

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

music inc[®]

JANUARY 2012 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

"Everybody at Willis Music should be an entrepreneur," said Kevin Cranley, company president and co-owner.



**WILLIS
MUSIC'S
OPEN-
BOOK
STRATEGY
FOR CREATING
A GREAT
RETAIL
TEAM**

USB Mics Find
Mass Appeal
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AES Showcases
Industry Cross-
Pollination
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Inventory
Control
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Vic's Drum
Shop Opens
in Chicago
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PLUS:
Kevin Cranley
as NAMM's
New Chairman

PAGE 42

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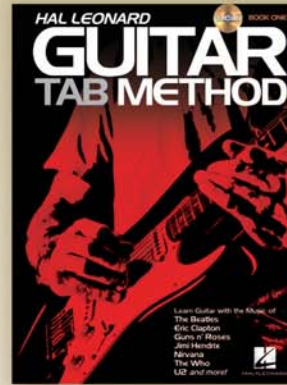
Stop by booth 4618 to see hundreds of new releases. From songbooks to software, recording gear to band accessories, Hal Leonard is your source for what will sell in your store!



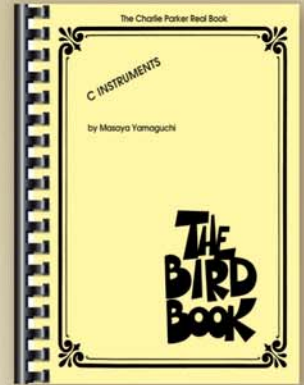
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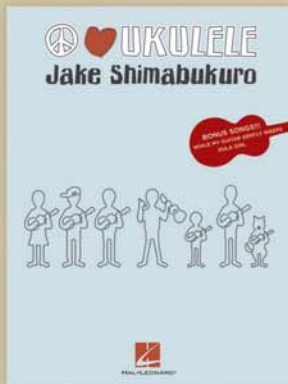
Easy Guitar Play-Along: everyone's favorite guitar series is now simplified for beginners!



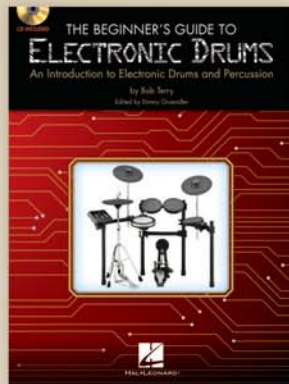
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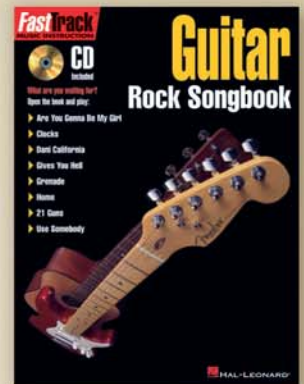
Ukulele! We have tons of new ukulele instructional titles and songbooks!



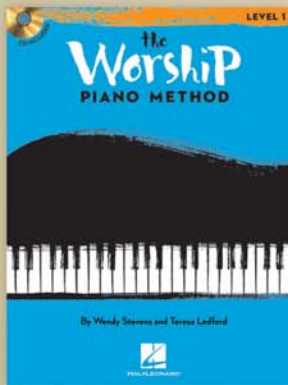
Dozens of **new percussion titles** including The Beginner's Guide to Electronic Drums



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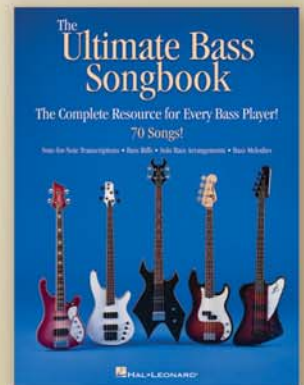
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DRUM WORKSHOP, INC. MILESTONES THE DRUMMER'S CHOICE™ SINCE 1972



1972

DW begins as a drum school in Santa Monica, CA



1974

A height-adjustable trap case seat is the first product to market



1977

Drum Workshop buys tooling from the Camco Drum Co. and reintroduces the 5000 pedal



