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PUBLISHER

Frank Alkyer

EDITOR

Zach Phillips

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Katie Kailus

ART DIRECTOR

Andy Williams

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Hilary Brown, Bobby Reed, Aaron Cohen

WEST COAST CORRESPONDENT

Sara Farr

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

John Cahill

WESTERN ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Tom Burns

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER

Ara Tirado

CLASSIFIED AD SALES

Theresa Hill

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Sue Mahal

CIRCULATION ASSISTANT

Evelyn Oakes

BOOKKEEPING

Margaret Stevens

PRESIDENT

Kevin Maher

OFFICES

Ph (630) 941-2030 • Fax (630) 941-3210

e-mail: editor@musicincmag.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE

(877) 904-7949

Jack Maher, President 1970-2003

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INSIDE



Jon Haber

Photo by Luis Peña

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Ten music retailers and 10 suppliers share their success stories for 2011.

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PETE CHRISTLIEB

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PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

LACEY ACT CRITICS SPEAK UP

Last month, I used this space to discuss sky-is-falling myths circulating about The Lacey Act. Not surprisingly, the article struck a nerve.

Within days of publication, I received a flurry of phone calls and e-mails from readers. Some said they appreciated the article's "level-headed" stance on the environmental protection law. Others told me I was off. Way off.

The most vocal criticism came from small guitar makers and retailers who specialize in the international used and vintage guitar trade. In particular, they took issue with the editorial's following statement:

"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."

Specifically, they said the paperwork and high expense required to comply with The Lacey Act makes doing business unreasonably difficult, if not impossible. Whether retailer or luthier, a few said the law's amendment in 2008 has killed their international business completely.

"The paperwork requires identification of every plant and animal component in a manufactured item to the level of genus and species," said Richard Bruné, head of R.E. Bruné Guitars in Evanston, Ill. "That's an unreasonable burden to place even on a botanist, let alone the average manufacturer and certainly on individuals."

Attorney Ron Bienstock, a partner with Bienstock & Michael, represents a large cadre of guitar makers. He noted that the "exactitude, time-consumption issues and cost" required to comply with The Lacey Act "can really take a toll on a small luthier or a small retailer."

George Gruhn, owner of Gruhn Guitars in Nashville, Tenn., acknowledged that the law is well-intentioned, but "as it is currently being interpreted and enforced, it makes international trade in new musical instruments much more cumbersome and makes international trade in vintage instruments exceedingly difficult."

I still say this isn't the end of manufacturing as we know it. For larger companies, The Lacey Act is a paperwork speed bump. For smaller manufacturers and dealers doing a substantial used international trade, that speed bump seems more like a mountain.

Luckily, at press time, NAMM and a group of music industry members were lobbying Capitol Hill to garner support for The Retailers and Entertainers Lacey Implementation and Enforcement Fairness (RELIEF) Act. If passed, it will exempt pre-2008 instruments from Lacey enforcement.

Now's the time to get on the horn with your members of Congress. Urge them to support this important amendment. **MI**



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LETTERS

How to Support Lacey Act Change

I'm grateful to *Music Inc.* Editor Zach Phillips for the thorough preparation of his most recent *Perspective*, "Lacey Act Myths" (November 2011), concerning the 2008 Lacey Act amendment.

At the time, I hinted that important efforts were under way to move a Lacey Act fix forward, and on Oct. 20, U.S. Reps. Jim Cooper and Marsha Blackburn shared details of their co-sponsored bill, the Retailers and Entertainers Lacey Implementation and Enforcement Fairness (RELIEF) Act, which has now officially entered the House of Representatives.

Every NAMM member should carefully review the bill, which is available at namm.org/publicaffairs, and, if so compelled, write or call your member of Congress.

Why should you support the RELIEF Act? It's the legislative fix we have been working on since the overarching amendment to The Lacey Act took place in May 2008. This legislative fix will guide needed regulatory changes in order to support legal trade and commerce in the music products industry, while upholding the intentions of The Lacey Act, which are to protect and conserve the world's forests.

The Act exempts pre-2008 music products and plant materials from Lacey enforcement, and it exempts personal owners of musical instruments from liability who may unknowingly possess an instrument that is the result of illegal logging.

It also requires regulators to outline requirements clearly for wood importers, including access to an online database of



other countries' wood export regulations. The RELIEF Act doesn't seek to change or undermine the intention of The Lacey Act. Instead, it creates clarity in the law, so users can practice their craft in a responsible and legal way.

Your voice matters as we work together to create needed changes.

Mary Luehrsen
Director of Public Affairs and
Government Relations
NAMM

Good Times at All County

Although you chose to place Amy picture on *Music Inc.*'s October cover to represent the story "Taming Hurricanes," which profiled All County Music, the story would not have been possible without

the commitment and support of the company's employees, customers and suppliers.

Our staff members were particularly pleased with the depth of the coverage, the accuracy of the details and the style of writing. You did an outstanding job researching and putting this story together.

Ask anyone in the industry, and they'll tell you business isn't easy. But after 35 years at All County Music, it's still fun.

Fred Schiff
President
All County Music
Tamarac, Fla.

Praise for Billings

I loved Greg Billings' column "Why I Don't Sell Pianos Online ..." in October 2011 of *Music Inc.*

I have witnessed several

similar experiences with people in my market who had buyer's remorse from purchases made over the Internet. In most instances, there isn't anything that can be done to resolve the problem.

What is surprising to me is that otherwise sophisticated individuals make a large purchase without personally inspecting the instrument. Pictures — and even technician's reports — can be very deceiving. Face-to-face interaction is replaced by Internet chat rooms that are full of so-called experts who have their own agendas.

Caught in the process are real consumers wasting real money on instruments whose quality is less than advertised. Auction sites particularly can be loose with the facts. I once purchased a used Steinway & Sons on an auction site. When it arrived, we discovered three different serial numbers on various parts of its cabinet. When something like that happens, the term caveat emptor becomes personal and is no longer an abstract Latin phrase.

Kevin Rindlisbacher
Owner
Steinway Piano Gallery of Spokane
Spokane, Wash.

Correction

In "Raising Uke Awareness" (October 2011), Kala's book *Play Ukulele Today!* was mentioned as being published by Hal Leonard. It is, in fact, published by Empire Music. *Music Inc.* regrets the error.

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»» ■■■■ RETAIL



Andrew Bell; inset:
the site of the solar
panel installation

TWIN TOWN GUITARS | ENVIRONMENT

BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN

By December, Twin Town Guitars will be a solar-powered music retailer.

The Minneapolis combo dealership recently kicked off the Sunburst Project. Approximately 100 solar panels, measuring 40 by 50 inches each, will be installed on the store's roof. Generating 280 watts each, the solar panels are projected to cover 100 percent of the store's

electric energy expense and will also benefit other businesses in the building.

"We are thrilled to see this project come to light," said Andrew Bell, owner of Twin Town Guitars. "An extra bonus is that the solar panels are manufactured locally in Bloomington, [Minn.,] by TenKsolar and will be installed by Sundial Solar, located in Minneapolis."

Twin Town Guitars received

state and federal grants for the Sunburst Project, as well as financing and installation through Sundial Solar and support from the Kingfield Neighborhood Association's Solarize Kingfield project. The dealership's electric company, Xcel Energy, also provided a matching grant.

According to Bell, the cost of his company's 30-kilowatt system is projected to be roughly \$275,000 with installation and

hardware, and he said he expects the system to pay for itself in two and a half years.

"I hope that we can be an example for other stores or brick-and-mortar building owners to see an additional revenue stream to offset the cost of energy," Bell said. "We hope to turn our \$400 monthly electrical bill into a wash and then have it become positive cash flow." **MI**

—Reporting by Zach Phillips

DADDY'S JUNKY MUSIC | CLOSING

DADDY'S JUNKY MUSIC CLOSES ALL STORES

After 39 years in business, Daddy's Junky Music has suddenly closed.

The Manchester, N.H.-based combo retailer, which had 12 stores throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Vermont, ceased operations as of the close of business on Oct. 26. On the company's website, a note said, "Thank you for a wonderful 39 years."

The following weekend, company founder and CEO Fred Bramante posted a note on Daddy's Facebook page, explaining that GE Capital, the company's major financier, is now in possession of the dealership's inventory except for customer-owned repairs. "We also do not have access to Daddy's checking accounts," he added.

Several customers on the Facebook page complained about having unclaimed gift cards or items on layaway. More thanked Daddy's for its years of service to the music community. At press time, Daddy's employees were trying to get repair instruments back to customers.

"Our techs have gone home, no one's been paid," Bramante told *Nashua Telegraph*. "We're trying to get our arms around this thing."

Regarding the status of layaways, Bramante told *Nashua Telegraph* that he was waiting on information.

"We did not anticipate the terrible and painful occurrence of the past week," Bramante



Fred Bramante

wrote in his Facebook post. "We never expected to be in this heart-wrenching position for our employees and you, our customers. We will be speaking to the states' consumer's bureaus to determine the best course of action for you. We will give you more information as soon as we can."

RESTRUCTURING ATTEMPT

Bramante attributed Daddy's closing to difficult economic conditions and increased competition from online retailers, according to *New Hampshire Union Leader*. He also told *The Dedham Transcript* that he couldn't go into specifics about the closure because of "pending legal issues."

"This is one of the worst days of my life," he added. "I'm brokenhearted."

According to *New Hampshire*

Union Leader, Daddy's employed 52 full-time and 14 part-time employees.

Earlier this year, Daddy's had 19 stores, but in July, it announced it would be closing seven of them and devote more resources to its online business.

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

SUPPLIERS TAKEN OFF GUARD

Several leading music product suppliers reported being surprised by the closure. On

the day of Daddy's closing, Rick Young, senior vice president of Yamaha Corp. of America, said his company received a phone call from GE Capital "saying operations had ceased. That was it."

Bill Reim, president of Hoshino USA, mentioned that his company "always had a very good relationship with Daddy's and part of that was a clear line of communication." According to Reim, he and the rest of Hoshino's team had expected Daddy's restructuring to help it regain a stronger footing during the holiday season, "making this sudden closure a real left-turn ending."

Likewise, Chris Bristol, president and CEO of Roland U.S., said he had "no inkling this was going to happen."

"We are all very sad to hear about Daddy's closing," he said. "They were great partners with us for decades. We and their customers will sorely miss them from our music community."

"Everyone recognizes that Daddy's is an institution in this business," Reim said.

"They have long been one of biggest and best-run independent music store chains in the country. Losing them is losing yet another piece — a large piece — of the vertebrae of this industry."

Bramante founded Daddy's in 1972 and also served on the NAMM board in the 1990s. The company has won multiple *Music Inc.* Retail Excellence Awards. **MI**

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»»» ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ RETAIL

TROMBINO PIANO GALLERIE | CLOSING

TROMBINO PIANO TO SHUT DOWN

In October, Trombino Piano Gallerie of Pittsburgh announced plans to close before the end of the year. The move will not impact Trombino Music Centers in Greensburg, Belle Vernon and Mount Lebanon, Pa., according to a statement from the company. Trombino Piano Gallerie plans to host a final sales event.

"It is with heavy hearts that we are turning the page on one of the most exquisite chapters of our lives," said co-owners Robert and Norma Jean Trombino in the announcement. "We came to Penn Avenue with a vision of becoming a vibrant hub for the arts, and we will take away so many wonderful memories spawned by our unwavering dedication and support of the arts community."

The statement added that the couple "will return to their roots in the home organ

The retail institution will shut down by year-end. Trombino to keep three other stores open

business they started 46 years ago."

Trombino Piano Gallerie hosted more than 60 recitals a year, along with master classes and receptions for the Steinway Society of Western Pennsylvania. Jonathan Biss, Yefim Bronfman and Billy Joel are among the artists who've rehearsed in the store's Steinway artist room.

GUITAR CENTER | OPENING

GC Rolls Out Round Rock Store

Guitar Center opened its newest retail location in Round Rock, Texas, on Sept. 29. To celebrate, GC hosted a grand-opening weekend featuring sale prices and giveaways. The store is the only Austin-area GC location to feature Guitar Center Studios, the company's music lessons program. It also has GC Garage, a guitar repair shop.

During the grand-opening, the company hosted events with drummer Jeff Friedl and guitarist Marcus Henderson. On opening night, hard rock band Lyman and Elvis impersonator Terry Buchwald performed.

"The Austin area is one of the key music centers in the country, and adding another store helps us to better serve the musicians and engineers in this burgeoning market," said Gene Joly, GC's executive vice president of stores. "As with our other new stores opened in 2011, the Round Rock location



Inside Guitar Center's new Round Rock, Texas, store

reflects a number of new design and merchandising principles. For instance, GC Round Rock features Guitar Center Studios lessons/rehearsal spaces, GC Garage repairs facility and an open layout that yields a streamlined traffic flow and more room for customers to test drive products in a comfortable environment."



Inside Jordan Kitt's remodeled Steinway Piano Galleries in Atlanta

JORDAN KITT'S MUSIC | VENUES

Kitt's Dolls Up Atlanta Store

In September, Jordan Kitt's Music completed the remodeling of its Atlanta store, Steinway Piano Galleries. Located north of the company's other Atlanta-area store in Alpharetta, Ga., this 4,000-square-foot location had fallen into disrepair under Jordan Kitt's previous owner, according to Chris Syllaba, the company's new president and CEO.

The project, which Syllaba said took approximately two months, included a complete gutting of the store's inside. The company added new carpeting and laminate flooring, as well as a new color scheme to match the Alpharetta location. Syllaba noted that the remodeled store achieved the biggest "wow" factor by raising the ceiling 2 feet, adding brighter lighting and fixing up the exterior — a move that included repainting the outside and adding a new entrance and landscaping.

The store is managed by Kitt's veteran Tony Martinez.

"We used a local contractor that one of our salespeople had experience with in the past when he was rehabbing homes as a profession, so it was done at an extremely reasonable cost but really made a difference," Syllaba said.

Kitt's also added a Roland Foresta display area to the store. Now, all four of Kitt's stores feature the display. "It creates a focal point in the store for the customers and salespeople," Syllaba said.

"The store and better lighting inside now makes the store more inviting, makes the pianos look more appealing to the customers and allows us to better merchandise the space."

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CLINICS

Fret-King's Road Show

From Sept. 12–23, Fret-King's Trev Wilkinson traveled across the United Kingdom with guitarist Jerry Donahue (pictured) and Fret-King clinician Gav Coulson. They stopped by several music retailers, including Allegro Music in Biggar, Scotland, which rented out a hall to accommodate demand for the event.

"We had people come from as far as Edinburgh," said Kieron O'Neill of Allegro Music.

"Some of Jerry's die-hard fans came along, as well, and they got to hear some pretty good music. Jerry explained his involvement with Trev Wilkinson throughout the process and gave a great overview of the guitar. He's a really unique player."



