to improve an instrument’s sound within seconds.

KICKPORT Why is Rejjie Troup excited about the Kickport? “It works,” said the manager of Dale’s Drum Shop in Harrisburg, Pa. “We’ve never heard any bass drum that didn’t sound better after the Kickport was installed.” Troup listed the unit’s simple installation, reasonable price (roughly \$40) and design as selling points. Dale’s Drum Shop displays Kickport in a bass drum next to a drumhead demo station. “This way, it’s easy for a drummer in the store to get an accurate idea of the before-and-after tone of the bass drum,” Troup said. kickport.com



THE STRING CLEANER For Michael Jones, The String Cleaner’s concept alone makes it a unique item at his dealership, JustStrings.com in Milford, N.H. “You slide it back and forth over the strings to try to remove some of the dirt and buildup that happens when players are fingering the strings on the fretboard,” he said. “Essentially, the idea is to make the strings sound newer longer.” His website automatically cross merchandises the item with other products that previous String Cleaner customers have purchased. Street price: roughly \$10. thestringcleaner.com

+ Practice Mates

Three standout small goods that appeal to students and pros guitarists alike.

VOX AMPLUG Chicago Music Exchange's David Kalt singled out this tiny unit for its "way better tone" than other mini headphone amps. Plus, he added, it "looks like a cool vintage Vox" and is "easy to travel with." Vox amPlug comes in a range of models, including a classic AC30 and Joe Satriani version. Street price: \$40-\$50. voxamps.com



RIFFTEK RIFFBANDZ & RIFFGRIP Industry newcomer Rifftek is making noise at The Music Room, John Giovannoni's Palatine, Ill., full-line shop. He displays both of the company's products, Riffbandz and Riffgrip, side by side, playing a demo video through a netbook. Riffbandz is a simple training system for string players that features guitar string-like packaging and an access code for handy online training tutorials. Riffgrip stickers attach to any guitar pick to make it less slippery. He sells them for \$9.99 and \$6.99, respectively. rifftek.com

+ Register Ringers

Easy add-ons with value-added packaging to boot.

RICO 3-REED PACK "It's so simple but so innovative for Rico to package them as a three-pack," said Mark Despotakis of Progressive Music in McKeesport, Pa. "A customer who walks in and wants to buy one reed, 99 percent of the time, they end up buying a three-pack. It's inexpensive enough for the customer and profitable for us at the same time." Each of Rico's packs features individual plastic reed holders and is cut from flexible cane to ensure seamless playability. ricoreeds.com



SAMSON CO1U The advent of USB microphones has created a new customer for the category: anyone with a computer or tablet. For this reason, Doug Ponier of Atlanta-based Ponier Music displays the Samson CO1U at the counter as an impulse purchase. The USB condenser mic, which has a \$99 street price, comes with a cable and Cakewalk's Sonar LE digital audio workstation software. samsontech.com



+ New Marvels

First-of-their-kind accessories with talking points that sell.

THE GROMBAL There may be a slew of quick-release cymbal mounts on the market, but for Rejjie Troup, none compares to The Grombal. "It's an easily installed protector for your crashes and rides that remains on the cymbals all the time," he said. "You can't lose it. The need for wing nuts, sleeves and felts on a cymbal stand tilter is eliminated, so it covers multiple product uses. It allows the cymbal to move freely on the stand, so there is also less chance of breakage for guys who might overplay their cymbals. Drummers can still use felts and a wing nut with it if they want less cymbal movement, but most of our players don't. It really speeds up setup and teardown. It's the most reasonably priced item in the cymbal accessory category."

Troup displays them in a fishbowl at the counter and among his cymbal accessories. Likewise, Donn Bennett of Donn Bennett Drum Studio in Bellevue, Wash., puts The Grombal on all of his display cymbals and demonstrates the ease of removing cymbals from their stands. He said the cymbal mount is great for music teachers who are tired of cymbal felts and washers "disappearing." Street price: \$5. thegrombal.com

SOULDIER STRAPS Souldier's green angle gives it a leg up in the crowded guitar strap market. Brian Westfall pointed out that the company's use of recycled seat belts ("What's a more durable material than seat belts?" he asked rhetorically) and vintage patterns set it apart at his dealership, Chicago Music Exchange. He also praised Souldier's marketing, which capitalizes on its handmade quality. "The target customers for Souldier straps are broad due to the wide range of patterns and prices available." souldier.us

COOPERSTAND INSTRUMENT

STANDS Ray Aleshire of Elderly Instruments in Lansing, Mich., suggests the Cooperstand Pro-Mini instrument stand as a must-have accessory for such small instruments as ukuleles, violins and mandolins, adding that the unit's also iPad-friendly. He attributed the stand's success to its ergonomic design, which is "very compact when folded and easily carried around by players." Constructed from solid sapele, the stand can support instruments as deep as 3 inches and offers neoprene contact points for extra protection. cooperstand.com

ALESIS IO DOCK

With various inputs for microphones, guitars and audio gear, the Alesis iO Dock iPad holder complements any musician's instrument or recording setup. "There are already numerous apps for virtually all types of musicians, songwriters and recording enthusiasts," said John Grabowski of Sweetwater in Fort Wayne, Ind. "The target market is all of those people and more." The iO dock features two combination XLR/quarter-inch inputs, a plug-and-play guitar-direct switch and producer-friendly MIDI jacks. Street price: \$200. alesis.com



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THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

Want Fries With That?

Pull into any fast-food joint, and the person on the other side of the counter will automatically say, “Would you like to try one of our combos today?” What they’re really asking is if you want fries with your meal, and it’s the oldest upsell in the book. The cost of a burger may be close to \$4, but adding fries and drink for a “combo” is \$5.50 plus tax. Profit margins on a drink and fries are big.



Now apply that same thinking to your music store. Start by making a mental list of small items you know are not only good profit generators but great tools for customers. What items do you have that are less than, say, \$5 that will make a customer’s life easier and can be combined with another item to generate a bigger sales ticket? These are your healthy versions of fries and a drink, the easy add-ons — or what I think of as add-ons for beginners. And by nature and cost, some of them are easier to upsell than others.

THE ADD-ON PROCESS

I departmentalize these items in my head. For example, when a customer buys a pack of reeds for a saxophone, I automatically ask if he or she needs cork grease, a cleaning cloth, a reed saver or a strap. I sell cork grease almost 80 percent of the time because it’s less than \$1. I also sell a lot of cleaning cloths and reed savers. They’re less than \$5 each.

However, straps are more than \$5, and a new case and mouthpiece are more than \$25. I know we’ll only be able to upsell these items to specific customers, namely those who’ve been playing for more than a year or are moving up to a better instrument. Also, notice that I asked if they needed a specific item. I didn’t ask, “Is there anything else you need?” Recommend what your customer may forget he or she needs, and you will make the sale.