1978

Company moves to its first production facility in Los Angeles



1979

First DW advertisement in Modern Drummer featuring Nick Ceroli



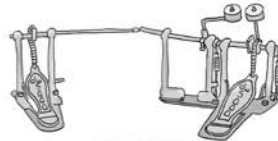
1980

Manufacturing begins on the popular 5000 Series chain-drive pedal



1982

DW expands its operation to keep up with demand for pedals and begins experimenting with drums



1983

First-ever double pedal design changes drumming forever



1985

The first remote cable hi-hat is introduced



1990

First DW Drums catalog features Jim Keltner, Mic Fleetwood, Chad Wackerman and Jason Bonham



1991

Complete line of 9000 Series hardware is unveiled



1992

DW expands manufacturing operations and moves to Oxnard, CA



1995

The year's patented innovations include the Delta ball-bearing hinge, Edge snare drum and True Pitch



1997

The DW Custom Shop begins making proprietary maple shells



1999

DW patents unique "Dog Bone" clamp system



2000

Pacific Drums and Percussion is launched to reach more drummers



2003

9000 Series single and double pedals are released



2005

Classics Series drums are added to the Custom Shop line



2007

DW Jazz Series is the first custom Jazz kit in history



2008

The DW Custom Shop unveils revolutionary X Shell technology



2009

Legendary Rock drummer Dave Grohl joins the DW family



2010

SSC Specialized Shell Configuration combines the Custom Shop's cutting-edge sonic technology



2011

Performance Series is the first DW-branded production drumset

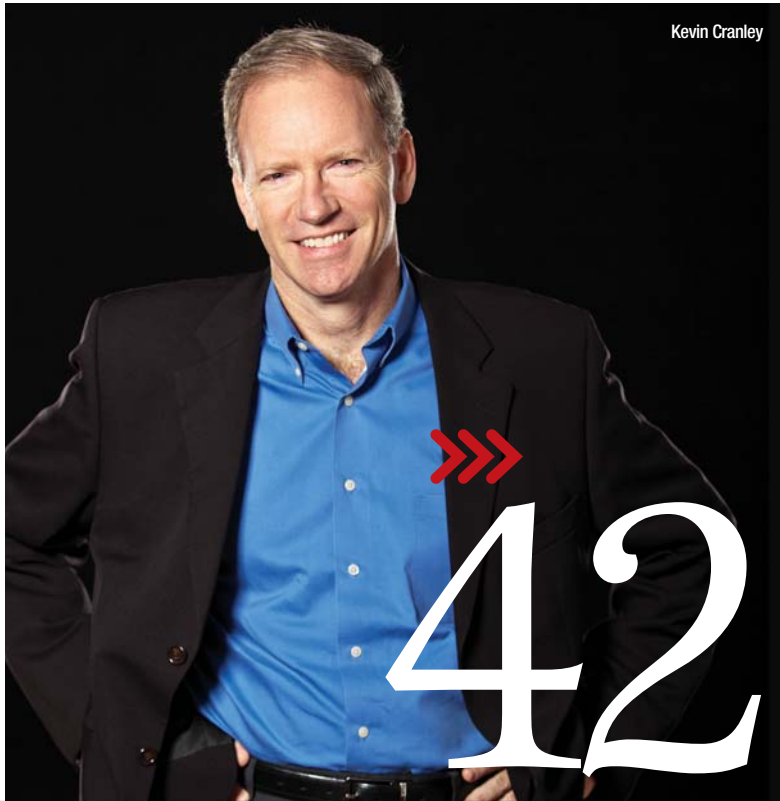


2012

Drum Workshop celebrates 40 years as The Drummer's Choice

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Kevin Cranley

Photo by Rick Lohre

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Grant Billings

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DISCOVER THE FUN

PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

DEATH OF A SALE

This month's cover subject, Willis Music, has practically made a science of creating a great customer experience. As a brick-and-mortar-only dealer, owner Kevin Cranley knows he has no other choice if he wants to compete in the fierce combo market. (The story begins on page 42.)