EVENT

Isleys Drop by HOG

House of Guitars in Rochester, N.Y., hosted Ernie and Ron Isley of The Isley Brothers on Sept. 30. More than 300 people showed up



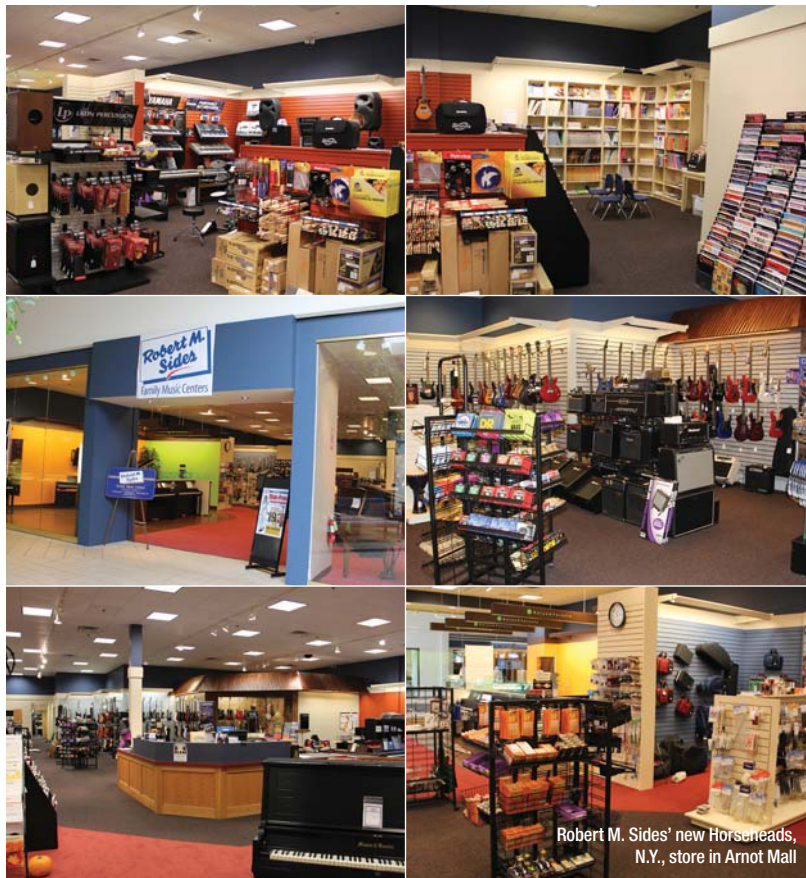
for the meet and greet, where Ernie (pictured, right) and Ron posed for photos and signed autographs. According to a statement from the retailer, it sold out of Isley Brothers CDs, tapes and vinyl, even though it had prepared for the rush.

"Everyone was very excited and had a good time with The Isley Brothers," said Armand Schaubroeck, owner of House of Guitars (pictured, left).

APPOINTMENT

Music Therapy Expands

West Music of Coralville, Iowa, recently expanded its Music Therapy Services division to the greater Des Moines area with the addition of music therapist Jenny Denk. Based out of the West Music Piano Gallery in Urbandale, Iowa, Music Therapy Services of West Music includes one-on-one individual therapy, small and large group therapy, recreational music classes, and adaptive music lessons.



Robert M. Sides' new Horseheads, N.Y., store in Arnot Mall

ROBERT M. SIDES | OPENING

SIDES GOES TO THE MALL

In September, Robert M. Sides Family Music Center opened its first mall store. Tucked inside Arnot Mall in Horseheads, N.Y., the new location is Sides' fourth overall. The company plans to host a formal grand opening in November as it gets closer to the holiday season.

According to Peter Sides, president of the Williamsport, Pa.-based full-line dealer, the store is open nearly 18 hours longer per week than the company's other three locations. It features a similar product mix, with the addition of new lines Vox, Ibanez and DigiTech.

Sides noted that the 2,900-square-foot space was easy to renovate, as the

previous occupant, Sam Goody, had furnished it with large front windows and retail-ready lighting. The store now has nine music lesson studios, a large group lessons room and separated departments, "so the guitar crew doesn't feel like they're in the piano department," Sides added.

His company hired consultant Glen Ingles to help with store design and layout. Alysha Sides Greevy, Peter's sister and vice president of the company, also created the color scheme.

"This store is located 90 miles north of our main store in Williamsport, so it really opens up some new territory for us without cannibalizing much from our other stores," Sides said.

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Note from Joe

Clarity and Focus

Pythagorean Theorem: 24 Words
 Lord's Prayer: 66 Words
 Archimedes' Principle: 67 Words
 Ten Commandments: 179 Words
 Gettysburg Address: 286 Words
 U.S. Declaration of Independence: 1,300 Words
 EU Regulations on the Sale of Cabbage: 26,911 Words
 (Europe's Problems Summed Up)

In my opinion, one of the most important ingredients for success today is having a clear vision and being focused on what you and your company do best. With the recent news of Steve Jobs passing, perhaps Apple is a great example of this. Jobs focused on providing clear solutions that his customers could understand, and in doing so, made his company the most valuable in the world. After the tectonic shifts in our industry over the past decade, many NAMM Members have had to ask themselves what it is that they do best, what their unique value proposition is to their customers and whether they had succumbed to the temptation to be "all things to all people."

Here at NAMM, we have the same challenge. Our Membership is diverse, representing the entire spectrum of music and sound manufacturing, distribution and retailing here in the United States and around the globe. Much has changed since NAMM's mission and objectives were created back in the early 90s and, because of this, the Board and Executive Committee approved a year-long strategic planning project. The last step was to convene a diverse group of NAMM Member companies representing all categories of Membership to create a new Vision, Mission and set of Strategic Objectives.

Their task was clear: In a world full of challenges, they had to determine the most important things NAMM could do—especially within the legal boundaries of our not-for-profit status—to serve the industry. Everything was on the table and I can tell you there were a wide range of opinions, but a theme quickly developed. The key to NAMM's future success would be clarity and focus, doing fewer things but doing them better and having real impact on the things that mattered *most* to our Members. The results of these meetings were brought before the NAMM Board and unanimously approved. In many ways, it was a confirmation and refinement of what we were already doing based on NAMM's "Circle of Benefits" model below.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve this great industry through our renewed focus on Trade Shows, Membership Services, Professional Development, Market Development and Global Impact. We welcome your feedback and look forward to seeing everyone in January! To learn more about the Vision, Mission and Objectives, visit www.namm.org/about.

Joe Lamond Joe Lamond
 NAMM President/CEO

P.S. By the way, we cut NAMM's Vision, Mission and Objectives from its previous eight pages and 2,242 words to one page and 205 words—that's clarity and focus!

Strategic Planning Team



Pictured, left to right: Joel Menchey, Joe Lamond, Ken Wilson, Henry Lee, Mark Goff, Tom Schmitt, Kevin Cranley, Mary Luehrsen, Robin Walenta, Yoshi Doi, Michael Canning, Gordy Wilcher, Rick Young, Larry Morton, Chris Martin, Michael MacDonald and Dana Messina



NAME NAMM News December No 2011

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ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

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Ends strike at factory
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Supports new Lacey amendment
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Forges deal with Shopatron
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Moves its U.S. headquarters
PAGE 27

SUPPLY

PEAVEY | BY KATIE KAILUS

THE FOREVER GUITAR

Hartley Peavey has seen the future of guitars, and it's carbon graphite.

Last year, his company, Peavey Electronics, purchased Composite Acoustics, a manufacturer of carbon fiber guitars. With the recent buzz over The Lacey Act, a law that places restrictions on imported woods, Peavey said he believes he's found a solution to the industry's environmental woes — one that plays just as well as wood.

And while he's adamant that he's not trying to replace wooden guitars, he argued that carbon graphite has many benefits.

"If you could have a material that didn't absorb water and wasn't affected by humidity and temperature changes, that would be a desirable thing," Peavey said. "I can't think of anything you can do that with other than carbon graphite fiber."

COMPOSITES TO THE RESCUE

Guitarists may crave instruments with exotic and sought-after tonewoods. Still, as Peavey pointed out, most of these woods come from developing countries that would rather ship finished products than raw lumber, adding the most value to their export. As a result, the



Hartley Peavey

countries have raised the prices of these woods substantially.

"There are two ways to deal with this increase," Peavey said. "One is to pass along the cost and scarcity to the end-user. The other way is simply to find a different material that will produce a better instrument. And that is the path that Peavey has chosen to take with Composite Acoustics."

Composite Acoustics' instruments feature stainless-steel frets and composite bridges, nuts, fingerboards, bodies and necks — and not one scrap of wood.

"We think we have a better instrument," Peavey said. "It has a lot of features that simply aren't available in other instruments."

Being a stronger material than wood, graphite allows for the guitar's top to be about

half the thickness of that of a wooden model. And it's not just the strength that differentiates the two. Peavey said graphite is a better material for transmitting vibrations.

"Sound waves tend to propagate longer the more dense the material," he said. "Sound travels much further underwater than in the air because water is denser than air. And graphite fiber is more dense than wood, given the same volume."

THE GUITAR OF THE FUTURE

"There are some wonderful wooden guitars and hopefully always will be," Peavey said. "But, as long as you are dealing with wood, you are going to deal with its shortcomings."

"Most new fighter jets have major portions of their structure made from graphite composites. How many wooden jet fighters have you seen?"

While it may not take the place of wood, carbon fiber has started a revolution in guitar manufacturing. "We do believe that carbon fiber will be the material of choice for high-quality instruments in the future," Peavey said. "We are making the forever guitar. With stainless-steel frets and composite bodies, the guitar will last a lifetime." **MI**

CONN-SELMER | PERSONNEL

Conn-Selmer Strike Ends

Conn-Selmer has announced that employees with Local 2359 of the United Auto Workers (UAW) ended their three-month strike at the East-lake, Ohio, manufacturing facility.

The UAW represents approximately 230 employees at the brass instrument facility. In its notification to the company, the UAW made an “unconditional offer to return to work” on behalf of all the striking employees and directed them to report for work immediately.

“The company has been negotiating in good faith with representatives of the UAW since January,” said John Stoner, president of Conn-Selmer. “We are encouraged by the decision to end the strike and return to work. We hope the UAW will present the company’s last position to employees for approval and that the employees vote to ratify that offer.” conn-selmer.com

STEINWAY | MANAGEMENT

STEINWAY MAKES PERSONNEL CHANGES



Steinway CEO Dana Messina recently stepped down.

Earlier this year, Steinway announced it was evaluating offers for company assets and other strategic alternatives. Messina agreed to resign as the company’s CEO, a position he’s held since 1996, due to his involvement in developing several of the strategic alternatives that the company is considering. He will remain on Steinway’s board of directors.

“Leading Steinway has been the job of a lifetime, and I leave very proud of what we’ve accomplished over the last 15 years,” Messina said. “It was a difficult decision to step down, but I know we have an extraordinary team of operating managers who will continue

to lead this business to further success. I have no doubt that Steinway’s best days lie ahead.”

Steinway Chairman Michael Sweeney will serve as the company’s interim CEO. He became a director of the company in April and was appointed chairman in July.

In other Steinway news, the company appointed Joon W. Kim to its board of directors, bringing the total number of directors to 11.

“Steinway is the premier company in the musical instrument industry,” Kim said. “I am looking forward to contributing to its continued success.”

Kim is managing principal and founder of Los Angeles-based M5 Investments. steinwaymusical.com



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Black Mountain Teams With Grover Allman

Black Mountain Musical Enterprises recently became the exclusive U.S. distributor of Grover Allman USA picks and accessories. All specialty-imprinted custom picks will continue to be handled through the Grover Allman USA office in Westfield, Ind.

“We were contacted in March by Grover Allman about becoming a distributor for their products throughout the United States,” said Jennifer McGuire, director of sales for Black Mountain Musical Enterprises. “Due to our proactive telesales and e-mail programs and the initial amount of sales which surpassed both our expectations, an agreement was made for Black Mountain Musical to be the exclusive distributor for Grover Allman USA products.”

blackmountainmusical.com

Big Bends Gets Ahead

Ahead Music has been named the distributor of Big Bends products in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

The addition of Ahead Music brings the total number of Big Bends' distribution countries to 25.

“We are proud to be associated with such a great company as Ahead Music,” said Big Bends' founder Jeff Massey.

bigbends.com; ahead-music.de



L'Acoustics, Sennheiser Canada Part Ways

L'Acoustics and Sennheiser Canada have formed a joint decision to end their collaboration. Sennheiser Canada will cease to be the exclusive distributor of the L'Acoustics brand in Canada as of Jan. 1, 2012. Starting then, all sales support will be provided directly by L'Acoustics.

“Sennheiser Canada has always proven to be a professional and dedicated partner for L'Acoustics during our many years of collaboration, and we wish them well for the future,” said Jochen Frohn, business development director for L'Acoustics.

“We are parting ways amicably and Sennheiser Canada will continue to honor its commitments to its existing L'Acoustics customers in regards to service and support,” said Jean Langlais, president of Sennheiser Canada.

l-acoustics.com; sennheiser.ca

NAMM | LEGAL

NAMM BACKS RELIEF ACT

NAMM has announced its support for new legislation introduced by U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper that will clarify a broad federal law so music instrument manufacturers and retailers, as well as musicians, would not be subject to penalties for unknowingly possessing illegal woods.

The Retailers and Entertainers Lacey Implementation and Enforcement Fairness (RELIEF) Act clarifies the Lacey Act, which Congress updated in 2008 in an effort to disrupt illegal logging.

“In theory, anybody who travels outside the country or even across the state line with an old guitar right now would be in legal jeopardy,” Cooper said. “The RELIEF Act protects them. It makes sure all the magnificent instruments played, traded and created in Nashville and elsewhere can make their way around the world.”

The new RELIEF Act aims to exempt any foreign wood products people owned before May 22, 2008; protect people who have any wood that violates Lacey but didn't know it; and prompt the government to compile a database of forbidden wood sources on the Internet, so everyone is fairly warned.

“NAMM applauds the swift action taken by Rep. Cooper in creating the RELIEF Act and pledges our support to this effort,” said Joe Lamon, president and CEO of NAMM. “NAMM's goal since the amendments in 2008 is to inform regulators and help legislators make positive changes to The Lacey Act that will preserve

NAMM speaks out in support of the RELIEF Act and joins a Lacey Act defense committee

not only the world's forests but the vital work of U.S. manufacturing and commerce in the music products industry — and we believe the new RELIEF Act moves us closer to achieving this goal.”

On Oct. 27, NAMM joined The Lacey Act Defense National Consensus Committee, a newly formed group made up of companies, associations and organizations impacted by The Lacey Act and leading environmental groups, with the purpose of creating a new standard designed to provide a defense to Lacey liability.

“Along with other activities, this effort represents a yearning for clarity in Lacey Act regulatory guidelines, enforcement rules, and the desire of business and industry to implement adequate and appropriate due care in assuring that material and product imports meet the requirements of The Lacey Act,” said Mary Luehrsen, NAMM's director of public affairs and government relations. “NAMM will work with other industry groups to achieve a fair and reasonable standard by which business can operate successfully within the guidelines and intent of The Lacey Act.” namm.org/publicaffairs

Attendees at the Let's Meet Guild event



GUILD GUITARS | EVENT

Guild Guitars Hosts Open House

Guild Guitars recently opened its doors to the public for the second annual Let's Meet Guild event, a behind-the-scenes look at the Guild guitar factory in New Hartford, Conn. More than 60 members of the

Let's Talk Guild online forum attended the event, which featured a tour, Q&A sessions with Guild staff and a close-up look at Guild's newly refined guitar-making processes.