EASY ADD-ONS

Now, let’s take a look at how you can better departmentalize your inventory and train your staff to sell these add-on items.

Easy add-ons are items that most beginner students and first-time buyers aren’t sure they need. These items make excellent SKUs

for new salespeople and teachers to use to practice upselling. The items should be demonstrated to show why they’re a good value combined with another item. Here are a few popular examples.

String winders and cleaning cloths. If a customer buys a pack of strings, he probably needs a string winder. Many new students don’t even know string winders exist. Offer to change a string for them, and demonstrate the winder. It’s only \$1.50, but sell 200 a year and you have \$300. Same with cleaning cloths. Unless your customer has a roadie, a cleaning cloth is a must.

Tuners and metronomes. Guitarists need a tuner, and drummers need a metronome, period. I know the argument: People already have free tuner and metronome apps on their smartphones. Remember, many kids under age 12 don’t have smartphones. They need a tuner and metronome, and they need a real one with bells and whistles.

Demonstrate why they need it, and demonstrate all the bells and whistles. For instance, explain that you can’t clip your smartphone to the end of your acoustic guitar headstock as a tuner. These items should be requirements for your lesson program.

The other argument I hear is that beginner guitar packs already include a tuner. Remember, many acoustic packs don’t. Have tuners next to your sales

Train your staff to sell add-ons the same way fast-food restaurants sell combo meals

counter, and keep batteries in stock, too — many people will see them and remember they need an extra pair. I recommend to customers that they carry extra batteries in their guitar bag or case. Keep 9-volt batteries in stock for effects pedals, too.

Picks, sticks and strings.

These items are self-explanatory, as you can't make music without them. I pitch these to customers as the disposable razor blades of the music products industry. You may only buy a drum set or guitar once, but you'll always need picks, sticks and strings. Your teachers should explain the benefits of having fresh strings, picks and sticks, too.

Capos and slides for guitarists and tuning keys and stick bags for drummers. I think of these as the intermediate items of

They cost more than \$5. Every drummer needs a place to store sticks, mallets and brushes. Plus, there are lots of drum keys on the market, but serious drummers need an all-in-one model — one that includes a wrench and screwdriver. Same with capos and slides. Serious guitar players will have a nice capo and slide, and students who've been taking lessons in your program will eventually graduate up to these items, too.

Earplugs. Don't let customers, especially drum students, into practice rooms without them.

ADVANCED ADD-ONS

Advanced add-ons are SKUs that may not move as often due to their higher prices. Still, there are a few things you can do to improve your chances of

selling these items.

Hardshell cases. Most prepacks come with a gig bag, but what about the customer who's ready to move up from a beginner prepack? I explain to customers that I wouldn't protect a \$600 guitar with a \$35 gig bag. The guitar needs a sturdy case.

It's said that a picture's worth a thousand words, and so is a good sales prop. One of our teachers had a nice high-end guitar in a soft gig bag when his dog knocked it over. The neck broke in half, and the repair would have cost the same as a new model. I bought it from him for pennies on the dollar and leave it hanging behind our sales counter. It looks terrible, and that's the point. People ask what happened to it. When we explain the guitar was in a soft gig bag, they start

thinking about their own gear. We've sold lots of hard cases because of that guitar.

Amps. Every electric guitar player and many acoustic players need a good amplifier. Many of today's prepacks come with an amp, so make sure you can explain the value of the product you're upselling.

I generally start a demonstration the moment a customer hears the amplifier in the prepack they're thinking about purchasing. Obviously, they aren't going to spend a few hundred on a prepack and splurge on another amp. But it plants the seed, and they know what to expect when they need to move up to a better model. **MI**

Billy Cuthrell owns and operates Progressive Music Center. Contact him at billy@raleighmusiclessons.com.

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Add-ons on Steroids

As a student of sales, I love shopping for cars. It's an education in the very best and the very worst of salesmanship. In my most recent experience, the salesperson was masterful at the add-on. Soundproof undercoating, extended warranties, window tinting, graphics, remote start, and on and on. I figured that if I bought everything suggested during the selling process, I could have added a solid 20 percent to the cost. And the funny thing is, considering all that stuff was a lot of fun for me as the buyer.



Think big with add-ons. The person coming in for a mic cable could be a customer for an entire recording setup

It got me thinking about our industry. The good people know that add-ons are crucial to the profitability of sales. They add strings and straps to guitars, music stands and books to band instruments, and so on. If you add a couple of small items to every sale, you clearly improve your bottom line. And if you add bigger items or more items, then you really start to make a serious difference.

The best example I've ever heard was during a NAMM University session with speaker Eddy Kay. Some of you may have heard him tell the story of a customer, years ago, coming into his A/V shop, asking for Betamax videotapes. (Set the "way back" machine, Peabody.) Kay said, "Would you like one of these nice, new portable Betacam recorders to go with those tapes?" And lo and behold, he made the sale. The moral of the story: If we don't ask, we don't receive.

ADDING UP

I took this as an important lesson learned. I'd been under the delusion that if I asked for an expensive add-on I'd lose the deal. Instead, I found that customers in a buying state of mind were often very receptive to massive amounts of purchases beyond the base unit. So when I sold a keyboard, I recommended a home studio

to go with it, along with the normal array of cables, cases and extra sounds. A drum kit was accessorized with not only sticks, bags and cymbals but the suggestion of an electronic kit.

Sometimes, the major purchase is the add-on. When someone comes into your store asking for a mic cable, could there ever be a better time to ask, "What mic cable are you currently using?"

That opens the door to suggestions about better mics, signal processors, the latest digital mixer and so on. The customer looking for a MIDI cable is a candidate for the latest software or a new computer. Someone coming in for a piano instruction book is well-served being shown pianos.

I've even translated this into ideas I use now that I'm in the manufacturing sector. At Wechter, we make a purpose-built Nashville-tuned guitar. The thing about Nashville tuning is that large portions of the guitar-playing public have never actually tried a Nashville-tuned guitar, even though they've unknowingly heard it on countless recordings. (Think "Hotel California" and "Wild Horses.") This makes a Nashville-tuned guitar the perfect add-on. A skilled sales professional, after selling a requested pack of guitar strings, could ask a customer, "Do you have a couple of minutes? I'd like your opinion on something brand-new."

This type of add-on selling is a numbers game. You clearly won't be successful every time. Still, sometimes you will succeed. And the more often you try, the more often you'll surprise yourself and sell something that the customer didn't even realize he wanted or needed. **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.