He's not alone. In last month's year-end awards issue, *Music Inc.* honored a handful of savvy music retailers. Like Cranley, many of the brick-and-mortars talked about recent showroom overhauls, special departments and innovative events, all designed to deliver something extra to customers who take the time to walk into a retail store.

Which is why I was horrified to hear about a recent bass-buying experience.

My brother, a semi-professional musician, decided to add a Squier Classic Vibe '60s Precision Bass to his arsenal after reading rave reviews online. He opted to shop local, so he could try the instrument before pulling the trigger. Only two stores in the area had it, both highly reputable dealers.

Unfortunately, at store No. 1, the instrument's action might as well have been an inch off the fretboard. Mind you, this is not an entry-level bass, despite the Squier name. (Street price is \$325-\$350.) My brother

asked the salesman if he'd throw in a setup with the purchase. The salesman said they charge for adjustments and my brother would have to wait for the outside tech to stop in later that week.

My brother then asked if he could adjust the action himself — being an engineer by trade, he carries an Allen wrench in his wallet. He reasoned that he couldn't evaluate the instrument if it didn't have decent action. The salesman looked at him as if he had six eyes before telling him it was against policy.

"The frustrating thing is that when I asked the salesguy how he could expect people to evaluate the instruments when they were so poorly set up, he basically made the excuse, 'We have a lot of inventory,' and blamed the weather changes," my brother said.

In no uncertain terms, retailer No. 1 blew it.

Retailer No. 2 also charged for setups but offered a much more playable instrument. When my brother mentioned that he'd prefer a slightly lower action, the department manager made the tweak himself to sweeten the deal. Retailer No. 2 got the sale and made a decent margin by adding on a gig bag.

It's not my place to criticize a retailer with a business model that works. Still, I can't help but wonder how that model will work a decade from now.

As I write this, the Internet is flooded with news of a buoyant Cyber Monday, with conservative estimates reporting a 22-percent boost in online sales. How will brick-and-mortars that offer little to no added value compete in this flight to e-commerce? And, most important, how will they compete locally with dealers like Willis Music in the market? **MI**

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WHERE DRUMMERS DECIDE WHAT'S NEW FOR 2012

PLAYERS' CHOICE

12 CYMBALS

12 PROTOTYPES FROM SABIAN



4 NEW FOR 2012

YOUR VOTE DECIDES THE 4 WINNERS

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LETTERS

Learning Lessons From Daddy's

As a 30-year veteran in this industry, I wanted to say how saddened I am to hear about the closing of the Daddy's Junky Music stores. It is another reminder to all of us independent dealers of how we must constantly be aware and on top of our game.

All the independents out there need to give their customers a reason to come to them. It is getting to the point where most of the pricing in our industry is the same. For example, if everyone is selling an item for \$399, why would the customer buy it from you and not someone else? Using the old, "We give the best service," line is not going to work. Everybody says that. Good service should be something everyone gets, not a sales tactic.

Make your location a destination and create niches for your store that no one else does. Sometimes, getting the business is just a matter of asking the customer to buy it from you and not your competitors. Try it. It works.

*Tony Colwell
Buddy Rogers Music
Cincinnati*

RELIEF in Washington

On Nov. 2 and 3, 2011, NAMM hosted a diverse group of guitar makers, dealers and importers in Washington, D.C., for informative meetings and lobbying to support House Bill H.R.3210, better known as the RELIEF Act.

Sponsored by U.S. Reps. Jim Cooper, Marsha Blackburn and Mary Bono Mack, the RELIEF Act provides needed fixes and clarifications to The Lacey Act. Amended in 2008, The Lacey Act puts regulations on imported wood and has caused highly pub-



Daddy's Junky Music's
Dedham, Mass., store

licized problems for Gibson. I feel it could cripple America's MI business.