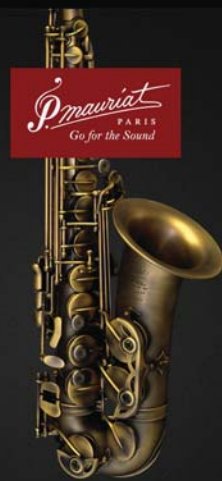
"When players are able to see

firsthand the incredible combination of technology and human-hand craftsmanship that goes into building Guild guitars, it's an eye-opening experience," said Dave Gonzalez, Guild's product manager. "They usually come

away from it with a whole new perspective and respect for what guitar makers do in an effort to bring them high-quality instruments. It reinvigorates their connection to the product and the brand." guildguitars.com



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KORG | TECHNOLOGY

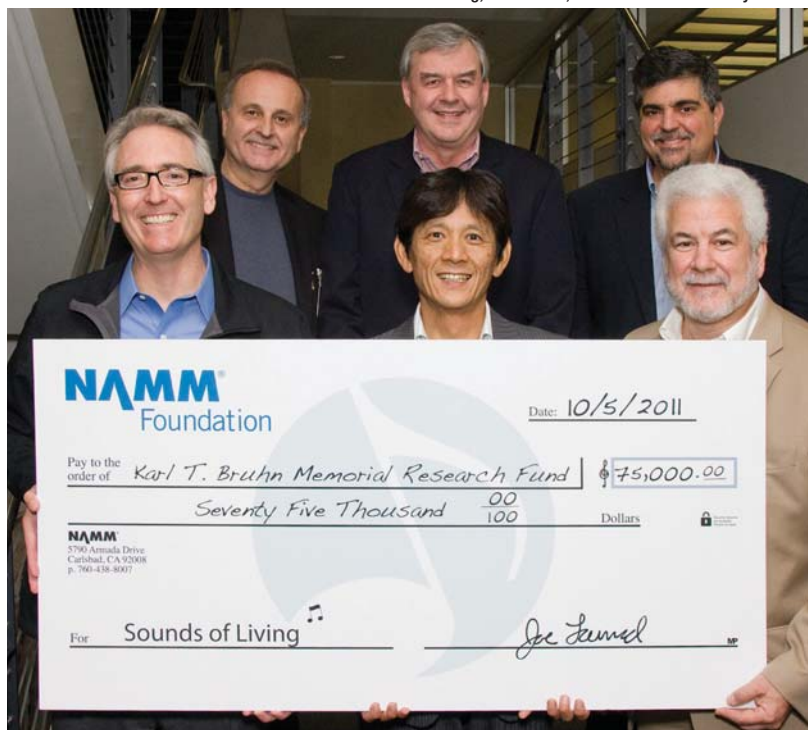
Korg Apps Up

Korg recently added the iKaossilator for iPhone to its lineup of music making apps. The app is an enhanced version of Korg's hardware Kaossilator instrument and uses the iPhone's touchscreen to mimic the functions of the Kaoss X-Y touch pad.

The iKaossilator app can run on iPad and iPod Touch, third generation and higher. It joins Korg's existing iPad apps — the iElectricbe series and the IMS-20. korg.com



From left: NAMM's Joe Lamond with Yamaha's Terry Lewis, Rick Young, Tak Nakata, Brian Jemelian and Barry Bittman



NAMM, YAMAHA | OUTREACH

YAMAHA RECEIVES \$75K NAMM GRANT

The Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute (YMWI) recently received a \$75,000 grant from the NAMM Foundation for research to be conducted through the Karl T. Bruhn Memorial Research Fund.

NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond delivered the check on behalf of the foundation to YMWI at a special presentation on Oct. 5 at Yamaha Corp. of America's headquarters in Buena Park, Calif. The majority of the grant will be used to fund a research project led by YMWI CEO, President and Director Barry Bittman, titled "Upper Extremity Rehabilitation for Non-Musician Stroke Patients Utilizing a Novel Keyboard Approach."

"The Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute is very grateful to the NAMM Foundation for this generous grant that will enable the institute to develop musical instrument protocols to aid stroke victims in a meaning-

'This is exemplary of the foundation's commitment to support projects that impact music making.'

— Terry Lewis

ful way," said Terry Lewis, chairman of YMWI. "This is exemplary of the foundation's commitment to support projects that explore the impact of active music making during various stages of life and to educate people of all ages about the proven benefits of playing music, and a worthy tribute to Karl Bruhn for his pioneering work."

yamahainstitute.org; namm.org

THE BROWN GROUP | SERVICES

Brown Launches Marketing Firm

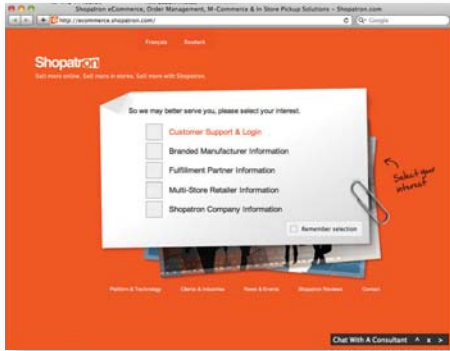
Pat Brown (pictured), a music industry veteran, has started a full-service sales and marketing company. The Brown Group, headquartered in Houston, will offer consulting services in sales, marketing, market research, graphic design, print and Internet advertising, media plans, and video. Additionally, the company has complete turnkey printing capabilities.



"While we can handle projects of any size, we are specifically targeting startups or other small companies that lack the resources to do these things in-house," Brown said. "It's increasingly challenging to get the attention of the customer, but the folks in our organization have a track record of doing just that. And we can save our clients money doing it."

Brown's background includes seven years at Fender, 26 years at Pro-Mark and a stint as co-director of the Percussion Marketing Council.

WEBNEWS



Sabian Partners With Shopatron

Sabian has partnered with Shopatron to add e-commerce to its recently revamped website. Now, online shoppers can complete their purchases without leaving Sabian's site.

Shopatron offers the benefit of retailer-integrated fulfillment. This means purchases made through Sabian's online store will be transferred to a local Sabian dealer, who will be able to fulfill the order by shipping the product or hosting the customer for an in-store pickup.

"Being able to include our retailers in the online process sold us on Shopatron," said Peter Stairs, Sabian's vice president of sales. "Not only does it support our retailers but it also benefits our customers who get the convenience of buying online but still enjoy the expertise and personal service offered by a local dealer in their area." **{sabian.com; shopatron.com}**

Sabian offers sales on its website, keeps music retailers involved

TAYE | PROGRAM

TAYE DRUMS TWISTS IT UP

Taye Drums recently announced a new twist on its artist relations, the Artist Referral Program. The company designed this initiative to reward its artists for directing clients toward a purchase. The artist can refer a consumer to Taye, and in turn, Taye will direct the sale to a dealer near the consumer. Once the sale is confirmed through the dealer, Taye will credit the artist a portion of the sale toward his or her next equipment need. **{tayedrums.com}**



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G7TH CAPOS | LEGAL

G7TH FIGHTS PATENT ISSUES

G7th Capos arrived at Music China in October to find products resembling its own advertised in the Music China brochure. According to a statement from G7th, the advertisements had also been placed in several magazines, and the alleged patent violator had posters in its booth displaying copies of the G7th Performance and Nashville capos. This company also offered samples for sale at its booth. The products in question weren't direct counterfeits, as they didn't display the G7th logo. Still, G7th executives claim the products infringed upon patent rights protecting the design and mechanisms of the capos.

After a complaint to the Music China patent agent and a refusal by the alleged violator to remove the posters, the patent agent enforced a written notice to remove all posters from the company's booth and stop selling the product.

"We have put an enormous amount of work into the design of our products and spent a great deal of time and money obtaining patents," said Nick Campling, G7th inventor and chairman. "There would be little point if we didn't intend to protect them. We will use the full force of the law to do so." g7th.com

MARTIN | FINANCE

GE CAPITAL, MARTIN TEAM UP

GE Capital's Retail Finance business, a consumer lending unit of General Electric, recently announced a new agreement to provide consumer financing through C.F. Martin authorized dealers nationwide.

Under the new multiyear agreement, consumers can finance the purchase of Martin guitars on their NAMM card, backed by GE Capital.

"Martin guitars have been the standard by which acoustic guitars are measured," said Dennis Murphy, vice president of sales for GE Capital's Retail Finance business.

"We're honored to work with Martin. They have a long tradition of quality and success, and we want to help them continue that tradition." martinguitar.com

APPOINTMENTS

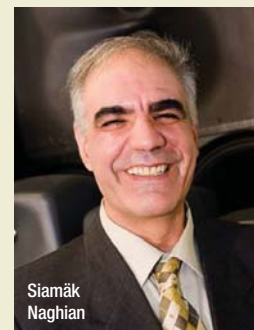
New Appointments at Genelec

Genelec Oy recently appointed two new directors. Siamäk Naghian has been named managing director, and Nick Zacharov has been appointed director of research and development.

Naughian joined Genelec in 2005 as head of Genelec R&D and a member of the Genelec management team.

"One of the most delighting aspects with Siamäk is sharing the same values in human life and corporate management," said Ilpo Martikainen, chairman of the board of Genelec Oy. "In addition to being systematic and goal-oriented, he is very inspiring and has a great sense of humor. We are sure the good cooperation with our partners will continue and find even new dimensions."

Zacharov is rejoining Genelec following 16 years working in various segments of the audio and telecommunications industry.



Siamäk Naghian

Korg has hired Doug Reynolds as its new district sales manager (DSM) for the Midwest region. The company has also promoted Matt Phillips to DSM for the mountain states and John Pasarelli as an ISR.

Tim McNair has been promoted to general manager of the string division for **C.F. Martin**.

Auralex Acoustics recently named global sales executive and marketing industry veteran David Fischer as the company's CEO.



David Fischer

Harman has promoted David Scheirman to director of knowledge resources.

Steinway has expanded its board of directors and appointed Greg Wood to fill the newly created directorship position.

Community Professional Loudspeakers recently appointed Thomas Mittelmann as the director of business development, Asia-Pacific.

Full Compass has promoted Al Breunig to the position of sales manager.

Chris Cairns has been tapped as the marketing director for **American Music & Sound**.

Audio-Technica recently promoted David Marsh to the position of director of sales and marketing, installed sound and broadcast.

FDW, a nationwide distributor of professional audio, video and lighting equipment, has named Sean Sennott vice president and general manager.

KHS America recently partnered with Phil Jaurigui, founder and president of Swing House Studios in Hollywood, Calif. Jaurigui will manage KHS's artist relations representation for the Los Angeles area.

Connolly Music has appointed Garrett Semmelink and Susan Short to the positions of inside sales specialists.

Taye Drums has added Charles Streeter to its artist roster. Streeter is an active drummer in the R&B, soul and gospel markets and has recorded with Al Green, Prince, Chaka Chan and Bruce Springsteen.

GEMINI | VENUES

GEMINI BUSTS A MOVE

Gemini recently moved its U.S. headquarters to a new facility in Edison, N.J., located less than a mile away from the company's former space.

Additionally, Gemini has opened new distribution warehouses in Redlands, Calif., and Shenzhen, China. The new facilities will increase the speed of delivery from overseas vendors, while offering a strategic location for all domestic distribution.

"The new office is a serious upgrade, and the new warehouses make perfect logistical sense," said Alan Cabasso, Gemini's president. "These moves will help us operate efficiently during the coming months, which will see huge developments for the Gemini brand." geminidj.com



Gemini's new headquarters

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the love
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is equal to
the love
you make

CONGRATULATIONS

2011 Retail Excellence Award Winners

It's nice to know our sticks are in good hands.
Thank you for your ongoing support.



mi BEST PRODUCT

THE BEST OF 2011

In the following pages, you'll find 10 music retailers and 10 suppliers that set new standards of excellence this year. These companies were voted upon by their peers, who recognized them for not only their successes but also their innovation to the music product trade. Learn from their stories, and hold onto this issue as a year-round source of great ideas.

+ THE RETAIL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

- + Alto Music
- + Hello Music
- + Sam Ash Music
- + Evola Music
- + Sweetwater
- + Memphis Drum Shop
- + Melodee Music
- + Quinlan & Fabish
- + Guitar Center
- + Bertrand's Music

+ THE SUPPLIER EXCELLENCE AWARDS

- + Fender
- + Yamaha Corp. of America
- + Hanser Music Group
 - + D'Addario
- + St. Louis Music
 - + Yorkville
 - + Musicorp
- + Roland Corp. U.S.
 - + KMC Music
 - + Harris-Teller

+ THE YEAR'S BEST PRODUCTS

Orange, Blackstar, Powerwerks, DW, Peavey, Avid, Alesis, Oscar Schmidt, QSC, Korg, Electro-Harmonix, Cannonball, Roland, Kawai, Crafter, Snark, Fender, Kala, Yamaha and Taylor



Alto Music Takes MI Prime Time

JON HABER BOOSTS SALES AND RAISES THE MI INDUSTRY PROFILE WITH AN AMEX COMMERCIAL

Alto Music's a bit of a superstar among music retailers. Early this year, owner Jon Haber raised the profile of not only his five-store combo dealership but the entire MI industry by starring in an American Express television commercial. During the spot, he told prime-time audiences how much he loves helping people discover "how great music is."

What's more, Haber set an example for the rest of the industry during the recession, pushing forward with business growth instead of retrenching. In November, he'll unveil his latest initiative — and raise his profile again, albeit on a local level — with the move of Alto Music's Wappingers Falls, N.Y., store to a larger spot.

If Haber has a secret, it's simply to stay the course. "We are still selling the same stuff that's been working for us all along," he said. "Messing around with what works doesn't always work out. So we've kept it the same. We have been very successful with a certain formula."

That formula includes investing in a boatload of inventory, a risky strategy in an uncertain economy. Still, Haber wouldn't have it any other way.

"Just because the economy is bad doesn't mean our formula is necessarily bad," he said. "One of the reasons we do make a lot of sales is because we have a lot of stuff to sell."

NEW DIGS

And selling "stuff" will get a lot more exciting for Haber and his team with the opening of the new state-of-the-art Wappingers Falls location. Situated across the street from the previous store, the dealership occupies a 12,000-square-foot building that

formerly housed a Gateway Computer outlet. Triple the size of the old store, the new Alto location boasts seven music lesson studios, a repair area and a showroom that, according to Haber, is unlike anything customers have seen before.

"This building is cutting-edge," he said. "The way it's merchandised and laid out — it's really something. It's a beautifully designed store. We bought the building, and we have been retrofitting it for the past year."

Part of the retrofitting includes brand-new built-in counters and huge Fender logos on the lesson room walls. "Every part of the store has its own feel," he said.

According to Haber, the store had outgrown its space as far back as 1997, and it was "about time for a move." He said he believes sales will double thanks to the move, and he has good reason to be confident. In 2010, Alto Music relocated its flagship store in Middletown, N.Y., a mile and a half up the road. The move, coupled with a design overhaul, raised the store's sales two and a half times over those of the previous location, according to Haber.