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ASTEROPE | BY SARA FARR

ASTEROPE CONNECTS

Ask guitarists what the most important aspect of their sound is, and you'll hear about an instrument, amp or effects setup. What probably won't get mentioned is a cable. Dariush Rad of Asterope wants to change that.

"The first time I plugged in and heard an Asterope cable, my jaw dropped," said Rad, the company's founder. "The analogy I would use is the difference between standard television and high-definition."

Rad, a producer and artist, said he was introduced to the proprietary technology behind Asterope's cables in 2004. At the time, he was designing integrated presentation platforms for musicians through his Austin, Texas-based advertising agency and multimedia production company, Niroomand. He began discussions with the cable developers, getting feedback from other musicians and producers.

"The more artists I shared it with, it didn't take long before I realized this [technology] is extremely unique and very special," Rad said. "More than anything, for me it was the intense connection that you're able to make with the music, both as a player and as a listener."

BRAND BUILDING

Asterope soft-launched at this year's winter NAMM convention with the slogan "Feels Good, Sounds Better." The company employed what Rad called an "early adopter" marketing strategy, building word-of-mouth through an exclusive, direct-to-



Asterope artist Jack Pearson (left) with Dariush Rad

Musicians have already taken to cable newcomer Asterope. Now, the company makes its pitch to MI retailers

consumer sales model.

He also reached out to artists, producers and engineers through a series of invitation-only events in Austin and Nashville, Tenn. There, he encouraged them to test an Asterope cable against their current cable. When they expressed interest — and Rad said there was always a "wow" moment — he'd have them talk about their careers on video, with a short, unscripted plug for Asterope at the end. Artists were compensated only with a

cable, not large endorsement deals.

The videos were then posted on the Asterope website, serving as not only testimonials but an archive of the musicians' histories. Among the endorsers are Bob Babbitt, David Grissom, Lance Keltner, Stuart Sullivan, Ruthie Foster, Kenny Vaughan and Jack Pearson.

Currently, Asterope offers 6-, 10-, 15-, 20- and 40-foot instrument cables starting at \$59 and also 1- and 3-foot patch cables starting at \$24. Brand-specific features include directional arrows and a reinforced solid-rubber bridge between the connector and cable. The NAMM Show 2012 will see the introduction of cables geared specifically to various instruments, such as guitar, bass and keyboard.

"During the past six to eight months, as we were drilling in and starting to better the flagship product, we realized that there were some things we could

be doing to make [the cables] more application-specific, based on the performance characteristics of these various instruments, whether it's an active bass or passive bass, a keyboard versus a guitar," Rad said. "We're really crawling inside the nuances of the product and needs of the artist to keep things as proficient as they can be."

RETAIL ROLLOUT

The upcoming NAMM show will also see the year-old company actively seeking MI and pro audio dealers. Although it plans to keep the direct-to-consumer sales component, Asterope will employ MAP pricing and support dealers through Internet and print ad campaigns. Plus, it will offer a drop-shipping program for dealers with online inventories.

"We're promoting in a way that is much more aggressive than most other suppliers," Rad said. "What we want to be for dealers is a good partner, and we plan on doing that by providing added value," such as targeted Facebook and YouTube ads, which Rad said will help drive foot traffic to stores.

He's also considering expanding the testimonial section of the Asterope website with personal histories and stories from semi-pro and hobbyist players.

"More than anything, it's about the intense connection with the music, both as a player and as a listener," Rad said. "That is really the impetus [behind the company]."

"The technology is descendant to the human impact." **MI**

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STRING SWING | BY JEFF CAGLE

THE CATEGORY KILLER

Sometimes, it pays to be early to market. In the case of String Swing, Travis Thieman said he believes getting into the market early has led people to associate guitar hangers with his company. He even noted that String Swing's marquee product, CC01, a home and studio hardwood hanger, has achieved what he called the "Kleenex effect."

"We have a lot of competition coming from overseas, but people see a guitar hanger and will say it's a String Swing," said Thieman, company vice president and son of String Swing founder and owner Paul Thieman. "It's like with Kleenex. People associate our name with guitar hangers because we were in it so early and our numbers are so large at this time."

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the Wisconsin-based company sells close to a half-million hangers per year, and 2011 is projected to be one of its best to date, according to Thieman. This comes on the heels of the economic recession, which he said included a poor year when the housing and job markets collapsed. Still, Thieman added that String Swing has since returned to growth, and the tough economic times could actually spur an increase in business.

"Accessories are small and affordable, and when someone can't afford a new guitar, they'll instead look toward a new strap or effects pedal and maybe some displays to dress it up a little bit," he said.



From left: Paul Thieman, Anne Tainter and Travis Thieman

DOMESTIC QUALITY

Thieman attributed String Swing's strong performance partly to its U.S. manufacturing. "We control the whole process right here," he said. "They're making these things right outside my office. If anything ever goes wrong or there are any changes we want to make, our hands are on it from the beginning to the end of the product."

"And we don't cut corners on our components. Because in the end, it's just going to cost us more money because we offer a lifetime warranty. So it's built to last, and it does."

And customers are usually one person away from speaking with someone who's hands-on in the manufacturing process. "You're not going through a chain of transfers that will never get you anywhere close to the manufacturing process," Thieman said. "If you have a product

At 25, String Swing achieves the 'Kleenex effect' among guitar hangers

and we're not going anywhere," he said.

issue, anyone you talk to can get you to someone who is hands-on with the process, who can get you the answer you want usually at the time you call."

A STEP AHEAD

The secret behind String Swing's quarter-decade of success? Thieman offered that it comes down to watching the market and putting out a quality product at an affordable price.

"You also have to try to stay one step ahead of [customer] wants with your own ideas and never take for granted that we've been around for X years

and we're not going anywhere," he said.

"Most who do business with us come back for more. They are treated well, and they get a great product at an affordable price. It's not the cheapest, but it's also not the most expensive."

Plus, there's an intangible quality to guitar hangers. For Thieman, they're much more than a way to display instruments. They're a tool that inspires musicians to practice.

"When you have a guitar in a case, it's often out of sight, out of mind," he said. "When you walk by a guitar hanging on a wall, you can just grab it, sit down and play a little bit. When you practice more, you become a better guitar player, and when you become better, you want to buy a nicer guitar, effects pedals and amps. Our company's owner decided to make the first hanger to have the instrument at hand." **MI**

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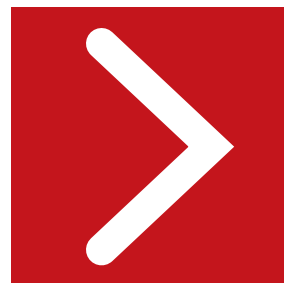
PERCUSSION IN THE SCHOOLS

Red Hot Chili Pepper's drummer, Chad Smith, performed for over 1500 students at PMC's 2010 PITS assembly at Peters Township High School in McMurray, PA.