The trip started with a day of orientation and prep work that included meetings with Rep. Cooper, representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service), and NAMM's legal counsel and lobbying firm.

On the second day, attendees met with their respective members of Congress. Staffers with Tennessee Sens. Bob Corker and Lamar Alexander were receptive to our concerns. However, an unscheduled visit to the office of Rep. Earl Blumenauer was met with cold opposition.

The meetings in Washington were highly informative for not only learning about Lacey but also how our Congress works and how dedicated NAMM is to helping our industry. Moreover, it marked the first time in my 40-plus-year career as a guitar dealer that I have seen such a widely representative group of

NAMM members working together toward a common goal. The RELIEF Act needs full-scale support of the MI industry to succeed.

It is critically important for all members of our industry to familiarize themselves with this issue and to contact their members of Congress to ask them to support the RELIEF Act.

*George Gruhn
Gruhn Guitars
Nashville, Tenn.*

Meet Me in St. Louis

I would like to thank Katie Kailus and Zach Phillips for visiting our store, Fazio's Frets & Friends, in St. Louis and featuring it as the November 2011 cover story ("Retail Revamp").

So far, this has been an amazing 33-year journey. I know that without the great staff here at Fazio's that journey might have been shortened.

When I needed to focus on "property negotiations," our staff stayed focused on our core business without missing a beat.

I also know that in our business we are reaching people in ways we might not realize until it is brought to our attention.

I'm thinking of families that showed up at rallies because of how they were treated at our store and people who spoke up because they cared about our family business.

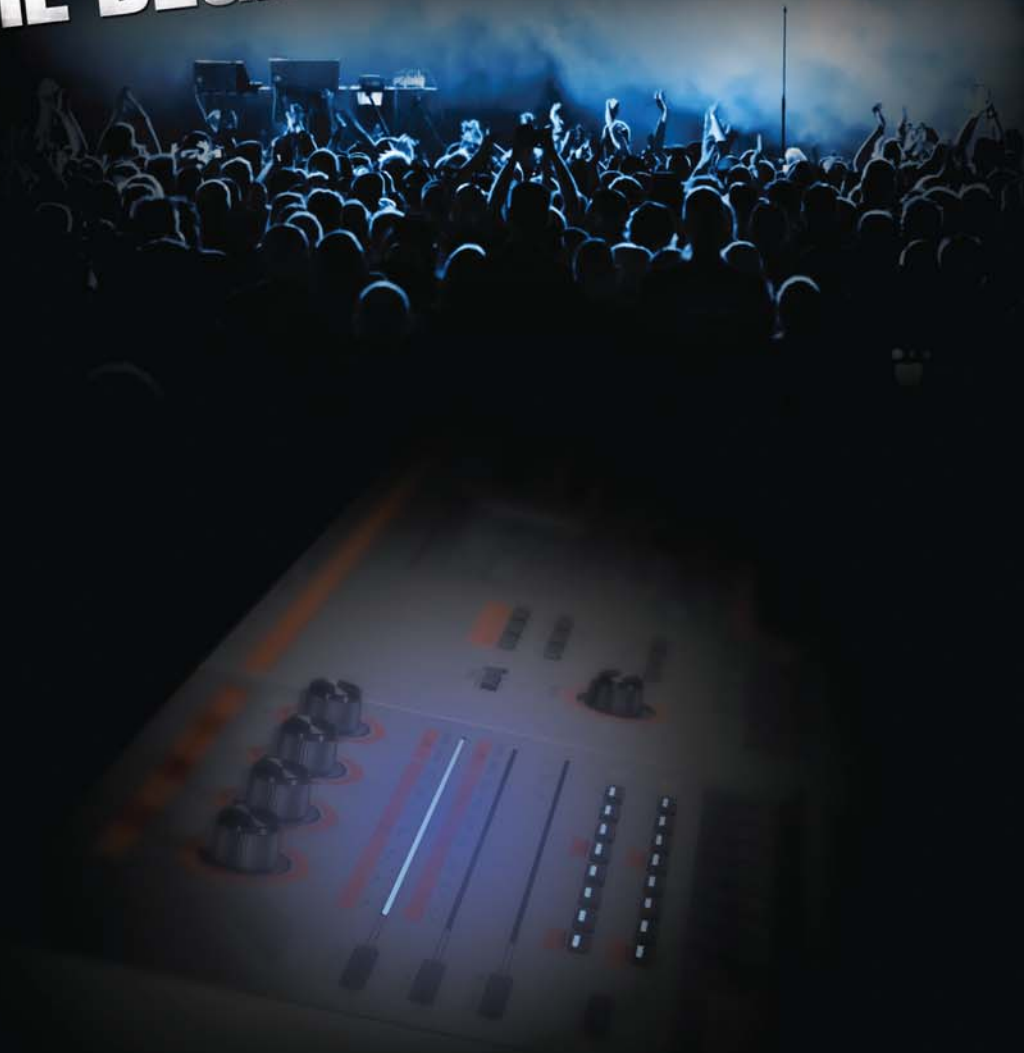
I am also thinking about the numerous commercial real estate professionals who reminded me that we sold them their first guitars so many years ago and the condemnation law attorney who reminded me that I sold him his son's drum set.