"I strongly feel our business should double from the first day we open up," he said of the Wappingers Falls location. "That's how much better this store is."

COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

The American Express ad campaign included radio and print ads, along with the TV spot. "You couldn't pay for that kind of advertising," Haber told *Music Inc.* when the commercials first aired. Alto's e-commerce sales tripled in the following weeks, and since the commercial went off the air, Haber said those sales have remained steady.

'I strongly feel our business should double from the first day we open up.'

"It's not like [sales] peaked during the commercial and then declined after that," Haber said. "We have maintained them. The AmEx commercial definitely helped a lot."

Haber's piece was also used in another American Express commercial titled "Heroes," giving his company an extra shot of publicity.

"We have a good relationship with American Express," Haber said. "They still call me from time to time and ask me to beta test things." — Katie Kailus & Zach

Phillips, photo by Luis Peña



Jon Haber



Embracing Social Commerce

HELLO MUSIC BRINGS THE EXCITEMENT OF DAILY DEALS TO MUSIC RETAIL CUSTOMERS

The way Rick Camino sees it, 70,000 customers pass through his store every morning.

That's how many receive the "daily deal" e-blast from his online dealership, industry newcomer Hello Music. And by year-end, he expects that number to more than double.

"Membership is growing 30–40 percent month over month," said Camino, president of the Los Angeles company, which also brokers musician-centered services, such as studio and mastering time. "Based on our trajectory, we'll probably be between 160,000–170,000 members by the end of the year.

"It's wildly exceeded our expectations."

GOING NARROW & DEEP

That growth has been driven by the company's unique approach to social commerce. In short, people join Hello Music as they would an exclusive club.

New visitors to the retailer's website are prompted to sign up, entitling them to browse, buy and, most important, receive Hello Music's daily deals. These e-blasts go out at 9 a.m. each day and feature four products at dirt-cheap discounts — sometimes as much as 40-percent below street price. Deals last just 48 hours, creating incentive to buy. This business model lets Hello Music turn its inventory every two days, making such low prices possible.

"It's going narrow and deep," Camino said. "We're not warehousing thousands of products for months at a time. We're focused on featuring four products or services every day and turning that inventory or service literally within 48 hours." He added that Hello Music handles as much sales volume "as probably some of

the biggest retailers in the country" on the gear it sells.

According to Will Urban, the company's vice president of programming and business development, Hello Music doesn't deal in B stock or "yesterday's product." Huge volume discounts from suppliers (Camino noted he prefers the term "partners") and a lean staff of 20-some employees allow for the retailer's low prices.

"Most of the [partners] that we're dealing with are finding that when Hello Music features something, it actually has an additive impact across all their other channels of business," Camino said.

That may carry over to fellow music retailers, as well. He mentioned that Hello Music's employees often refer business to local brick-and-mortar retailers due to the company's lean inventory.

"Customers may not have the money in the next 48 hours," he said. "We may just raise the consciousness of a particular item.

"And a lot of times, we will drive the ancillary demand back to traditional retail. We'll hook up a retailer in the area."

BUILDING A BASE

Camino stressed that Hello Music has built its customer base without purchasing a single e-mail list. Facebook and word-of-mouth stand as the company's two most robust sources of new prospects.

Ironically, its Facebook presence is sparse on sales pitches. Recent posts include a discussion of unsung bass heroes, an article about handling gig cancellations and a piece on songwriting tips. Much of the content is repurposed from other sources, and it gets co-promoted in daily deal e-mails.

"As a marketing tool, there is no better way to target specific communities than Facebook," Camino said.

Social media and e-mail serve another equally important function for Hello Music: They let the company carry on conversations with customers to determine what products to stock.

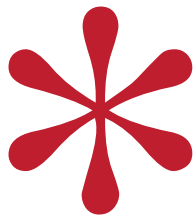
"Our community *wants* to talk to us," Urban said. "Without any incentives or prodding, they are very open to discussion and telling us how they feel about certain things and items that they want. That was one of the reasons we got into the daily deals in the first place."

Making customers opt-in has also yielded a remarkably effective mailing list. According to Camino and Urban, the company's daily deals have a 30-percent open rate — and it's a different 30 percent each day.

"So, we guess that we're probably at about 85- to 90-percent penetration with our membership base in any given week," Camino said. "If you know anything about e-mail marketing, that's about 100-percent more than the average open rate." — Zach Phillips



Rick Camino (left) and Will Urban



Creating Destinations

SAM ASH MUSIC REMODELS ITS STORES TO GIVE BRICK-AND-MORTAR CUSTOMERS SOMETHING EXTRA

These days, Sam Ash Music isn't just a chain retail store. It's a destination.

And Sammy Ash, chief operating officer of the Hicksville, N.Y.-based company, explained that creating destination stores doesn't always mean starting from scratch. Sometimes, it simply means being resourceful.

"You need to get creative with your space," Ash said. "Either you move and lose a lot of business afterward, or you take what you have and use it better."

For Ash, creativity can be as simple as fresh carpeting and new slatwall. "Not every store gets a major overhaul," he said. But occasionally, he'll pull out all the stops, a decision that's resulted in a major redo of Sam Ash's Nashville, Tenn., location — the chain's biggest remodel of the year.

"We made a conscious decision that we do well in Nashville, but our business will erode if we don't do more," Ash said.

EMBRACING CREATIVITY

Ash enlisted the help of Mike Aurigemma, Sam Ash's director of merchandising and special projects, to give the Nashville store a destination-location facelift. Its tour de force is the sparkling new guitar department — the progeny of several previous department rooms — which is a mammoth enterprise that Ash hopes will better his employees' lines of sight and efficiency.

"If a manager can manage his store better, he can be more involved on the floor," Ash said. "He can see where customers are not being taken care of."

He added that, while revamping a store doesn't necessarily mean increasing its inventory, he intends on displaying more

product, a goal he's realized in the new Nashville audio department. Developed from one of two existing warehouses — the other is a performance stage — the department is the biggest in Sam Ash's 45-year history, flush with new trussing and staging in order to attract the chain's commercial audio clientele.

"Now, wherever possible, we put in permanent trussing with all the power boxes," Ash said.

USER-FRIENDLY STORES

The Nashville shop is not only destination material but also an ergonomic masterpiece. For Ash, it's all about "basic store counter and department upgrading." Accessories, for example, have been a huge focus recently for the company. Due to the "screaming success" of Sam Ash's Ontario Mills, Calif., accessories counter, many stores, including Nashville, are receiving similar makeovers in order to push the category at higher volume and gross profit.

Over the last year, the company has also made tweaks to its drum departments, equipping 12 of them with new decking display systems over warehouse-style racking. Cymbal rooms have also been removed entirely, creating spacious, customer-friendly areas.



The audio department in Sam Ash's Nashville, Tenn., store

DESIGN SCHOOL

In an effort to promote the company's burgeoning music lessons business and further the "destination" appeal, Sammy Ash is also renovating his lesson studios. Several stores with lessons will feature a mezzanine of classrooms, HDMI-connected television monitors, soundproofed studios and cozy waiting areas.

"Nashville is going to knock everybody out," Ash said. "Miami and Cerritos, Calif., are already doing that. There are a number of places where we've put attention to detail and our dollars.

"We're doing it so we can be cutting-edge. We're not the only game in town. The experience is a total experience." — Hilary Brown

THOROUGHBREDS



IronHorse Head shown with DHX12 Cabinet

DarkHorse Head shown with DHX12 Cabinet

IRONHORSE

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

DARKHORSE

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



QUARTERHORSE

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

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

Traynor

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



Never Stop Promoting

EVOLA MUSIC HOLDS STRONG IN THE PIANO MARKET BY USING AN AGGRESSIVE MARKETING STRATEGY

How does a Detroit-area piano merchant power through an economic recession? If you're Evola Music, you stick to your promotional guns.

"Truth is, we're holding our own in the metro Detroit market," said Jim Evola, owner of the four-store dealership. "Starting in 2010, we stopped going backwards. We turned the corner. And 2011 has been holding numbers with 2010 — maybe slightly above it."

That's not to say Evola hasn't tweaked his promotional strategy. In terms of event marketing, his company has gone from hosting three local college sales per year to two. He's also made Evola Music's biannual warehouse sale strictly an annual event. But instead of saving those funds, he's reinvested the difference into three new outside sales in untapped smaller markets.

"We've still kept the budget, still promoted and still worked it aggressively," Evola said. "In the downtime, several [competing] stores have closed, so we can go into secondary markets.

"We've tried to go into a few other remote areas that are still a distance from our store — maybe 45 minutes to two hours away. There was a secondary dealer there, and those dealers have closed up."

OLD SCHOOL STILL WORKS

Evola Music remains steeped in other traditional piano marketing methods, too. Evola said direct mail still works when it's aimed at high net worth prospects, as does advertising on talk radio. In fact, he'll often plan events around months when he can purchase cheap radio time.

"There are actually a couple of times throughout the year

when radio is very inexpensive," Evola said. "You can buy radio time in January for significantly less than you can buy it in November and December."

While print may yield shrinking readerships, Evola noted he's been able to negotiate a "ridiculously reduced rate" on newspaper advertising. "And there are fewer [ads] in the paper, so the ad jumps out more."

His company's *Yellow Pages* budget has shrunk from \$48,000 to \$8,000 annually. Plus, he continues to tinker with e-mail blasts and Google AdWords. Evola even uses his company's music lessons program as part of its promotional efforts. His stores are 9,000–12,000 square feet — not small in this era of austerity retailing. Lessons help fill the showrooms and give Evola Music a way to draw people in week after week.

"What piano dealer has anything that's residual?" Evola asked rhetorically. "You can have people take lessons for years. What else do we have that comes in steady every month? Nothing."

To maintain good relations with local private teachers, Evola said his company supports "every single piano teacher organization under the sun."

LEAN RETAIL

Since the recession, "lean and mean" has become the new piano retail watchword. But despite the size of its stores, Evola Music has been practicing austerity retail for years.

"I'm carrying one less salesperson [overall] than we did long ago," Evola said. "We've been fairly conservative all along."

The only significant change has been the company's approach to inventory. According to Evola, his dealership's stock is purposefully "way down" and turning much faster. Not to mention Evola Music has gotten off floorplanning.

"We're using *all* internal funding," Evola said of his purchasing policy. "But it took years to do that."

Four years ago, he entered into a partnership he's particularly proud of for his fourth store, an affiliate dealership in Traverse City, Mich. At the time, an existing dealer was going out of business, leaving its store manager in need of a gig. Evola volunteered to fund the store and provide it with inventory, assuming the manager covered the lease and used the Evola Music name. The partnership provided an efficient means of growth in a tough market.

"It's a really interesting business model that I think has some merit for the future," Evola said, adding that it's worked out "very well."

"For him, his neck's not on the line for a half-million dollars of inventory. I think for some growth, it's reasonable if you can put two people together." — Zach Phillips



Jim Evola



Post-Recession Expansion

SWEETWATER NEARLY DOUBLES ITS REVENUE AFTER ELECTING TO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE DOWNTURN

According to Sweetwater President Chuck Surack, roughly 80 percent of calls from within the company are outgoing. Even with a streamlined Web presence and thriving mail-order business, it's old-fashioned pavement-pounding that's kept the Fort Wayne, Ind., independent retailer from — as Surack famously put it three years ago — “participating in the recession.”

“Every time we hire a new sales engineer, once they're trained and up to speed, there's more business coming in,” Surack said. “It's a fundamental difference from our competitors who sit there and wait for customers to walk in the door or call them on the phone.”

The full-line dealer has nearly doubled its annual revenue since the start of the recession to roughly \$200 million. Surack said this double-digit growth has stimulated big plans for expansion, beginning with Sweetwater's sparkling 180,000-square-foot facilities. “We're going to expand our building next year,” he said.

The company moved into its current headquarters in 2008 with roughly 220 employees. It now has just under 500.

“We continued to grow through this crazy recession, and we just need more room.”

CONQUERING NEW TERRITORY

Sweetwater has also staked a claim in the digital and acoustic keyboard categories, acquiring exclusive Yamaha dealership rights from neighboring Fort Wayne retailer Fred Myers Pianos, Clocks, Organs, which closed its doors earlier this year.

“The main genesis was the Yamaha product,” said Surack, who added that Sweetwater also offers substantial displays of

Chuck Surack



‘It really is all about customer service. Those are great words. They’re easy to say. But to really do it day in and day out is a whole other ball game.’

Clavinova, Kurzweil and Roland products. “We were already selling to schools, churches and higher-end homes. So when [David Myers] was willing to retire and give up a line, we all worked closely with Yamaha to make it a smooth transition for our customers.”

Surack also said Sweetwater plans to “stay where they are” product-wise, specializing in the technology and recording sectors. But he added that guitars have become a promising category for the business.

“We’ve quickly gone from not selling guitars 10 years ago to becoming the No. 1 or 2 dealer on most of the brands we sell,” Surack said.

And behind these sales is a staff picking up the phone and defying the economic odds.

“Word-of-mouth is probably the most important thing to us,” Surack said. “It really is all about customer service. Those are great words. They’re easy to say. But to really do it day in and day out is a whole other ball game.” — Hilary Brown

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Casting Crowns
CeCe Winans
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Chicago
Chick Corea
Chayanne
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Chuck Leavell
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Cyndi Lauper
Cirque Du Soleil
Clay Aiken
Clint Black
Coldplay
Colin James
The Corrs
Creed
Crowded House
Damien Rice
Dandy Warhols
Daniel Lanois
Darryl Stuermer
Dave LaRue
Dave Matthews
David Gilmore
Davy Knowles
Decemberists
Def Leppard
Derek Trucks
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Devin Townsend
Dimmu Borgir
Disney
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Dream Theater
Duke Robillard
Duran Duran
Dwight Yoakam
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Hoobastank
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Jay Leno Show
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Jet
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Los Lobos
Lou Reed
Lucinda Williams
Macy Gray
Manhattan Transfer
Manowar
Marcus Miller
Mariah Carey
Marillion
Marilyn Manson
Mark Egan
Mark Knopfler
Mark Tremonti
Maroon 5
Marty Stuart
Matchbox 20
Meatloaf
Megadeth
Melissa Ethridge
Merle Haggard
Metallica
Michael Bolton
Michael W Smith
Moist
Mötley Crüe
Motorhead
Muse
My Morning Jacket
Nathan East
Nelly Furtado
Neville Brothers
Nickelback
Nine Inch Nails
Oak Ridge Boys
Offspring
Oz Noy
Panic at the Disco
Pat Metheny
Pat Travers
Paul Anka
Paul Simon
Peter Gabriel
Phil Keaggy
Pink Floyd
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The Police
Porcupine Tree
Prince
The Prodigy
Queensryche
Radiohead
Randy Bachman
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Recession Relief

FENDER OFFERS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TO WEATHER A DOWNTURN

Being big hasn't stopped Fender from remembering the little guy. And nowhere is this more apparent than the company's service.