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GEAR



OASIS | OH-1

Much-Needed Oasis

Oasis' new OH-1 Guitar Humidifier protects instruments from cracking in dry weather with long-lasting humidification. The unit's design lets guitarists see when it's time to refill but won't leak from overfilling. The body of Oasis is made from a specially designed fabric that lets water vapor pass through it. As the vapor transmission takes place, a vacuum is created, and Oasis shrinks to compensate for the loss of water. The unit fits between the strings and never touches the body of the instrument. oasishumidifiers.com

> InsideGEAR

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EDDY FINN | NEW LINES

Eddy's Swimming With New Models

Eddy Finn has released a new line of ukuleles, cases, tuners, straps and gig bags. The Eddy Finn line consists of more than 50 models of ukuleles and banjoles in a variety of woods, including mango, mahogany, swamp ash, bubinga, spalted maple and koa. The Finn-shaped sound hole is aromatically enhanced with a tropical scent formula.

{eddyfinnukes.com}



AKAI PROFESSIONAL | ANALOG CUSTOM SHOP

Akai's Custom Craze

Akai Professional is now shipping its new Analog Custom Shop line of guitar pedals. Ten guitar effects pedals make up the Analog Custom Shop line, including the Phase Shifter, Analog Delay, Blues Overdrive, Chorus, Compressor, Drive3 Overdrive, Deluxe Distortion, Flanger, Drive3 Fuzz and Drive3 Distortion. They use all-analog design to deliver the sound quality of boutique pedals. {akaipro.com}

MODTONE | COLISEUM REVERB

Gladiator's Choice

ModTone recently added the Coliseum Reverb pedal to its family of effects.

The Coliseum Reverb features three modes to satisfy the reverb needs of every player. The pedals include room, grand hall and spring settings. The Coliseum Reverb features a metal chassis, true-bypass switching and a five-year ModTone warranty.

{modtone-effects.com}



> AddOns

PRO ROCK GEAR | LEGEND SERIES

Perfect for Pros

ProRock Gear has released the Legend series of hardshell cases and gig bags. The hardshell cases are constructed of a lightweight but reinforced hard wood shell that provides the highest level of protection in a hard-shell case. The gig bags provide protection and safety in a soft case. They boast a weather-resistant two-tone rugged nylon exterior and 20 mm of reinforced thick PE foam protection on the inside.

{prorockgear.com}



GUILD | GAD SERIES

Guild's Mad GAD

Guild has introduced the Guild Acoustic Design (GAD) series, which includes 19 guitars. The instruments feature all-solid tonewoods; dovetail neck joint construction; and a slim, satin-finished neck. Body styles include dreadnought, classical, concert, and the new orchestra and jumbo models. Pictured is the D-125 dreadnought, which features an all-mahogany construction and a satin finish. {guildguitars.com}



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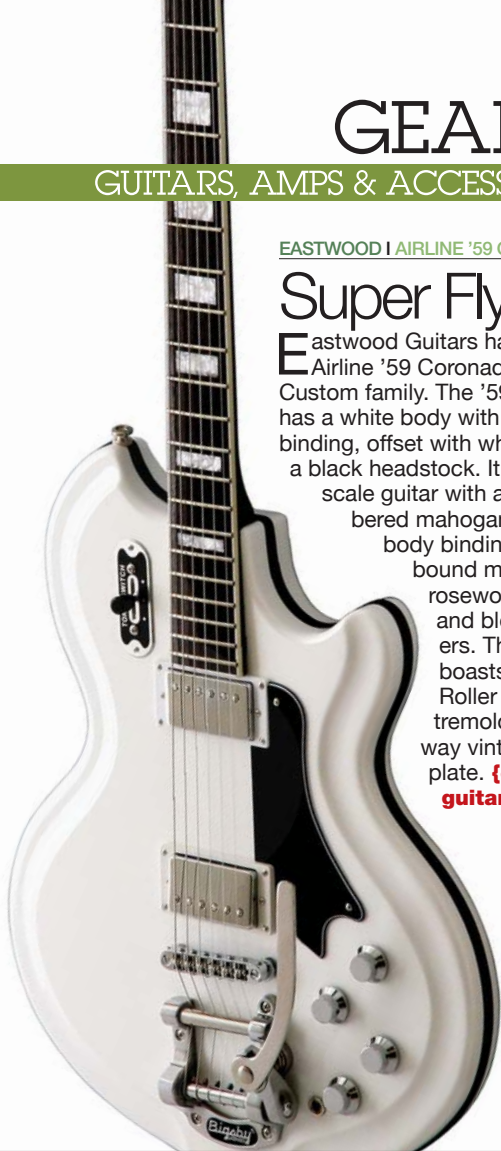
GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

EASTWOOD | AIRLINE '59 CORONADO

Super Fly

Eastwood Guitars has added the Airline '59 Coronado to its '59 Custom family. The '59 Coronado has a white body with black rubber binding, offset with white binding on a black headstock. It's a 25.5-inch scale guitar with a toned chambered mahogany body, rubber body binding and bolt-on bound maple neck with rosewood fingerboard and block markers. The guitar also boasts a TonePros Roller Bridge, Bigsby tremolo and three-way vintage switch plate. eastwoodguitars.com