We do reach people in what we do. If that experience is positive, we all win.

*Mike Fazio
Fazio's Frets & Friends
St. Louis*

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Hosts Black Friday all-nighter
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Opens third location
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RETAIL

VIC'S DRUM SHOP | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

VIC'S RETAIL COUP

“I have to let you know how happy I am that you’re here,” said a beaming drummer to Victor Salazar. “I plan on buying all my gear from you from now on.”

The customer was one of thousands who passed through Vic’s Drum Shop during the Chicago retailer’s grand-opening party on Oct. 29, 2011. Launched by Salazar, former general manager of The Drum Pad in Palatine, Ill., the new store is situated inside the Music Garage, a five-floor rehearsal facility for local bands. And during the party, Salazar could barely walk 10 feet without a customer thanking him for being there.

“There has not been a dedicated drum shop in the city of Chicago since 1993,” Salazar said. “It was long overdue.”

The grand-opening party featured a star-studded roster of clinics from drummers Terry Bozzio, Will Calhoun, Jimmy Chamberlin, Todd Sucherman and Chad Wackerman, among many others. According to Salazar, roughly 2,000 people stopped by during the seven-hour event. He noted that being in the Music Garage gives him a built-in clientele.

“There are 120 drummers already here.”



CYMBAL UTOPIA

Vic’s Drum Shop features 10,000 total square feet of space, including 7,000 square feet for retail. The store is laid out as a series of different rooms, each one a particular department. The high-end and digital drum kit selections are displayed separately on the fifth floor. Salazar pointed out that the building’s 12-foot ceilings give him a generous amount of display space. “For example, I am able to dis-

play nine kits in my stick room alone and an additional 15 kits in my drumhead room,” he said.

A particular standout is the two cymbal rooms. According to Salazar, they house roughly

1,500 cymbals from 10 brands.

“The selection is staggering,” he said. “Both rooms are sonically tuned with custom ceiling baffles to ensure that every customer can clearly discern what each cymbal sounds like as they audition it. Even the slatwall itself is custom-made in birch to match the rest of the store. No manufacturer-supplied stock slatwall was used. The rooms are as stunning as they are functional.”

CRITICAL TIMING

Salazar acknowledged that being a drum industry veteran made it “incredibly easier” to start his own store. He mentioned that his initial inventory purchasing for Vic’s Drum Shop took only a matter of weeks, even though he was dealing with 68 manufacturers and a “million-dollar budget.” And, he added, suppliers were supportive of a new drum shop, especially given the state of the economy.

“When other businesses are cutting back or closing locations, it seemed to be the time to go big and make a serious statement. It is risky. Opening any business involves risk, but I’m confident that our selection, quality of customer service and outstanding location will enable us to become a destination point.” **MI**

+ VIC'S DRUM SHOP WALK THROUGH



STICK ROOM
Drum kits are cross-merchandised above an enormous stick wall.