"They have the most organized customer service department for taking care of any defective product-related issues, and they seem to improve on it every year," said a music retailer. "That says all you need to know about a company. If they take care of their problems as quickly as they take your order, that's the sure sign of a winner."

Nominating dealers also cited Fender's budget-line guitars and amps as key tools in helping weather the recession. "Fender has

always been about innovation, product excellence and creating value for our customers," said Richard McDonald, the company's senior vice president of global marketing. "Getting the most musical solution from new technology is the key. It's what our customers expect from us. It's what we expect from ourselves."

Or, as one retailer put it, "They're adjusting to the current economic conditions and working with their dealers to keep things fresh and stimulate interest in the guitar market."



Richard McDonald

"We are sensitive to the challenges [dealers] face in an ever-evolving, dynamic marketplace," McDonald added. "Channel consolidation, catalogs and Internet sales have changed the landscape. We do everything we can to stay close to our dealers and help them grow and succeed. Fender customers depend on local music retailers on many levels, and that is important to us." — Jeff Cagle



miBESTPRODUCT

ORANGE DUAL TERROR

Two years after its launch, the Orange Dual Terror continues gaining traction. A 30-watt version of the company's best-selling Tiny Terror, this twin-channel tube amp head gives players even more power and options. Retailers were especially keen on its quality and price, roughly \$900 on the street, as well as its super-portable chassis. orangeamps.com

miBESTPRODUCT

BLACKSTAR In seven years, Blackstar has become a rising leader of the crowded amp world. "Blackstar is selling really well, and it is hard to keep them in the shop," one dealer said. "Plus, they have great advertising and are coming with more artists that use the brand." At Summer NAMM, the company turned heads with its front-and-center exhibit space, which showcased new additions to the Series One range. blackstaramps.co.uk





RETAIL EXCELLENCE **★ ★ ★ ★** The
Gong Show

MEMPHIS DRUM SHOP GRABS ATTENTION WITH UNUSUAL NICHES

To make Memphis Drum Shop a national retail destination, owner Jim Pettit embraced his love of all things gong.

“The Memphis Gong Chamber is an extremely unique place — sonically, visually and physically,” said Pettit of his Memphis, Tenn., store’s key attraction.

The 18- by 14-foot space contains Paiste Symphonic, Planetary and Sound Creation gongs in its main chamber and various other models of gongs and metal objects in the lesser chamber.

The space also includes an array of mallets, stands and cases.

But for Pettit, the Memphis Gong Chamber’s not just about giving his customers options. It also plays host to regular gong-related events. During the “sonic massage,” artists play not only two 60-inch gongs at once but also the chamber’s 84-inch Paiste model.

“I have received excellent feedback from my customers on our gong service to them,” he said.

CRASH COURSE

Pettit has received similar praise for his store’s cymbal-only website, myCymbal.com. Featuring videos for each model, it’s become an industry-wide reference for drummers seeking the ideal cymbal.

“Many people tell me that myCymbal.com has become the standard reference for cymbals in the industry,” he said. “Customers are able to see and hear the exact cymbal that they will purchase.”

Meinl President Mitch McMichen agreed. “Their cymbal website allows users to see, hear and purchase the exact cymbal they want and not just one at random,” he said. “Their sales have been rewarded for their efforts.” — Katie Kailus

CONSISTENT EXCELLENCE

What do music retailers love about Yamaha? In a word, consistency.

“A dealer can present Yamaha products with confidence knowing that the product is well-made and Yamaha will back that product with a gold-standard

SUPPLIER
SX
EXCELLENCE

warranty,” said one retailer. “We deal with many suppliers who are a pleasure. These folks really treat their customers well. But in the end, [when it comes to] innovation, vision and consistency, Yamaha wins every time.”

Yamaha Senior Vice President Rick Young explained that the company’s

high quality of components and production drives its ability to offer warranties that exceed consumer expectations, and that helps dealers build relationships with customers.

“Retailers extend their credibility with customers when the product sold is high-quality and performs better than the specs on the box,” Young said.

And just as consumers expect great service from dealers, Young said Yamaha’s team understands that dealers expect great service from suppliers — a point not lost on many nominating retailers.

“New [Yamaha] managers learn from seasoned managers, and new employees learn right away what is expected to serve our customers,” Young said. “It is the result of the respect we have for all of our retailers and end-users, and although employees move and change over the years, customer service is one of our constants.” — Jeff Cagle



Rick Young



Acousti-Craze

HOW MELODEE MUSIC BRINGS 300–500 PEOPLE INTO ITS STORE IN A SINGLE DAY

When Sterling, Pa.-based Melodee Music began hosting its annual Acoustifest 13 years ago, Rick Mock knew it would be a runaway hit.

“I know for a fact that there are people who have come every year for the past 13 years,” said Mock, vice president of the two-store combo dealership, adding that the event usually draws 300–500 attendees. “They are anticipating it.”

Held strategically on the last Sunday of March, Acoustifest falls during a slow period in the community — when, Mock joked, there are “no football games” — helping ensure a large draw. Annual festivities include clinics from such big-name companies as Taylor and Martin, along with vendor booths, raffles and displays of custom-made guitars. Acoustifest also features special promotions, most notably free restringings courtesy of D’Addario.

“Their reps supply the strings for the free restringing,” Mock said. “[During Acoustifest,] they usually restring about 50 guitars.”

While Melodee Music closes sales that day, Mock said the residual sales are heavier. “The [attendees] are going to talk about it to their friends and relatives for weeks afterwards,” he said. “They talk about the things they saw here or who they saw here. Most people come for the clinics because they feature known artists.”

Melodee Music holds the event at its 20,000-square-foot, three-floor Sterling location, spread throughout the store. The 109-seat auditorium houses clinics and, with the addition of folding chairs and standing room, can accommodate more than 200 people at once. The company also promotes Acoustifest via e-mail blasts and posts on its website. Mock said he’s even considering marketing the event alongside the store’s regular local cable commercials.

“We have advertised on cable TV for some time now but just recently expanded our coverage to almost the entire Northern Virginia area,” Mock said. “We now reach approximately 600,000 homes with Comcast and FiOS. So this year, we may advertise on cable along with our usual ads.” — Katie Kailus



Rob (left) and Rick Mock

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PERCUSSION

PRO AUDIO

HARMONICAS

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Hanser's Golden Rule

When it comes to rating Hanser Music Group's customer service, this year's retail voters had nothing but praise. Hanser's reps "get it," one said, while another added that the company is "friendly and fair with retailers."



Bill Xavier

There's no secret formula to the distributor's success, according to Executive Vice President Bill Xavier. Still, he noted that an "altruistic" mindset pervades Hanser's culture.

"It's really quite simple," he said. "We treat others as we wish to be treated. Perhaps that's old-fashioned, but that's how we operate."

Xavier mentioned that he's seen the banking crisis affect retailers' ability to expand their product offerings. Luckily, Hanser — which carries such brands as B.C. Rich, Kustom and Davitt & Hanser — promises same-day shipping for orders placed by 3 p.m. And the company continues "pulling customers' orders until the UPS truck drives away," Xavier added. To meet everyone's busy schedules, Hanser also offers an online order-entry system that lets dealers place orders 24/7.

"Of course we need [dealers] to make a living, but at Hanser, our customers are king." — Sara Farr



miBESTPRODUCT

POWERWERKS PW50 P.A. SYSTEM As one dealer said of the Powerwerks PW50, "It serves so many uses for so little money." It's a portable sound system, practice amp, player for audio devices — the list goes on — and works in multiple performance environments. "[It] sells itself as a result of all the useful features," the retailer added. Plus, the Powerlink Circuit lets two or more units be connected to work as one P.A. system. powerwerks.com



miBESTPRODUCT

DW PERFORMANCE SERIES The DW Performance series boasts HVX, a slick, new shell design that yields deep fundamental tones and bends horizontal, vertical and diagonal plies of North American hard rock maple. The set also features TruePitch tuning and a choice of five hand-sprayed specialty finishes or three ultra-durable FinishPly finishes. "These are a great value for DW kits," said Glenn Noyes, Guitar Center's director of category management for drums and percussion, adding that "it's a DW kit at half the price." dwdrums.com

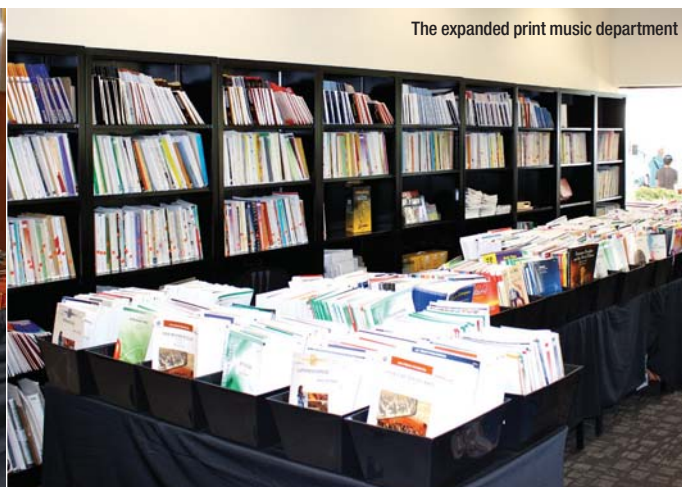
miBESTPRODUCT

PEAVEY AMPKIT LINK Peavey's AmpKit LiNK electric guitar adapter provides users with a powerful way to play, practice and record high-quality tones anytime, anywhere. New features include the ability to copy and paste audio into other apps and DAWs, as well as three new pieces of gear — the American Acoustic, Tremo-LOL and Wahba Doo effects — which can now be placed before or after the amp. MSRP: \$39.99. peavey.com





A violin table display



The expanded print music department



Quinlan & Fabish's new Burr Ridge, Ill., showroom



The dedicated string room

RETAIL EXCELLENCE **Retail Upgrade**

QUINLAN & FABISH ENTERS ITS LAST UNCHARTED TERRITORY

Going into this year, Quinlan & Fabish had conquered the school music business. It operated in three states and won over much of the hyper-competitive Chicago market. Ironically, the company's last frontier was retail itself.

That changed in August, when Quinlan & Fabish unveiled its new Burr Ridge, Ill., headquarters. With increased warehouse space and a new conference and event room, the 52,000-square-foot building put two of the company's separate facilities under one roof. Most important, it gave the school music dealer 10,000

square feet of showroom space to play with.

"For years, we'd operated where our retail store was secondary," said George Quinlan, company president. "At one point, we committed to being better retailers — building store traffic."

The new showroom boasts classy department signage, an earth-toned color scheme, print music galore and a plentiful selection without feeling cluttered. "We'll hopefully see growth in step-up instruments," Quinlan said. The company also added a music lessons program to the store, partly to draw traffic. (It already offered lessons at its Mount Prospect, Ill., location.) And the new conference and events room gives Quinlan & Fabish space to host focus groups, teacher in-service days and master classes with artists.

"We've already had some focus groups," said Quinlan, adding that he's partnered with suppliers for these events. "The teachers love it, to be asked what their opinion is.

"We don't know exactly what we're going to utilize [the room] for — we've never had a meeting room of that size. But so far, for the limited things we've done, they've been really good." — Zach Phillips

miBESTPRODUCT**AVID PRO TOOLS 9**

This year, audio retailers everywhere celebrated Pro Tools going open platform with version 9. The software also delivers several highly requested features, including Eucon support and automatic delay compensation. Plus, customers can use Pro Tools 9 as a software-only tool or with hardware options. As if that weren't enough, Avid debuted Pro Tools 10 at press time. Stay tuned. **{avid.com}**

**mi**BESTPRODUCT

ALESIS IO DOCK As an all-in-one docking station for the iPad and iPad 2, Alesis' iO Dock has an unusually large target market. The unit features two combination XLR/quarter-inch inputs, a plug-and-play guitar-direct switch and MIDI jacks, letting users connect to nearly all their favorite apps. With a \$200 street price, it's the ultimate complement to a recording setup — and, by default, the ultimate add-on for recording customers. **{alesis.com}**

**mi**BESTPRODUCT

OSCAR SCHMIDT ACOUSTICS With a street price well under \$200, Oscar Schmidt acoustic guitars represent the ultimate bang-for-the-buck value for retailers and customers. One dealer called the instruments a "year in, year out perennial best-seller," praising their quality and margins. "The company stands behind its product better than companies whose guitars cost 10 times as much," the retailer added. The OG10CE concert-size cutaway acoustic/electric (pictured) has a tuner built into the pre-amp and a rosewood fingerboard and bridge. **{oscarschmidt.com}**



GC Studios in Louisville, Ky.



Branching Out

GUITAR CENTER LISTENS TO CUSTOMERS AND GETS INTO THE LESSONS BUSINESS

It takes more than a sluggish economy to slow down Guitar Center.

Instead of cutting back after the recession, the mega retailer rang in 2011 by going into full-blown expansion mode, opening six new locations and building out two. By year-end, GC also plans to open shop in Yonkers, N.Y., and Orange, Calif. — bringing its grand total to 224 stores.

Possibly the most significant move GC has made this year is entering into the music lessons business, a space dominated by independent music retailers. Why did it take the plunge? According to Norman Hajjar, executive vice president and chief customer officer for Guitar Center, because consumers kept asking for it.

"We listen closely to our customers and are always looking to extend our relationship with them in a way that helps them get deeper into their musical passions," Hajjar said. "We heard the same thing over and over again: lessons."

GC built the studios on its own terms. According to Hajjar, that meant differentiating them from the competition. The education program features a standardized curriculum, created in partnership with Hal Leonard, and hip-looking lesson studios that closely match the design and vibe of GC stores.

"We took the time to get the price and value balanced on the right fulcrum and create a retail environment that was hip, fun and unlike anything else out there," Hajjar said. "We really believed we had the right mix — something differentiated and not 'me too.' Instead, something worthy of Guitar Center. We went into the rollout of GC Studios with full optimism and confidence." — Katie Kailus



The Retailer Whisperer

WHAT LEAN MANUFACTURING MEANS TO D'ADDARIO AND ITS DEALER BASE

At D'Addario, it's the customer who drives decisions. "D'Addario is a company made up of a lot of musicians," said Rick Drumm, company president. "We have an understanding of the customer because we're the customer — many of us."

To better serve customers, D'Addario has made several recent improvements. It's reduced order fill times from 24–48 hours to same-day shipping and also lowered prices on many of its strings and Evans drumheads. The company accomplished these cost- and time-saving measures, in large part, by embracing Lean manufacturing, a practice of reducing waste in all forms.

And according to Drumm, Lean has helped D'Addario reduce its operation by 70,000 square feet, which, in turn, gives it "an opportunity to bring in more business and create more jobs."

LEAN RETAIL APPLICATIONS

The fundamental challenge for brick-and-mortar retailers nowadays, Drumm said, is adding value to the customer experience. Here again, he pointed to the value of adapting Lean manufacturing principles to a retail environment.

He suggested, for example, that dealers evaluate how their salespeople access information about service-related issues. Is the information available where the associate works, or does he have to access another system in a different part of the store? Giving employees information from a central location lets them better concentrate on the customer and provide a higher level of service. Drumm also noted that streamlining such processes can add up to big savings in time and money, and that's where a profit margin can be made or lost.