> AddOns

LEVY'S LEATHERS | BLACK STRAPS

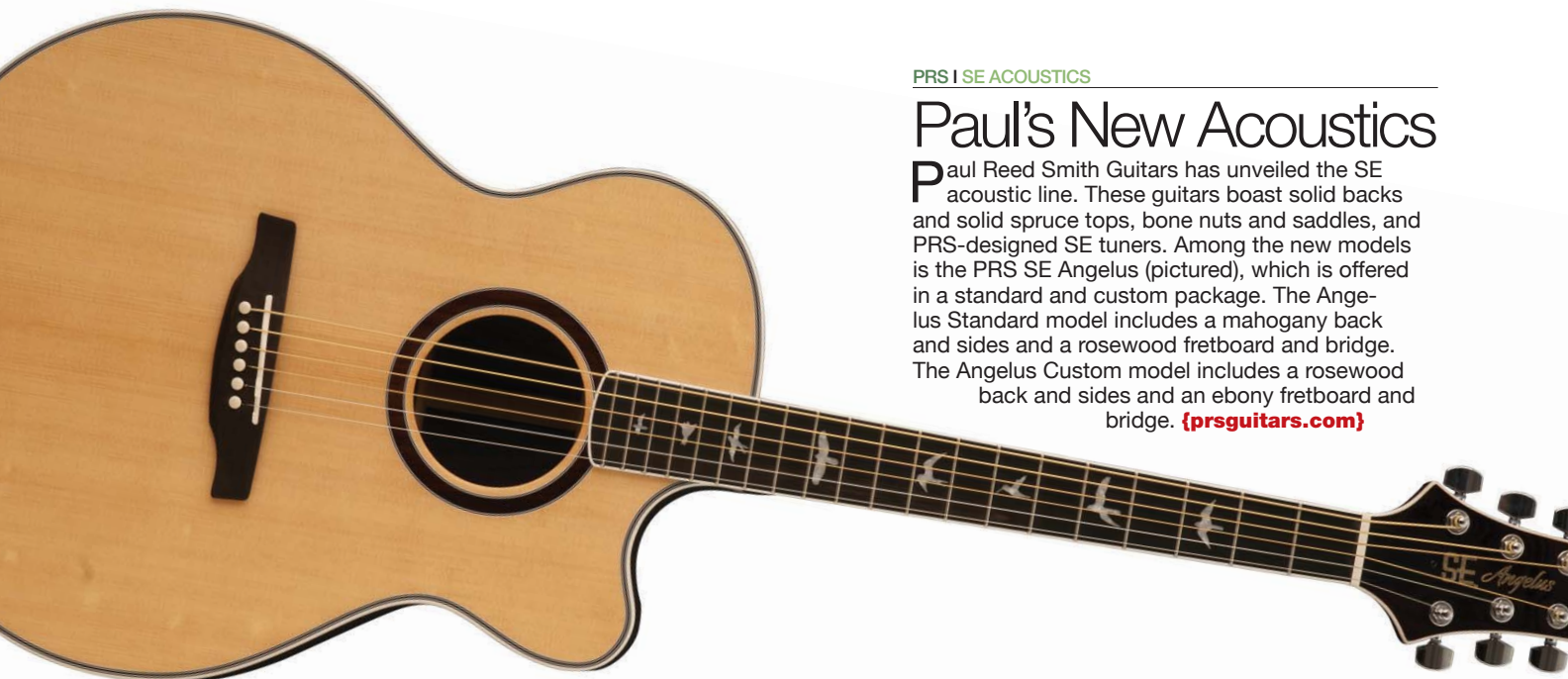
Back to Black

Levy's Leathers recently released its black-on-black guitar strap designs. The straps are 2-inch black garment leather with black embroidery, polypropylene webbing backing and a tri-glide adjustment. Pictured is model MS-S7GPE. The straps are available in six designs. levysleathers.com

PRS | SE ACOUSTICS

Paul's New Acoustics

Paul Reed Smith Guitars has unveiled the SE acoustic line. These guitars boast solid backs and solid spruce tops, bone nuts and saddles, and PRS-designed SE tuners. Among the new models is the PRS SE Angelus (pictured), which is offered in a standard and custom package. The Angelus Standard model includes a mahogany back and sides and a rosewood fretboard and bridge. The Angelus Custom model includes a rosewood back and sides and an ebony fretboard and bridge. prsguitars.com





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GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



INDY CUSTOM GUITARS | USA CUSTOM SHOP

Indy's Own Custom Shop

Indy Custom Guitars, a division of SHS International, recently announced its new USA Custom Shop, which produces a limited number of aged and reconceived American models under its new USA Reserved line. Each instrument is hand-assembled using special aging techniques, creating a one-of-a-kind feel. shsint.net

> AddOns

BIG BENDS | LIL LUBER

Big Bends Line Expands

Big Bends has launched its new Lil Luber Nut Sauce applicator. The package is ideal for the occasional player who only owns one or two guitars but wants the benefits of smoother tuning and longer string life. bigbends.com



OPTEK | FRET LIGHT GUITAR PRO 6

Light Me Up

Optek's new Guitar Pro 6 Fretlight Ready version is a program designed to create, edit and play tablature for guitars, basses and other fretted instruments.

The software boasts such features as loop, play and slow down tempo. It also lets users see fingering positions light up on the Fretlight's fingerboard. fretlight.com



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JENSEN | JET ELECTRIC

Jet Set

Jensen Speakers has added the 10-inch Electric Lightning to the Jensen Jet series. The 10-inch Electric Lightning's tone is warm and bold with shimmering highs. Like the 12-inch version, the 10-inch is a rock 'n' roll speaker that can handle heavy playing styles and is designed for loud applications.

{jensentone.com}



KTS | STOCK BRIDGE COMPONENTS

Titanium Strength

New KTS Tone-Resonant Titanium stock bridge components feature longer sustain, clearer note separation and string-to-string definition. The units also offer weight relief, as titanium is lighter than steel. {apintl.com}



CHARVEL | DESOLATION

Top 10

Charvel has introduced its new Desolation series guitars. The line boasts 10 new models, including four single-cutaway DS models, three double-cutaway DC models and three distinctive Skatecaster SK models. All the instruments feature mahogany bodies and necks, dual humbucking pickup configurations with three-way toggle switching, and solid and transparent finishes. {charvel.com}



WASHBURN GUITARS | RESONATOR SERIES

Old-timer

Washburn Guitars has added the Resonator series to its line of folk and bluegrass instruments. The guitars include the R15R and R15S acoustic resonators, along with their acoustic/electric counterparts, the R15RCE (pictured) and R45RCE. All four instruments feature a spider-bridge and a single cone resonator design, the combo of which creates classic resonator tone. MSRP: \$712.90–\$890.90. washburn.com



KALA | SUBDUCTIVE SERIES

Subductive Solids

Kala has debuted the Subductive series of Solid Body U-Basses. It's the latest addition to Kala's line of 21-inch-scale bass instruments. Subductive, or S-U-B, models are available in sunburst, red and black finishes and feature a shadow pickup system with volume control. ubass.com



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TRAVELER GUITARS | EG-2

Travel Companion

The new Traveler Guitar EG-2 is a full 25.5-inch-scale electric guitar featuring a compact double-cutaway body shape, three-ply pickguard, maple neck and fretboard, and classic black finish with white pickup covers. At less than 30 inches long, the EG-2 stows easily in airline overhead compartments and weighs less than 5 pounds. MAP: \$469.99.

travelerguitar.com

BOSS | RC-300

Meet the New Boss

Boss has unveiled the RC-300 Loop Station, which is equipped with multitrack loop phrases, three hours of stereo recording time, built-in effects and enhanced real-time control options. The RC-300 is ideal for instrumentalists and vocalists that incorporate live looping in their musical performances. bossus.com



> AddOns

RAPCOHORIZON | i-JAM 3-N-1

Jam-packed

RapcoHorizon's new i-JAM 3-n-1 smartphone interface serves as an audio interface that connects an instrument to iPhone applications. The interface is ideal for electric instrument players. In addition to interfacing with iPhone apps, the i-JAM 3-n-1 also features a built-in amplifier and MP3 playalong practice device. rapcohorizon.com