ADD-ONS
A generous medley of mallets, practice pads and other miscellaneous accessories are displayed at the checkout station to spur impulse buys.



SNARE ROOM
The dedicated snare drum room includes ceiling baffles to isolate noise.



DEDICATED FIXTURES Vic's Drum Shop takes advantage of classy birch shelving (seen here with the drumhead selection) that matches the slatwall.



HIGH CEILINGS The world percussion room benefits from 12-foot ceilings, which allow for deep merchandising.



CYMBAL PARADISE The store carries more than 1,500 cymbals and features two cymbal rooms. Again, the high ceilings create a towering impression.



HIGH-END SELECTION
High-end and digital drum kits are displayed in two separate rooms on the fifth floor.



DRUMMER TOWN "Chicago has a rich history when it comes to drums and drummers," said Victor Salazar. Here, he's pictured with one of his clients, Jimmy Chamberlin of The Smashing Pumpkins.

HERMES MUSIC | REOPENING

HERMES MUSIC RETURNS

After a five-year absence, Hermes Music has re-entered music retail with three new locations in South Texas.

In 2006, Guitar Center purchased certain assets of the company, including Hermes Music's inventory. The deal also included a non-compete agreement in the United States.

Hermes' new stores, which opened in October 2011, are in Brownsville, Pharr and McAllen, Texas. The full-line locations feature MI, pro audio and lighting

selections, along with contracting and TV production services.



Alberto Kreimerman

"We are all about focusing on personal attention with the clients, taking care of our clients' necessities, helping them with what they need and, on top of that, giving them good prices, which is something extra we give because this isn't the only thing that creates the relationship Hermes Music has with its clients," said CEO Alberto Kreimerman. "They know that we are in this business because we love music."



Inside Hermes Music's new McAllen, Texas, store

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HELLO MUSIC | LAUNCH

Hello Music Goes Vintage

Hello Music has expanded into used gear.

On Nov. 23, 2011, the Los Angeles-based e-tailer debuted Hello Music Vintage, adding rare and one-of-a-kind vintage offerings to its selection. The new venture is a partnership with retailers Norman's Rare Guitars of Los Angeles and Chelsea Guitars of New York. According to a statement from Hello Music, the company plans to add new vintage retail partners biweekly.

"Our goal is to improve the lives of musicians," said Rick Camino, CEO of Hello Music. "With Hello Music Vintage, our members now have access to the finest vintage guitars, amps and more from some of the most highly regarded stores across the nation. The launch of our Hello Music Vintage further establishes Hello Music as the go-to place to connect musicians with previously out-of-reach opportunities, while simultaneously elevating business for our esteemed vintage retail partners."

"We're now able to bring these items directly to the large Hello Music community while strengthening our customer and fan base," said Norman Harris, owner of Norman's Rare Guitars. "It's something that is mutually beneficial, and we're honored to be a part of the Hello Music family."

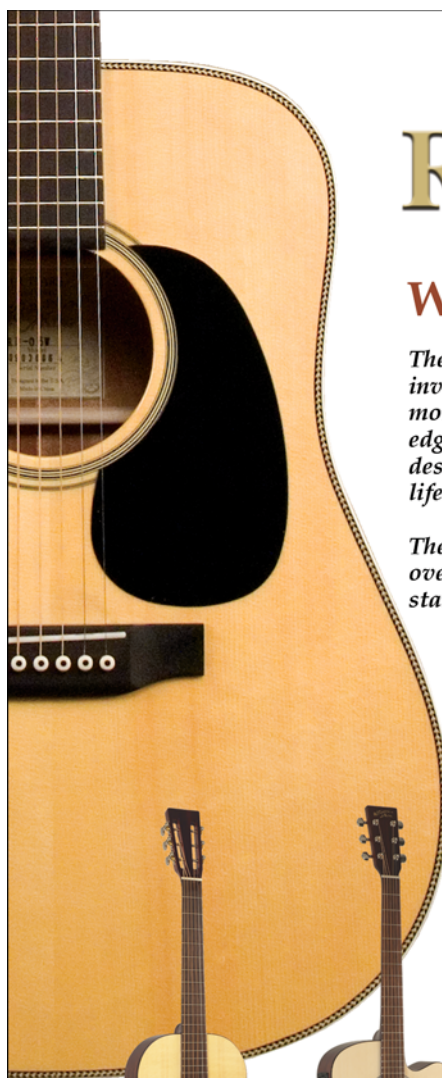
Hello Music makes users opt-in to shop its website and receive its daily deal e-mails. The company currently has 110,000 members.