"Retailers will see their profit margins improve, as well," he said, adding that after implementing Lean principles, D'Addario saw an increase in its own profits. "If you maintain activities that don't add value to your company — and, more importantly, that don't add value to your consumer — the consumer is going to go elsewhere, where they will perceive they are getting more value for less effort on their part." — Sara Farr, with reporting by Zach Phillips



Rick Drumm



miBESTPRODUCT

QSC K SERIES One audio retailer called the K series "a game changer," adding, "We haven't seen this kind of response to a single line of product in a long time." Others agreed. These loudspeakers deliver 1,000 watts of high sonic clarity and reliability in a lightweight, portable package. They also offer multiple mounting and suspension options, making them useful for a range of applications. qscaudio.com



miBESTPRODUCT

KORG KRONOS When Korg released its latest flagship keyboard, Kronos, at winter NAMM, "Best in Show" judge John Grabowski remarked, "I don't know if I can figure out what it doesn't have." Kronos has since become a top seller at keyboard retailers everywhere. Nine sound engines and gargantuan piano, drum and tape-based keyboard libraries are just a few of the many reasons for its broad appeal. korg.com

High-Service Culture

ST. LOUIS MUSIC HELPS ITS RETAILERS RUN TIGHTER SHIPS

When it comes to today's fast-paced sales environment, St. Louis Music tries to balance technology with a personal approach.

"This is still a relationship-based industry," said Mark Ragin, company CEO. "Although it is

easy to order online, it's still great to talk to each other and build friendships."

That's why St. Louis Music, a division of U.S. Band and Orchestra Supplies, offers dealers two ways to conduct business: an online ordering system and an inside sales team. Dealers praised this strategy, adding that St. Louis Music's fair, friendly approach extends throughout the company.

"We have a very open culture here," Ragin said, noting that his management team meets weekly to discuss policies, procedures

and products. "If there is an unhappy customer that week, we discuss how to fix it and make sure it doesn't happen again."

Additionally, the company has a 12-year sales history of best-selling items and an automated purchasing system, making it uniquely positioned to identify what to order and when to have it in stock. Currently, St. Louis Music carries such brands as Knilling, Austin, Perfection Planetary Pegs, Zonda, Cargo and SLM music accessories. It's also the exclusive U.S. distributor of Alvarez and Alvarez-Yairi, Francois Louis, the Nuvo Clarinéo, and Superial Reeds.

Ragin pointed out that the industry has irrevocably changed since the advent of the Internet.

In order to combat a tougher business climate, St. Louis Music stays "nimble enough to make quick decisions but large enough [to] appeal to most customers," according to Ragin.

"As many retailers these days are running tighter ships, ordering just-in-time and holding smaller inventories, it's our job to make sure we have it on our shelf" and, he added, get it to them as quickly and reliably as possible. — Sara Farr



Mark Ragin



EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

YORKVILLE RECEIVES PRAISE FOR ITS FAST SERVICE AND PRODUCT OFFERINGS

Most companies strive for fast, accurate service, but few overdeliver on expectations. Not the case for Yorkville, which many dealers praised for its speedy, friendly service and excellent fill rate. Or, as one dealer said, there are "no hassles at all in any way" when working with the supplier.

Phil Betette, Yorkville's vice president of marketing and sales, attributed this service partly to the close proximity of the company's Pickering, Ontario, factory to its U.S. sales and distribution center in Niagra Falls, N.Y.

"When customers order product, we are able to ship within 24 hours most of the time," Betette said. "Our factory is extremely modern and is run with contemporary manufacturing technology."

Dealers also gave kudos to Yorkville's products, and Betette

credited the company's design philosophy for some of this year's best-selling gear, such as the Thoroughbred amp line.

"We deliver exactly what we say we will, in terms of performance and value."

"We stick to our roots," he said. "We offer products that perform as promised to our retailers and end-users. We deliver exactly what we say we will, in terms of performance and value. We're a company that backs our retailers and products with the full breadth of our resources."

— Jeff Cagle

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miBESTPRODUCT

ELECTRO-HARMONIX STEREO TALKING MACHINE This pedal recreates the characteristics of vowels and reshapes instruments' signals to mimic them. It provides nine selectable voices that deliver varied vowel sounds, plus Bassball and wah-type dynamic filters. "You can get some really cool sounds from it, and it gives your songs a really different vibe," said Thomas Greager of Greager Guitars in Greensburg, Pa. "It also offers a lot of flexibility." MSRP: \$290. ehx.com



Constant Contact

BERTRAND'S MUSIC ADAPTS SCHOOL MUSIC RETAIL TO A DIGITAL WORLD

School music retail isn't just horns, stringed instruments and sheet music anymore. Just ask John Bertrand, whose diverse online product catalog and rental platform have pushed his dealership, San Diego-based Bertrand's Music, to the forefront of the band and orchestra category.

The Bertrand's website offers everything from an express sheet music finder to embedded video of the company's four showrooms. Bill Walzak, owner of Pro-Active Websites, has worked with Bertrand's Music for seven years. He said that while Bertrand's "embraces every part of music," he's been particularly impressed with the company's "very sharp" Web presence.

"Digitally, they are constantly in contact with their customers," Walzak said, mentioning Bertrand's "tremendous" online rental program.

Bertrand's also heads up a thriving karaoke business, Express Karaoke, which the company cross-promotes on bertrandmusic.com. Jeff Bertrand, John's son, recently took over store management responsibilities after his father's retirement. He noted that a spike in karaoke business directly after the school music season — around the holidays — has led the company to put Web addresses for both bertrandmusic.com and expresskaraoke.com on all of its promotional materials.

Plus, the company practices the philosophy of doing well by doing good. John Bertrand often donates instruments and scholarships to area schools, an ideal setting to pitch the company's music lessons program.

"We do a lot of in-school promotions where we're actually out in front of administrators and teachers," Jeff said. — Hilary Brown

miBESTPRODUCT

CANNONBALL VINTAGE SERIES The Vintage series recreates the glory of saxophones from the early to mid-20th century, delivering classic looks and keywork, as well as focused projection. One school music retailer commented that the instruments are "very, very easy to sell," as they appeal to a specific customer. Bonus: Vintage saxes also yield Cannonball's respectable margins. cannonballmusic.com



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Loyalty Matters

MUSICORP WINS BIG FOR TAKING CARE OF RETAILERS LARGE AND SMALL

In an age of corporate consolidation and impersonal online ordering, a small dealer can feel lost in the hustle and bustle. But that will never happen at Musicorp, according to Dan Roberts, company vice president.

“While we may be part of a large corporation, it remains at the core of Musicorp’s mission to honor the foundation we were built upon: to be there for our customers, no matter how large or small their businesses may be,” Roberts said. “They are like family to us.”

That loyalty has paid off for the company, which has been in business for more than 30 years and specializes in musical instruments, lighting products and accessories. In 2011, Musicorp launched more than 30 new MBT Lighting products, such as the LED Brite Pack and LED PARdelite line, all aimed at helping dealers draw attention to their showrooms, thereby increasing sales. Musicorp, along with sister company KMC Music, also carries the full line of Fender accessories and apparel, providing dealers with easy add-on products at a range of price points.

“The struggling economy has really hit some of our customers hard and forced them to cut expenses in any way they can,” Roberts said. “At Musicorp, we’ve put extra effort into finding ways ... to help find business solutions and launch business initiatives to increase their sales and profit performance.”

Specifically, those initiatives include keeping product and shipping costs low; providing a variety of promotions, marketing support and sales tools; and creating the Musicorp Road Shows. These mini trade shows, which make four stops around the country, let dealers test new products, take advantage of show-only specials and join in product demos conducted by Musicorp staff.

“We’re in business because of our customers, and they are the reason why our people come to work every day with a passion for music and a commitment to serve their needs,” Roberts said. — Sara Farr



Dan Roberts



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The Dealer Toolbox

ROLAND'S DEALER SERVICES PRIME COMPANIES FOR SUCCESS

This year, Roland wins big for offering both the products and the tools retailers need to close a sale.

"We love to give the tools to our dealers to help them please their customers," said Chris Bristol, president and CEO of Roland U.S.

Roland spends a lot of time and money on dealer education and training, something this year's Supplier Excellence Award voters were quick to note. One commented that the company also creates a "great consumer experience" through such initiatives as the Foresta program, a partnership with dealers that

A Roland Foresta display at Robert M. Sides Family Music Center



combines retail merchandising, training and other coordinated activities.

"We're very interested in the experience the customers have when shopping for a piano, and we want them to have the best possible experience when doing so," said Bristol of Foresta. "The setting is focused on making the experience comfortable for families and, in particular, women because they make up the majority of the buying power for the piano market." Bristol added that Roland's consolidated group of Foresta piano dealers has seen a 20-percent rise in sales this year.

The company also scored hits in 2011 with the GR-55, V-Piano Grand (which has been featured on "The Grammy Awards" and "The Voice") and the Jupiter-80 — all of which showcase the company's "long-term commitment to evolving categories," Bristol said.

"Since dealers have such a wide variety of products to choose from nowadays, we had to find a way to differentiate ourselves as a supplier. It was important for the dealers to see how committed we are to making their businesses successful from the top down." — Sara Farr



mi BEST PRODUCT

ROLAND JUPITER-80 Roland touted the Jupiter-80 as its most realistic-sounding synth to date, and dealers gave that claim a vote of confidence. Representing the apex of the company's SuperNATURAL technology, the instrument includes a treasure trove of acoustic instrument sounds. What's more, the synth actually analyzes a user's performance to make it as authentic as possible. It's a combination that deserves to be called "incredible," to quote a happy Roland dealer. rolandus.com

THE ADAPTER

When it comes to service, today's retailers want it now, and they want it done right. For KMC Music, this means "continuously adapting to meet the individual needs of our customers," according



to Jay Wanamaker, KMC's senior vice president of sales. To that end, KMC Music offers customers one-stop shopping, including a 24/7 on-line ordering environment and personalized customer service.

The supplier has invested heavily in inventory to accommodate dealers' needs. Additionally, KMC Music boasts a specialized supply-chain management system encompassing logistics, sourcing and inventory planning that lets it "uphold our mantra: supplying customers with the right products at the right time and at the right cost," as Wanamaker put it.

He said he hopes that by having the right tools in place, dealers will be able to focus their resources on growth. To help, KMC's continually working to expand its product lines, incentive programs and marketing services.

"We make buying music products easy and efficient, so our customers can get on with their jobs and feel secure," Wanamaker said. — Sara Farr



The Profit Partner

HARRIS-TELLER AIMS TO HELP RETAILERS IMPROVE THEIR PRODUCT TURNS

The way Jon Harris sees it, his company is a music store's warehouse. "In today's economy, it is more crucial than ever to keep a steady cash flow and for the store to turn its inventory several times a year," said the president of Harris-Teller, which carries a range of musical instruments, accessories and print music.

For this reason, Harris-Teller aims to offer its customers flexibility, according to Harris, letting dealers operate in a "just-in-time fashion" to more effectively manage their resources. He added that Harris-Teller's major hurdle is convincing retailers to call on his company instead of ordering direct from manufacturers. While a dealer may think there's a cost savings associated with ordering direct, Harris explained, there may be hidden freight charges or minimums that result in overstock and additional operational costs.

"While the line item on the bill might appear to be less, when all factors are added in, it is often much more expensive," he said, adding that his company's staff "is extremely skilled at dispelling these notions."

And at Harris-Teller, the customer-centric culture begins from the ground up. The company engages employees and customers in a dialogue to ensure "the best possible service that we can," Harris explained. "While we are not afraid to change if needed, we also do not want to reinvent ourselves if things are going well and our customers are happy.

"There are not many places where your job can also be your passion. I feel honored to say that we enjoy a level of trust by both our customers and suppliers unmatched in the industry." — Sara Farr

miBESTPRODUCT

KAWAI CA93 The CA93 takes the digital piano experience to a new level. It features 88 wooden keys with ivory touch surfaces, along with a cabinet designed from premium rosewood and finished in a sharp satin black. The instrument also comes with 80 voices and can play MP3, WAV and MIDI files, as well as record MP3 and WAV files. On top of that, the CA93's new sound technology offers 88-key piano sampling for smooth transitions across the keyboard.

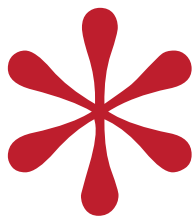
{kawaius.com}



miBESTPRODUCT

CRAFTER TG-200H Crafter's TG-200H has garnered a lot of attention thanks to its easy-to-read display — one that starts with an orange background and turns to green when tuning is achieved. It's effective on even the hardest-to-tune strings. "It sells well, has rapid turns and good margins, along with no customer complaints," said Bryan Loy of Paradise Music in Franklin, N.C. MSRP: \$24.95. {crafterusa.com}





Two-Time Winners

THESE BEST-SELLERS
TURNED HEADS LAST YEAR.
IN 2011, THEY CONTINUED
THEIR UPWARD TRAJECTORY



miBESTPRODUCT

SNARK TUNERS This year, there was Snark, and there was everyone else. No company or product garnered as much recognition from music retailers as this clip-on tuner maker. One dealer called Snark products the “easiest sale ever,” another commented that he couldn’t “keep them on the shelves.” And everyone agreed the company’s margin couldn’t be beat. Oh yeah, then there’s the tuners themselves, which boast a distinctive full-color display, tap tempo metronome and transpose function. **{snarktuners.com}**



miBESTPRODUCT

FENDER MUSTANG AMPS “Fender did a great job at making a small amp better, but their boxes just took over when it came to making displays,” said Sims Music’s Jerry Sims of the Mustang amp line. And dealers have even more reason to be excited about the series with the recent launch of the Mustang Mini (pictured). This ultra-portable model has a single 6.5-inch speaker that delivers 7 watts of power. Features include 24 on-board presets built from eight digital amp models and a dozen digital effects. MSRP: \$174.99. **{fender.com}**



miBESTPRODUCT

KALA U-BASS “We sell them as fast as we get them,” said one retailer of the Kala U-Bass. Considering how fast ukuleles turned in 2011, that’s saying something. At 20 inches, this short-scale wonder produces the same deep rumblings as a traditional bass. It comes in fretted or fretless models, and at Summer NAMM, Kala even rolled out a more affordable, solid version: the S-U-B U-Bass. “Every bass player should have one,” commented Liz Reisman of Creative Music Center, who gave the instrument a “Best in Show” nod. **{kala ukulele.com}**



miBESTPRODUCT

YAMAHA CLAVINOVA The Clavinova line receives praise year after year for its robust margins and Yamaha's brick-and-mortar-friendly policies (i.e., no online sales). More recently, the company rolled out the CLP400 series (pictured). It features redesigned cabinetry that makes it a dead ringer for an acoustic upright. This is complemented by the new Panel Reveal Key Cover, which hides all signs of technology. yamaha.com