AKAI | EIE PRO

Akai Goes Pro

Akai Professional recently launched the EIE Pro digital audio interface and USB hub. The EIE Pro is a tabletop audio and MIDI interface with USB hub in one box that connects virtually any kind of musical gear. The USB audio interface on the EIE Pro is tailored for professional, project and portable studio setups. This four-in, four-out device enables professional recording at up to 24-bit resolution and sample rates of 44.1 kHz, 48 kHz, 88.2 kHz or 96 kHz into virtually any DAW, recording or performance software on a Mac or PC.

akaiapro.com/eiepro





> AddOns

HOSA | SPEAKER CABLES

Speak Easy

Hosa Technology recently released Hosa Pro speaker cables. They feature 14 AWG Oxygen-Free Copper (OFC) conductors for enhanced signal clarity and a black PVC jacket for durability. The cables are available with REAN loudspeaker connectors by Neutrik AG and come in six different lengths. MSRP: \$14.40–\$169.20. hosatech.com



AKG | DMS 70

Wireless Wonder

AKG has unveiled the DMS 70 digital wireless microphone system. The DMS 70 is ideal for live sound and club sound. The entire package includes the company's DSR 70 receiver, DPT 70 digital pocket transmitter and DHT 70 digital handheld transmitter wireless mic, as well as a DSR 70 rackmount kit and power supply.



All DMS 70 devices are available separately and in packages, including the Vocal Set Dual, Instrumental Set Dual and Vocal/Instrumental Set Dual. akg.com

L-ACOUSTICS | ARCS II

Awe-Inspiring Arcs

L-Acoustics has launched the new Arcs II constant curvature line source. The Arcs II boasts L-Acoustics' Wavefront Sculpture Technology in a constant curvature line source solution. The system delivers power, bandwidth and coherence, along with flexible, predictable coverage for medium to large productions. The biamplified Arcs II enclosure is based on a two-way active design.

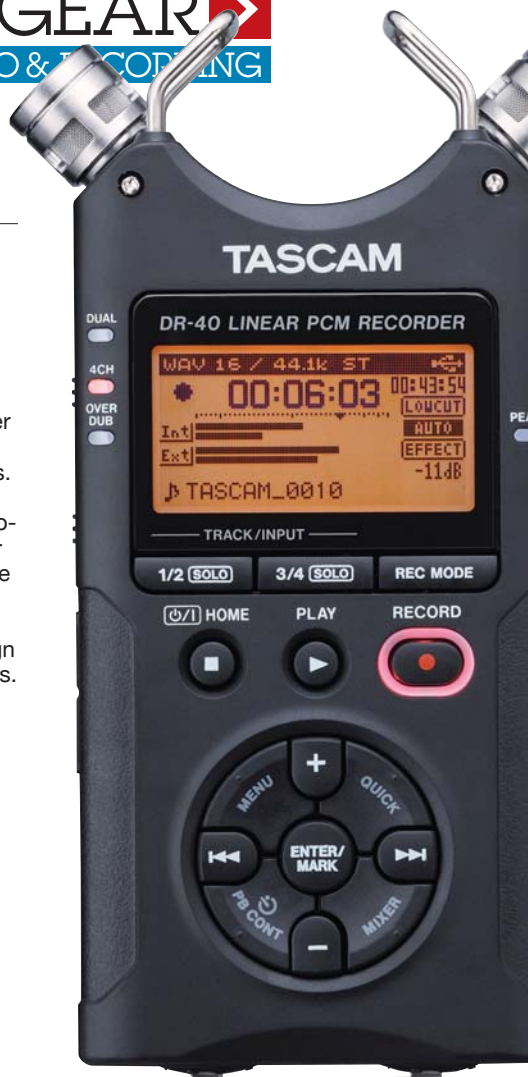
l-acoustics.com/arcsII



TASCAM | DR-40

Recording Prowess

Tascam's new DR-40 is a portable recorder that features adjustable condenser microphones, four-track recording and XLR mic inputs. The internal microphones are adjustable from X/Y to A/B position, letting users tailor their recordings to the sound of the room. Once recorded, users can play back the takes with EQ and the optional level-align feature to avoid volume jumps. MAP: \$199. tascam.com



NADY | PAS-250

Tower Power

Nady Systems recently debuted the MaxTower PAS-250, a self-contained portable line-array 250-watt P.A. system. The unit delivers full-range audio quality and enhanced coverage for a variety of venues, and the line-array eight-speaker configuration provides wider dispersion and more sonic penetration than standard cabinet speakers. The PAS-250 is constructed from a lightweight, durable polymer composite material and features a 250-watt RMS Class D amplifier for high efficiency and cool operation. nady.com



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RADIAL ENGINEERING | JD-X

Radial's Reactor

Radial Engineering has launched the Radial JD-X Reactor module, a combination speaker simulator and direct recording interface designed for the 500 series format. The JD-X Reactor module is made to capture both the sound of the guitar head and speaker cabinet. The module features options for recording, including an on-board low-pass filter that lets users tame excessively bright amplifiers. radialeng.com



KORG | MONOTRIBE

Shipping Out

Korg recently shipped its Monotribe Analogue Ribbon Station. This unit builds on the analog synthesis in Korg's Monotron with its easy use and addition of three-part discrete analog drums. The Monotribe Analogue Ribbon Station also features Korg's Electribe-style step sequencing, a built-in speaker and optional battery power. korg.com

BAG END | TA SERIES

TA Adds New Driver

Bag End Loudspeakers has updated the core models of its TA series time-aligned full-range loudspeakers with a new high-performance, high-frequency driver. The TA1202, TA2002 and TA6002 models now feature the new E-700 driver, which is designed to offer improved high-frequency response with lower distortion.

bagend.com



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DRUMS & PERCUSSION

ROLAND | SPD-SX

Super Samples

Roland has introduced the SPD-SX Sampling Pad, a multipad percussion instrument with 2 GB of on-board sampling memory and three effects engines. The SPD-SX replaces the SPD-S pad and boasts pad-sensing technology, enhanced sampling performance and assignable click output. **{roland.us.com}**



> | AddOns

MBT | CYMBAL BAGS

Crash Protectors

The new MBT Cymbal Bags boast a fortified exterior with padded interior that holds cymbals up to 22 inches and an external compartment that holds cymbals up to 15 inches. The bags include cymbal dividers and a reinforced base padding. MSRP: \$59.95. **{musiccorp.com}**



YAMAHA | CLUB CUSTOM

Welcome to the Club

Yamaha Drums has released Club Custom drum sets, which combine classic and modern qualities. This series features a painted lacquer finish that lets the shells vibrate and creates a classic vintage-era tone. The kit also features shells made of kapur, an exotic tonewood exclusive to Yamaha. **{yamaha.com}**

ROCKET SHELLS | THE NGAGE



Rocket's Rockin' Throw-off

Rocket Shells has released its new throw-off, the ngage. The design uses a cam-and-sealed-ball-bearing combination, allowing almost frictionless tensioning of the snare wires. The ngage is crafted from aircraft-grade billet aluminum and stainless steel and boasts a smoother roller-cam action with sealed stainless steel ball bearings. The throw-off is available in silver, black and black/silver.