PENDER'S MUSIC, MUSIC 1ST | EVENT

DEALERS PARTNER FOR TMEA EVENT

Retailers Pender's Music and Music 1st, in collaboration with French music publisher International Music Diffusion, have announced their sponsorship of France's Magnifica Brass Quintet (pictured) at the upcoming 2012 Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) convention in San Antonio, Texas.

Magnifica Brass Quintet is scheduled to lead a master class and perform in concert at the convention on Feb. 10. Prior to TMEA, the group plans to stop by several area colleges for master classes and concerts.



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MANTOVA'S TWO STREET MUSIC | PROMOTION

Mantova's All-nighter

To celebrate Black Friday, Mantova's Two Street Music opened its doors at 10 p.m. on Thanksgiving and stayed open all night. The Eureka, Calif., retailer offered special discounts and ran a two-week radio campaign to promote the event.

"We have never offered a series of across-the-board sales, and I think the freshness of an unheard-of Mantova's sale added to the excitement," said Anthony

Mantova, company owner.

The period from 10 p.m. to midnight drew 95 percent of the sales, according to Mantova. He added that midnight to 8 a.m. was dead, but 8 a.m.–7 p.m. the following day, Black Friday, yielded "more than twice what we made during the same time last year." Mantova also noted that offering 75-percent off a selection of books and sheet music "drew the most attention."

BLACK INK PROMOS

FULL COMPASS of Madison, Wis., promoted several Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals, including free FXpansion BFD-ECO virtual acoustic drum software with any DAW or virtual instrument software purchase.

GRAND CENTRAL MUSIC of San Luis Obispo, Calif., opened its new store on Black Friday. All items were 10-percent off, and to promote Lanikai ukuleles, the dealer offered 15-percent off all ukes and uke accessories.

MOM'S MUSIC of Louisville, Ky., opened at 9 a.m. on Black Friday and offered special deals, including 15-percent off Takamine products, 50-percent off used guitar amps, 20-percent off guitar accessories and 25-percent off cables.

Online print music retailer **PRIMA MUSIC** of Brooks, Ga., offered free shipping and up to 30-percent off everything during its after-Thanksgiving sale.

RICK'S MUSIC WORLD of Raynham, Mass., held its annual VIP student holiday sale and party from 7–9 p.m. on Black Friday. The private event offered "rock-bottom" pricing, entertainment and prizes.

Minneapolis-based **SCHMITT MUSIC** promoted exclusive Black Friday deals and held a jazz play-along at its Brooklyn Center, Minn., location. On Cyber Monday, the company offered 15-percent off all in-stock guitar products on schmittmusic.com.

More Black Friday and Cyber Monday campaigns at music retailers across the United States

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FAUST HARRISON PIANOS | OPENING

Faust Harrison Goes to School

Faust Harrison Pianos recently opened a new piano retail, restoration and performance center at Music Conservatory of Westchester (MCW) in White Plains, N.Y. The company also has locations in Manhattan and Huntington Station, N.Y.

The new Faust Harrison dealership occupies a renovated 24,000-square-foot facility. The location lets the company incorporate its more technologically advanced keyboard instruments into the conservatory's educational programs. In tandem with MCW, Faust Harrison will also reach out to the community with expanded performance programs.