**mi**BESTPRODUCT

TAYLOR GS MINI "Even though it was really introduced late last year, this guitar is still selling very well," said a combo retailer of the Taylor GS Mini. He added that by September he'd already moved close to 20 GS Minis. Those sales are powered by an ultra-portable guitar with bold tone and a proprietary pickup. Taylor also bundles the GS Mini with the V-Cable, a quarter-inch cord with a built-in volume control. As the retailer said, "Taylor hit one out of the park with this guitar." MSRP: \$678. taylorguitars.com



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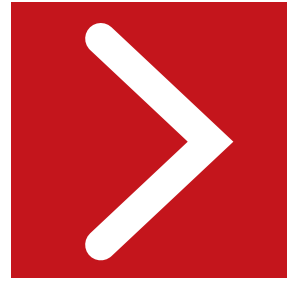
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GEAR



MARTIN | D-28M

California Dreamin'

Martin recently launched the D-28M The Mamas & The Papas Custom Artist Edition guitar. The new instrument is a 14-fret dreadnought crafted of rare premium tonewoods. The top is made of Carpathian spruce and boasts solid Madagascar rosewood on the back and sides with a neck carved from genuine mahogany. An ebony headplate features The Mamas & The Papas' silhouettes inlaid in solid mother of pearl directly above the nut. MSRP: \$4,999. martinguitar.com



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Taylor unveils its Fall Limiteds

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Kickport keeps kickin'

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Korg releases SP-250 in black

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Rico finds new comfort levels

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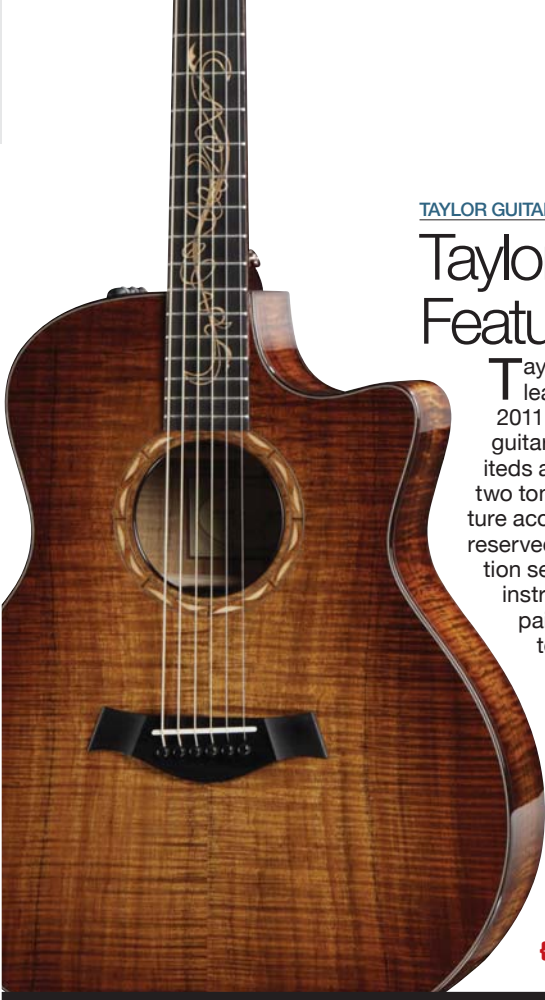
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Chauvet gets intimidating

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TAYLOR GUITARS | 2011 FALL LIMITEDS

Taylor's Fall Features

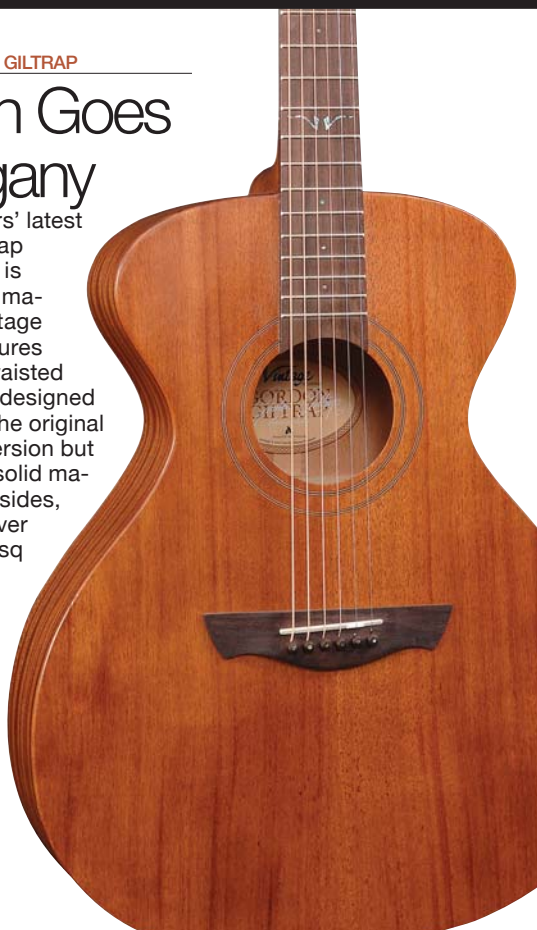
Taylor Guitars has released its collection of 2011 Fall Limited Edition guitars. Anchoring the limiteds are cocobolo and koa, two tonewoods with signature acoustic voices. Usually reserved for Taylor's Presentation series or Build To Order instruments, cocobolo is paired with Sitka spruce tops on two models: the GA-LTD and the GS-LTD. The 400 series LTDs feature an Indian rosewood back and sides, a Sitka spruce top, and bonus appointments that include a small diamond fretboard inlay and gold tuners.

{taylorguitars.com}

VINTAGE | GORDON GILTRAP

Gordon Goes Mahogany

Vintage Guitars' latest Gordon Giltrap signature model is now available in mahogany. The Vintage V2000MGG features the same slim-waisted Rob Armstrong-designed body shape as the original cedar-topped version but this time with a solid mahogany top and sides, gold-plated Grover tuners, and a Tusq graphite nut and saddle. The guitar boasts a punchy tone that covers the complete sonic spectrum. {giltrap.co.uk}



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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

MORLEY | EFFECTS LOOP CORRECTOR

Loop Fixer

Morley's Effects Loop Corrector increases the signal in weak FX Loops for more headroom and a fuller sound. The unit also lowers hot FX loop and send signals that cause effect pedals to clip or distort, and it corrects the variations in FX loop signals that exist from amp to amp. MSRP: \$110. morleypedals.com



EPIPHONE | LES PAUL ULTRA-III

Ultra Ax

Epiphone's new Les Paul Ultra-III fuses the look, design and shape of a classic Les Paul with the latest in guitar technology. The Ultra-III is a real Les Paul electric guitar that also has the ability to sound acoustic and is the only electric guitar with Shadow's built-in tuner, NanoMag and A/B switch. Colors include: Faded Cherryburst, Midnight Ebony, Vintage Sunburst and Midnight Sapphire. MSRP: \$1,332. epiphone.com



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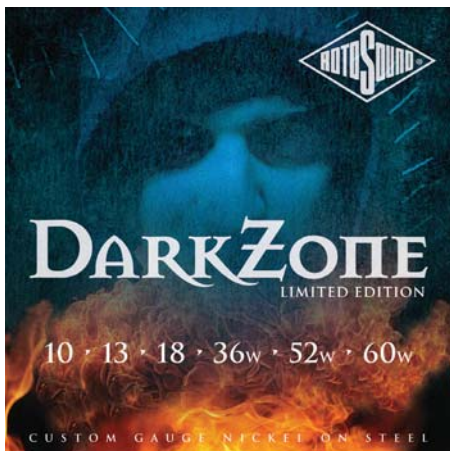
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— Theresa Case — PianoCentralStudios.com

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ROTSOUND | DARKZONE

Into the Dark

Rotosound has unveiled the Darkzone drop-tuning, high-output, nickel-plated electric steel guitar strings. Darkzone is a hybrid string set that includes super-heavy bottom E and A strings that are ideal for thunderous power chords. The sets are available in 10, 13, 18, 36, 52 and 60 gauges. Darkzone retains the distinctive British bright tone associated with Rotosound strings. Designed specifically for rock and metal guitar players, the strings also work for blues and jazz musicians, as well. rotosound.com

ACTIONTUNER.COM | TUNERMATIC

Auto Tune

ActionTuners.com has released its newest model, the TunerMatic. The easy-to-use tuner lets players hold the tuner on the tuning peg for each string and pluck the string. The TunerMatic then processes the sound. Its gear motor actually turns the peg, and within seconds, the string is in tune. The tuner beeps to let users know when the string is tuned to the perfect pitch. actiontuners.com



LINE 6 | POD HD

Line 6 Goes HD

Line 6 recently launched its Pod HD Pro rack-mountable multi-effect processor. The Pod HD Pro is loaded with an arsenal of 22 HD guitar amp models and 22 HD guitar pre-amp-only models, which are ideal for driving a tube amp's power section. MSRP: \$979. line6.com



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GEAR

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

FENDER | EC SERIES

Slowhand's Choice



Fender recently introduced the Eric Clapton EC series guitar amplifiers, which include the EC Twinolux, EC Tremolux and EC Vibro-Champ. The amps bear not only Clapton's name but also his design touches. Each is a variation based on three classic Fender tweed tube amps of the 1950s. They're handmade in the United States.

{fender.com}



GIBSON | FIREBIRD X

X Marks the Spot

Gibson's new Firebird X guitar boasts such technologies as fourth-generation Robot tuners for automatic tuning, on-board effects based on computer plug-in technology and wireless Bluetooth pedals. The guitar has a lightweight body created from hand-sorted swamp ash, three mini-humbuckers with side-by-side coils and a hexaphonic piezo bridge pickup. MSRP: \$5,570. {gibson.com}

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

KALA | GOLDEN ACACIA SERIES

The Golden Boy

Kala has added the Golden Acacia series to its acacia Uke line. Features include a solid acacia top, laminate acacia back and sides, and satin finish.

{kalaukulele.com}



JACKSON | JS SERIES

Jackson Three

Jackson recently included three new basses in its JS series. The JS2 concert bass (pictured) boasts an Indian cedro body and a maple neck with an Indian rosewood compound radius fingerboard. The JS3 concert bass features a bolt-on maple neck with Indian rosewood, a bound fingerboard and a 34-inch scale. The JS3V concert bass is Jackson's most affordable five-string bass and includes the same body as the other new models, along with 24 jumbo frets and a 34-inch scale. MSRP: JS2 concert bass, \$399.99; JS3 concert bass, \$466.65; JS3V concert bass, \$506.65. {jacksonguitars.com}



K-Lever

Series of Partial Capos

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.

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LEVY'S LEATHERS | UKE STRAP

Uke Holder

Levy's Leathers has released a ukulele strap. It features a 3/8-inch cotton webbing with a plastic sound hole hook and tri-glide adjustment. The strap is only available in black. {levysleathers.com}



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GEAR >

AUDIO & RECORDING

ROLAND | R-26

Stylish Recording

Roland has released the R-26 Portable Recorder, a hand-held device that provides up to six simultaneous channels of recording to SD/SDHC media. Features include two types of built-in stereo mics, XLR/TRS combo inputs and USB functionality. MSRP: \$599.

{rolandus.com}



EARTHWORKS | WL40V

Look Ma, No Wires

Earthworks Microphones recently debuted its first-ever wireless product, the WL40V wireless vocal microphone capsule. The WL40V has been adapted to wireless capsule form from the SR40V vocal microphone. The capsule is interchangeable with any screw-on-type handheld transmitter that receives 31.3-mm/pitch 1.0-mm threading.

{earthworksaudio.com}



WAVES AUDIO | BASS RIDER

Covering All Basses

Waves Audio has unveiled Bass Rider, an easy-to-use plug-in that rides bass levels automatically. It delivers bass levels without changing the natural sound.

Optimized for the frequency range and envelope characteristics of bass instruments, the plug-in covers DI, amplified, acoustic, synth and upright. MSRP: Native, \$200; TDM, \$300.

{waves.com}





ALTO PROFESSIONAL | EMPIRE SERIES

Empire Power

Alto Professional has introduced the Empire powered mixer series. The line offers power, flexible routing capabilities and rugged portability to strengthen any sound. Up to 2,000 watts of class D power can be attained from the line, which is available in either tabletop or cabinet style designs. The Empire mixers have ample headroom to accommodate dynamic source material. altoproaudio.com

CROWN AUDIO | XTi 2 SERIES

Crowning Achievement

Harman's Crown Audio recently released the XTi 2 amplifier series. The line boasts an enhanced feature set and sleeker design, as well as enhanced control with Crown's PeakX Plus limiters. The XTi 2 also increases the amount of presets a user can save and recall from 20 to 30. The amplifiers are also compatible with HiQnet Band Manager software. harman.com



AVID | C400, C600

Fast Tracker

Avid's new Fast Track C400 and Fast Track C600 are the next generation of M-Audio Fast Track USB interfaces. They're available bundled with studio-standard Pro Tools MP software or as standalone units. Sporting a new, desktop-friendly ergonomic design, the Fast Track C-series interfaces combine multiple solutions into one unit by incorporating a studio-quality audio interface, unique hands-on controls and an integrated monitor management system. MSRP: C400, \$309.95; C600, \$499.95. m-audio.com





FOCUSRITE | SCARLETT 2I2

Red Alert

Focusrite's new Scarlett 2i2 is a two-in, two-out USB 2.0 audio interface. The unit boasts Focusrite mic and instrument pre-amps; 24-bit, 96-kHz digital conversion; and flexible monitor control. Other features include LED-halo signal indicators and direct monitor function for zero-latency tracking. MSRP: \$199.99. **{focusrite.com}**



COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL | DISTRIBUTED DESIGN SERIES

Design Concepts

Community Professional Loudspeakers recently expanded the Distributed Design series of ceiling-mount loudspeakers with the addition of several new surface-mount models. The 5-inch DS5 is a two-way compact system, ideal for installations where space is at a premium. For larger installations, the 8-inch DS8 provides higher sound pressure levels, higher sensitivity and greater bass extension. The 8-inch DS8SUB subwoofer complements the DS5 and DS8 full-range models with extended low-frequency performance for musical applications. **{communitypro.com}**

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MOOG | THE LADDER

Climbing the Ladder

Moog has released The Ladder, a professional 500 series dynamic ladder filter. The unit features the same fullness and analog euphoria as the Moog Filter but also includes upgrades required for studio use. Features include low pass and high pass at the flick of a switch; positive or negative mode for mild to extreme sound shaping and manipulation; and transparent relay bypass for routing and A/B comparison. MSRP: \$769. **{moog.com}**





AURALEX ACOUSTICS | PROMAX

On the Go

Auralex Acoustics has unveiled its new Pro-Max portable StudioFoam absorbers. The panels are designed as a lightweight but effective absorption treatment for on-the-go recording situations, such as studio rentals, live events, temporary recording applications and any location where mounting acoustical treatments to the wall isn't possible. Their lightweight and flexible design makes them ideal portable absorbers, as they can be moved easily and positioned to reduce audible reflections in any recording or listening environment. auralex.com



BEHRINGER | C50A

Superior Tones

Behringer has introduced the Behritone C50A and C5A 30-watt active reference monitors. The C50A (pictured) is a full-range reference studio monitor and boasts a sleek, high-gloss black finish. The C5A includes a high-end 30-watt class D amplifier built in and features a vintage wood grain look. behringer.com