{rocketshells.com}



BLACK SWAMP PERCUSSION | CRAVIOTTO

Swamp Monster's Ace

Black Swamp Percussion recently updated its existing Craviotto solid shell snare drums. This orchestral snare drum line now features Craviotto's solid maple shells with distinct diamond inlay. Shells are available in 5.5- by 14-inch and 6.5- by 14-inch sizes with die-cast hoops, arch tube lugs, and either the multisonic or SoundArt strainer. MSRP: \$1,372-\$1,686. {blackswamp.com}



ALESIS | DM6 SESSION KIT

Versatile Sounds

Alesis has released the DM6 Session Kit. It boasts a five-piece drum kit that includes the DM6 drum module, a new ProRack II drum rack, five drum pads, three cymbal pads, a hi-hat and bass drum pedals, drumsticks, and a drum key. The DM6 Session Kit's compact rack and quiet rubber pads provide versatility and low noise. MAP: \$399. {alesis.com}



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

Dbl Drop D



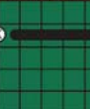
Open G



(DADGAD) Short-Cut



Drop D



What's Your Color?

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GEAR > | AddOns

BAND & ORCHESTRA

REUNION BLUES | CORNET & FLUGELHORN

All Packed Up

Reunion Blues has added cornet and flugelhorn models to its RB Continental instrument cases. The bags include luggage-grade zippers and a bell-area suspension system, along with fitted internal pads and a quilted lining. MSRP: cornet, \$139.95; flugelhorn, \$159.95. reunionblues.com



RICO REEDS | H-LIGATURE

Lustrous Ligature

Rico Reeds now offers its H-ligature and cap for bass clarinet and baritone saxophone. The H-ligature incorporates the attributes of Rico's Harrison ligature and holds the reed firmly to the table of the mouthpiece, assuring better contact and reducing leaks along the side rails. The ligature brackets have been reinforced for increased durability. MSRP: \$69. ricoreeds.com



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D'ADDARIO | BONUS SETS

Triple Set

D'Addario's new Helicore/Kaplan Bonus Sets are three limited-run sets that are available for violin, viola and cello. The sets consist of a Helicore set in medium tension, full size (long scale for viola), plus a single free bonus Kaplan high string. The three sets will be available for a limited time only and packaged in a specially marked Helicore set package as five single strings. daddario.com

VANDOREN | MO LIGATURE

Vandoren Wants Mo'

Vandoren's new MO ligature series combines efficiency and function in a lightweight design. The ligature boasts characteristics of the original Masters series with the symmetrical tightening and speed of the Optimum series. The series is available for all clarinets and saxophones in finishes, including pewter, black and silver for the clarinet family and gilded for the saxophone. Twenty-four-karat gold plating is available for the B-flat clarinet, alto sax and tenor sax MO ligatures. vandoren.fr



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KORG | MICROARRANGER

Micro Master

Korg has launched the microARRANGER. This unit can turn an idea into a complete song featuring a full backing arrangement in real time, based on the selected musical style. The keyboard features more than 300 styles and includes intros, breaks, fills, endings and four variations for a realistic performance. Each style also includes four preset instrument selections. korg.com


 **AddOns**

GATOR CASES | LIGHTWEIGHT LINE

Key Carryall

Gator Cases recently expanded its Lightweight keyboard case line with new slim 61- and 76-note sizes. These cases are made of a rugged nylon exterior over a dense polyethylene reinforced internal frame. A thick padded interior and fully adjustable padded straps keep keyboards secure during transport. The built-in wheels, tow handle and skid bars let users easily take their keyboards from one gig to the next. gatorcases.com



NOVATION | IMPULSE KEYBOARDS

Impulsively Awesome

Novation has debuted Impulse keyboards. This range of professional USB/MIDI controllers is available in 25-, 49- and 61-key models. Each unit has an ultra-responsive, semi-weighted keybed with aftertouch. Impulse controllers offer eight rotary encoders, full transport control, a large LCD and 55-mm faders. They come complete with Xcite+ Pack. novationmusic.com

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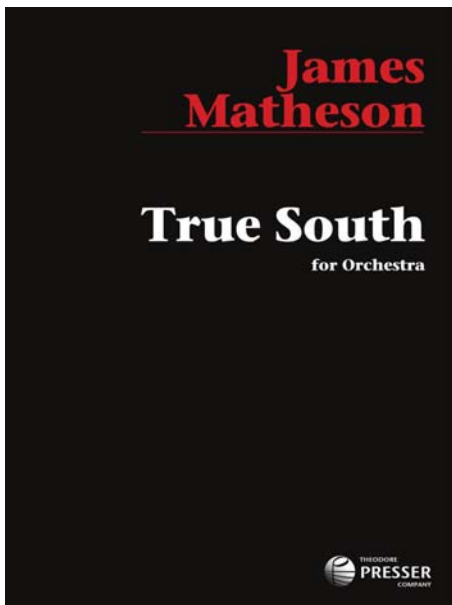


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THEODORE PRESSER | 'TRUE SOUTH'

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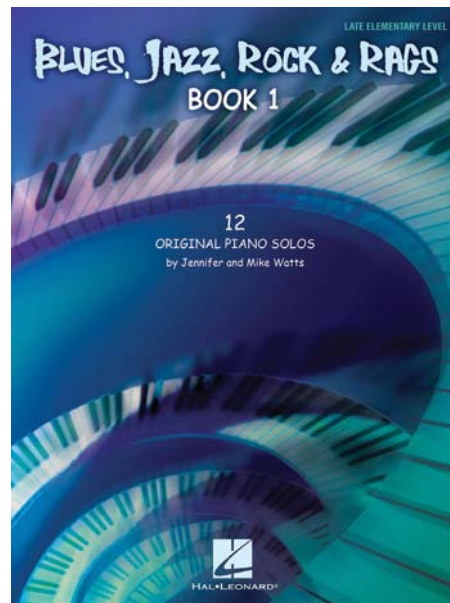
Theodore Presser has published James Matheson's *True South* for orchestra. *True South* captures Matheson's reinterpretation of traditional harmony and rhythm. This work features a loosely structured set of variation flows through moments of brightness and darkness, sparseness and density, and motion and stillness. MSRP: \$40. presser.com