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KICKPORT | KICKPORT 2

Keep on Kickin'

KickPort International has launched an upgraded version of its KickPort bass drum sound enhancer, the KickPort 2. This model features the newly developed Firm-Flex collar for easier installation, a better fit and a fatter bass drum sound. Due to multiple design, material and manufacturing features that have been added to the accessory, the KickPort 2 increases the effect on frequency and focus when applied to almost any bass drum. kickport.com



PREMIER | SPIRIT OF MAIDEN

Iron Man

Premier recently introduced the Spirit of Maiden drum set, designed with help from Iron Maiden's Nicko McBrain. Each drum has a silver embossed Iron Maiden badge that complements the artwork, and the bass drum head includes the Premier logo in Maiden's signature font. Featuring 6.6-mm six-ply birch shells, the shell pack consists of two power toms, 10- by 9-inch and 12- by 10-inch with traditional mounting upon the shell. premier-percussion.com



KORG | WAVEDRUM MINI

Korg Gets Fun-sized

Korg is now shipping the Wavedrum Mini, which borrows technology from the Wavedrum series. Completely self-contained, the Wavedrum Mini provides a playable pad, speaker, sounds, effects, patterns and a loop recorder, as well as a Sensor Clip to transform any object into a second sound source. The unit offers 100 professionally programmed and ready-to-play sounds, as well as 100 rhythm patterns covering a range of styles. These patterns can be used as a beginner's guide to help keep a steady rhythm or to keep the groove going while performing or jamming. MSRP: \$430. korg.com





VIC FIRTH | AMERICAN CLASSIC

Colorful Classics

Vic Firth has added black, white and pink finishes to its American Classic 5A and 5B lines. These classics feature a specially formulated finish, which is both comfortable to grip and visually distinctive. The tips have a clear finish to keep heads and cymbals clean. Crafted from select hickory for a pronounced sound and long-lasting durability, the sticks are straight, weight-matched and pitch-paired. MSRP: \$15. vicfirth.com

AHEAD | ARMOR DRUM MAT

Floor Armor

Big Bang Distribution recently released the Ahead Armor Drum Mat. It's a durable carpet with a non-skid gel backing to keep drums in place while protecting the floor. The mat incorporates a tough, plush nylon carpet with reinforced edges and an exclusive fabric-hinged center, so the carpet folds and rolls into a compact bundle. bigbangdist.com



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YAMAHA | ARIUS YDP-135R

Digital Doppelganger

Yamaha recently launched the Arius YDP-135R digital piano. It features a dark rosewood cabinet and three-pedal footswitch assembly for accurate pedaling functions. The piano also features variable touch sensitivity for adjusting the instrument's response to one's playing style and a one-track sequencer to capture and reproduce a single performance. An included matching piano bench completes the set. MSRP: \$1,199.

{yamaha.com}

CAKEWALK | Z3TA+ 2

Cakewalk's Classic

Cakewalk's new Z3TA+ 2 is a second-generation waveshaping synthesizer featuring improved sound design, real-time expression and sound quality. It's a classic synth with unique character and tonality. The Z3TA+ 2 boasts a formidable sound synthesis generation engine, featuring unique per-oscillator waveshaping capability, vast filters and multistage envelope generators with powerful effects routing. MAP: \$99. **{cakewalk.com}**

KORG | SP250BK

Dark & Mysterious

Korg now offers its SP-250 portable digital piano in an all-black body and speaker grill with a matching black stand. The new SP250BK provides an expanded range of expression and performance with a strong stereo piano sound, which is matched to Korg's RH3 graded action keyboard. Three dynamic touch curves tailor the piano's response to any player's touch or style. The instrument's ideal for players looking for rich piano sounds and the convenience of a lightweight, portable instrument. MSRP: \$1,199. **{korg.com}**



The Legend Continues

Announcing the latest in Kawai's legendary MP Series... the new MP10 and MP6 Professional Stage Pianos. With new keyboard actions, new piano sounds and new EP sounds, these instruments take tone and touch to a whole new level.

MP10

Streamlined and focused, the all-new MP10 is the *only* instrument for the piano purist. It features new Concert Grand, Pop Grand and Jazz Grand sounds, plus Kawai's new RM3 wooden-key action — now with let-off and Ivory-feel key surfaces. All new EP sounds include tine, reed and FM types with enhanced effects and amp simulation.



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- RM3 wooden-key action
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- New EPs with amp simulation
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- 27 ultra-quality sounds/156 user setups
- Single-zone MIDI control



- Progressive Harmonic Imaging
- 88-key piano sampling
- RH graded-hammer action
- New piano sounds
- New EPs with amp simulation
- Tone wheel organ generator
- USB recorder – MP3, WAV & MIDI
- 256 sounds/256 user setups
- 4-zone MIDI control

MP6

The MP6 boasts new pianos, new EPs and a tone wheel organ generator. The new RH graded-hammer action also includes let-off and Ivory-feel keys. With 4-zone MIDI control, it's the perfect stage piano for the pro on the go.

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RICO | SAX STRAP

Rico's Hookup

Rico has launched the Padded Sax Strap with snap hook. Constructed from soft memory foam, the Rico Padded Sax Strap adapts to the curvature of the neck, providing a customized, comfortable fit. The outer shell is a durable, athletic-style material that breathes with the player and lets heat dissipate. This also enables the strap to dry faster when used on hot stages.

MSRP: \$36.
ricoreeds.com



ADAMS | ARTIST SERIES XYLOPHONE

Adams Gets Artist-worthy

Adams' new Artist series rosewood xylophone features four octaves of wide, uniform-width Honduras rosewood bars and nickel-plated steel resonators. The xylophone has a tone reminiscent of vintage American instruments, with a presence that projects to the back of a hall during solo or ensemble playing. The Artist series xylophone boasts the patented Adams Voyager frame, oak rails, a drop cover and mallets. pearldrums.com



RS BERKELEY | FRANK FOSTER LEGENDS SERIES

Foster's Favorite

RS Berkeley and Drake Mouthpieces recently introduced the Frank Foster Legends series mouthpiece line. The Frank Foster mouthpiece is an exact reproduction of his original gold-plated model. Similar to the Johnny Griffin Legends series piece, Foster's model was created through a one-piece casting method that's completely hand-finished. Each mouthpiece is finished in a deep 24-karat gold plating. rsberkeley.com

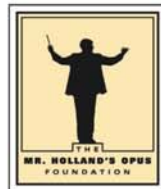
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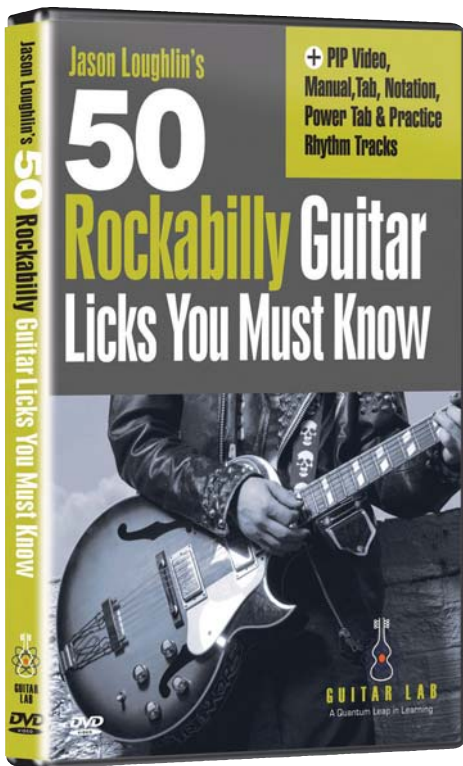


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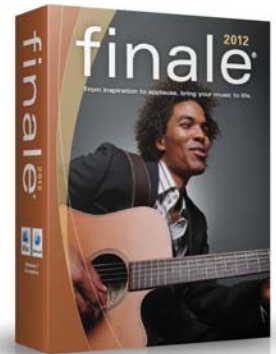
Media Music's new *50 Rockabilly Licks You Must Know* features educator and rockabilly guru Jason Loughlin. The DVD equips musicians with the tools they need to play licks, riffs and rhythmic patterns in the style of Brian Setzer, Chet Atkins, Chuck Berry and Jimmy Colvard. MSRP: \$24.95. **{emedia.com}**



MAKEMUSIC | FINALE 2012

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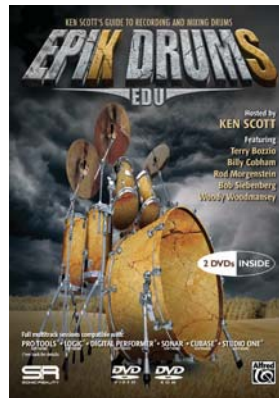
MakeMusic recently released Finale 2012. Finale provides musicians with the technology to create, publish and share their own music. The new release includes ScoreManager, which controls the way music looks and sounds. Finale 2012 also features Unicode font support, which broadens Finale's visual possibilities. **{makemusic.com}**



ALFRED | 'EPIK DRUMS'

Epic Lessons

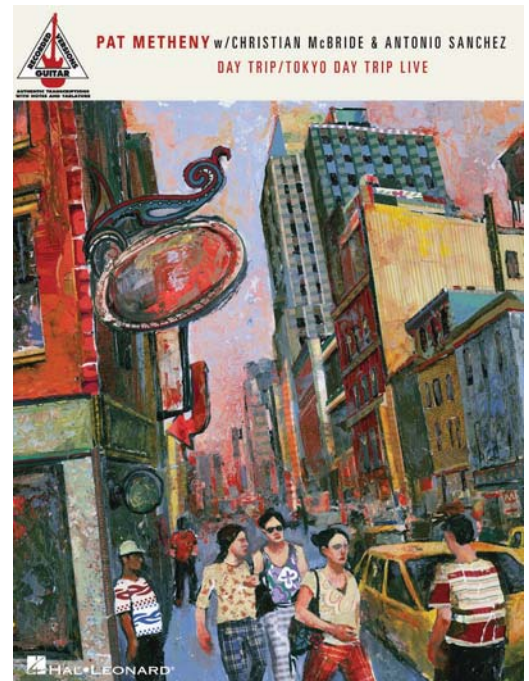
Alfred has launched *EpiK DrumS EDU*, an educational DVD on recording and mixing real drum kits. *EpiK DrumS EDU* exposes industry-proven techniques in an easy-to-follow, hands-on experience. The instructional DVD provides five drum grooves as full multitrack session files for Cubase, Digital Performer, Logic, ProTools, Sonar and Studio One, along with the WAV files for every track. MSRP: \$29.99. **{alfred.com}**



HAL LEONARD | 'DAY TRIP/TOKYO DAY TRIP LIVE'

Pat's Day Trip

Hal Leonard has debuted Pat Metheny's *Day Trip/Tokyo Day Trip Live* folio. This songbook features transcriptions in notes and tab for all the tracks from Metheny's 2008 daylong recording session with bassist Christian McBride and drummer Antonio Sanchez. Songs include "At Last You're Here," "Calvin's Keys," "Day Trip" and "Dreaming Trees." MSRP: \$22.99. **{halleonard.com}**



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NUMARK | LAPTOP STAND PRO

Numark Makes a Stand

Numark has unveiled the Laptop Stand Pro, a rugged, portable laptop platform for DJs. It's designed for live performance with a solid, secure construction featuring a portable and collapsible low-weight design. Rubber pads on the top and bottom ensure security, and the stand comes complete with a zippered, protective case for easy transport. numark.com



CHAUVET | INTIMIDATOR

The Intimidator

Chauvet's new Intimidator Spot LED 150 and Intimidator Wash LED 150 can fit on a truss and be installed almost anywhere, making it ideal for low ceilings. The unit is a moving yoke wash with quad-colored RGBW LED and high-quality optics. chauvet.com

VESTAX | VCI-400

Versatile Vestax

Vestax recently introduced the VCI-400, a professional four-channel DJ MIDI controller with versatile control functions. The VCI-400 and its four-channel layout provides control for standard DJ software operation, such as cueing, pitch control, looping, FX control, track browsing/loading, triggering samples and scratching. The symmetrical, intuitive control surface includes high-resolution jog wheels with torque and sensitivity control. MSRP: \$999. vestax.com



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Bob Willcutt

**Willcutt Guitars
Lexington, Ky.**

One way to get ahead of the pack is to think outside of the box. Instead of laying off employees, I created two new positions and filled them with college graduates who brought new skills to the company. One is an efficiency expert who increases productivity, and the other is an e-commerce expert. There is still business out there, but instead of embracing the race to zero that many of our competitors have, I have maintained fair profit margins, which are necessary to employ and keep quality people, and I've tightened up the ship.

>>>

Sammy Ash

**Sam Ash Music
Hicksville, N.Y.**

Basic department upgrading. A lot of customers come in once a week. The average customer comes to a music store once a year, and they usually come between September and Christmas. If I can't get their experience [right] by that time, I've missed an opportunity. I'm doing acoustic guitar room upgrades in four stores as we speak. It's a little ambitious, but these things need to be done. I need the customers to see when they come in that we've done something for them and made some kind of improvement, whether it be counters or carpeting.

>>>

Matt Perez

**The Piano Gallery
Corpus Christi, Texas**

We have focused proactively on our customer- and student-cultivating events. We are hosting more in-store events, including living room-style concerts, celebrations, recitals and educator workshops. These events help us promote local talent and our Musical Moments, Way Cool Keyboarding and Lowrey lesson programs. Our pianos are featured, and customer relationships are strengthened. Consistency is also important. Our friends and loyal customers look forward to our Constant Contact invitations. We also advertise our program on Facebook. Having in-store events is one way to ensure future sales.



>>>

Craig Merrick

**Astro Audio Visual Lighting
Glendale, Calif.**

What is the **most important change** you've made to your business this year?

We've done some search engine optimization using social media, YouTube and things like that. We do Twitter and Facebook, and we're checking to see what sticks. We've been targeting a certain demographic within this industry that uses these tools. The people I've hired are young people who are totally in tune with their peers. They're all involved with music production, the entertainment industry and the social interaction that goes along with them.

We started out being a premier DJ store, so that's been a big part of our business. We do all aspects of sound equipment and

video, but the DJ industry is what has helped my business grow. It's a very unique aspect of my business. We have a DJ school, so I've really been trying to promote that. We put our series of DJ battles up on YouTube and linked people who are Facebook friends with Astro to them.

Getting people aware of what we do — the social aspect — has been the most important thing. But we've still been selling a lot of turntables. In our beginning DJ classes, we still use turntables. The classes have been the greatest blend of technology and old-school, tactile ways of dealing with vinyl.

We've also tried to take the signage up a notch and not just hang a bunch of banners on the walls. That's your first impression, and we've made it more professional and more enticing and have given it a little more sizzle.

If you don't have support from knowledgeable people, you're never going to be successful. We now have experts on everything. One guy knows about lighting. One guy knows about recording. We have a service and repairs department. I now have a really good core group of people who ask questions, listen to customers and satisfy what their real needs are.

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