> AddOns

AIM GIFTS | PURSES

Musically Inclined

Aim Gifts recently added a new line of fashion purses to its musical gift offerings. The four different purse designs are ideal for the holiday season. aimgifts.com



HAL LEONARD | 'BLUES, JAZZ, ROCK & RAGS'

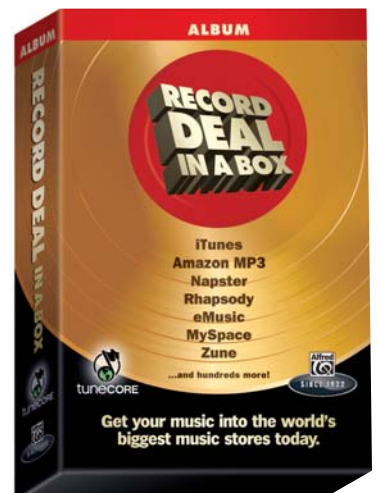
Piano Gold

Hal Leonard has released books 1 and 2 of *Blues, Jazz, Rock & Rags*. Each volume contains 12 original piano solos written by piano teacher Jennifer Watts and composer Mike Watts. The original solos in book 1 are ideal for late-elementary-level players, and titles include "The Baby Rhino," "Blues News" and "The Broken Clock." The 12 solos in book 2 are all written at the intermediate level and include "Chasin' Monsters" and "The Doctor Is In." MSRP: \$8.99. halleonard.com

ALFRED | 'RECORD DEAL IN A BOX'

Musician's Help Box

Alfred recently launched *Record Deal In A Box*, a resource that gives artists the ability to record, distribute and sell their music on iTunes and other online stores through TuneCore. Features include one-year digital distribution through TuneCore, a Studio One Artist recording program, and an informative booklet containing recording tips and copyright information. MSRP: Single/Ringtone Edition, \$24.99; Album Edition, \$49.99. alfred.com





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AddOns

GATOR CASES | G-CLUB

Gator Goes Clubbing

Gator Cases recently launched the G-Club DJ bags, which are ideal for various DJ gear and accessories. The messenger-style bag is made of a lightweight nylon exterior. The controller bags also feature the G-Club's signature orange interior lining for easy visibility in low lighting.

The controller sections feature thick padding on the front and back. **{gatorcases.com}**



AMERICAN DJ | FUSION SERIES

Fusion Frenzy

American DJ has debuted the Fusion series of multieffects fixtures and the Fusion FX Bar 5, a compact bar-shaped fixture. One of Fusion FX Bar 5's three effects is a Tri Color LED Moonflower, which features a high-output 3-watt LED lamp. The lamp also boasts ADJ's Tri LED technology, which combines red, green and blue LEDs into one tricolor lamp source for blended colors. MSRP: \$559.95. **{americandj.com}**



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NATIVE INSTRUMENTS | TRAKTOR KONTROL S2

Krazy Kontrols

Native Instruments' new Traktor Kontrol S2 couples two decks and a mixer, with controls for multieffect units and a third channel for samples. Easily portable, the Traktor Kontrol S2 comes equipped with a full version of Traktor Pro 2. The S2 is tuned for maximum intuitiveness and creativity. **{nativeinstruments.com}**



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- Send your advertisement to: Music Inc., 102 N. Haven Road, Elmhurst, Illinois, 60126; or FAX your ad to: (630) 941-3210.
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Aaron Rathbone

Dirt Cheep Music
Smyrna, Ga.

Nothing beats proper positioning in a conversation.

When a customer introduces the idea that they are shopping for a beginner acoustic guitar, the first thing we talk about is critical accessories. We use language like, “There are 100 things you can buy to go with your guitar, but there are only four you’ll want to get today.” Sound bites like that relieve tension and minimize perception of cost. We’ll briefly show a case, a tuner, an extra set of strings and a guitar stand, but we don’t talk about straps or picks because the customer will consider them when they approach the counter.

>>>>

Scott Maxwell

Reno’s Music
Fisher, Ind.

A lot of layouts have a bunch of string SKUs behind the register, but we’ve narrowed it down to four or five brands. The same 10 feet of slatwall that holds strings is mixed with an equal amount of tuners, metronomes and capos. String multipacks are also suggested by salespeople. Instead of saying, “Here’s some 9’s,” offer a three-pack. A lot of times with student traffic, they’ll just go off what we suggest.

Every item on our website also has a suggested accessory. Every time a customer pulls up a ukulele, there’ll be two or three examples of a gig bag or a tuner. So those are built-in add-ons right there.

>>>>

Alan Rosen

Bananas at Large
San Rafael, Calif.

We certainly do sales training with the staff to show them how a few good add-ons can improve the margin of sales and their paychecks. We’re also doing merchandising around some interesting add-on items. We’re known for our pedal display, so we make sure we stock unique cable and pedal accessories, such as power supplies, around the display itself. Our holiday marketing campaign involves a lot of add-ons and includes e-blasts, downloadable catalogs and tons of social media.



>>>>

Ray Aleshire

Elderly Instruments
Lansing, Mich.

How do you propel add-on sales?

The best strategies involve staff training, good merchandising and attractive promotions. As selling has moved from the showroom to the website and to direct e-mail promotions, the methods for getting add-ons to the sale have also evolved.

We train our staff to pitch add-ons with every sale without becoming the “overly pushy salesperson.” We include suggested add-ons as part of our item descriptions, both in-house and on our website. Even shoppers who aren’t really seeking a salesperson’s assistance can be inspired to add a certain item or items.

In our showroom, product placement near the register is important. It’s also

always tremendously valuable to say to a customer, “I use this, and it is terrific.” The best salespeople are those who are skilled at navigating the sea of add-on possibilities and qualifying the customer once you have their ear.

Sometimes, suggested items are needed, while others are just wanted. A cable is an absolutely necessary add-on for a first-time electric guitar buyer, but not every buyer — like a mom at Christmas — knows that. Currently, clip-on tuners are easy add-ons. Every player needs to play in tune, and they are cheap and easy-to-use.

It is usually easy to obtain add-on sales when

we’re running specials on essential items like tuners or strings. We tell customers about sale items if the item seems in any way connected to their reason for calling us. They usually will buy if the deal is a good one.

We also use add-ons as deal sweeteners when trying to close a sale on an instrument. Things like free case upgrades and free strings do not make you more profit, but judicious offerings like that can help convince potential customers to become buyers. The best salespeople know when to pile it on to close the sale. This makes a sale where there was none. That’s the best kind of addition.

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