From left: Faust Harrison's Sara Faust, Yamaha's Bonnie Barrett, Faust Harrison's Irving Faust and Yamaha's Bob Heller

During the grand-opening event, the company featured a demo of Yamaha's RemoteLive.

This included a Disklavier performance by Yamaha artist Sue Downs in Denver, which was

reperformed in real time on an Internet-connected Disklavier.

"This remarkable facility exemplifies Yamaha's commitment to music education," said Yamaha Keyboard Division National Sales Director Bob Heller, who attended the grand opening. "We're thrilled to support this wonderful venue and look forward to being a part of its future successes."

"Faust Harrison Pianos and MCW combined offer more than a century of musical knowledge, educational expertise, top-quality instruments and acclaimed concert performances," said Irving Faust, managing director of Faust Harrison Pianos.

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Note from Joe

NAMM's New Vision, Mission and Objectives provide focus and clarity for greater impact.

Your association is made up of nearly 9,000 companies making and selling every imaginable product and service in more than 100 countries around the globe. As you can imagine, Member wants and needs vary widely. And, most are not shy about expressing their ideas. Or, to put it another way, ask six NAMM Members their opinion on any industry subject and you'll likely get seven answers!

That is why the outcome of our new Vision, Mission and Objectives project, the blueprint of all NAMM's efforts on behalf of the industry, was so important. Thanks to the input of thousands of NAMM Members, the NAMM Board of Directors and many other organizations that we work with on a daily business, our objectives are clear: produce world-class trade shows, make NAMM Membership a real return on investment for your annual dues, offer education that can lead to business success, promote music education and music making for all ages, represent our Members on Capitol Hill and make a positive impact in an increasingly global market.

The results of this renewed focus and clarity will serve our Members and the industry for years to come. We welcome your feedback on the continually shifting priorities within these five Objectives and look forward to working closely with our Members to serve this great industry that brings music to the world.

Sincerely,

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO

vision, mission and objectives

vision

We envision a world in which the joy of making music is a precious element of daily living for everyone; a world in which every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught; and in which every adult is a passionate champion and defender of that right.

mission

NAMM's mission is to strengthen the music products industry and promote the pleasures and benefits of making music.

objectives

Trade Show

- Produce successful trade shows that serve our Members and the industry, thus ensuring the growth of NAMM's Circle of Benefits model

Membership

- Recruit and retain Members by making NAMM services an invaluable tool for success
- Convene stakeholders around industry issues to provide tools and strategies to help Members address challenges and pursue opportunities

Professional Development

- Provide relevant and high-value educational programs for NAMM Members

Market Development

- Promote music education as a right for all children
- Create, fund and market programs, initiatives and public relations campaigns designed to encourage people of all ages to make music
- Promote and represent the shared interests of NAMM Members to elected officials and policy makers in the United States

Global Impact

- Expand NAMM's Circle of Benefits model by pursuing new opportunities globally
- Increase global attendance at NAMM trade shows
- Convene a global coalition of stakeholders around industry issues



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ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

- > **Gemini**
Debuts new branding campaign
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Auctions signed guitar for charity
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Partners with Zenph
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Marches down Sesame Street
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SUPPLY

OPTEK MUSIC SYSTEMS | BY HILARY BROWN

OPTEK SEEKS DEALERS

Rusty Shaffer views traditional music education as outdated in the YouTube world. “You can give someone a book and a guitar and say, ‘Please struggle,’” said the Optek Music Systems CEO. “And people will say, ‘Sorry, I can do this with an Xbox.’ That’s what we’re trying to conquer.”

He wants his company’s Fretlight guitar trainer to be the tool that changes minds. And after years of selling direct, he’s now including independent music retailers in the equation.

“We came up with a very unique program,” Shaffer said. “We need to bring people into this industry that are going to buy our product. The industry is contracting, and it shouldn’t be.”

STAGE-WORTHY EDUCATION

The Fretlight formula is simple: A USB cable interfaces instrument with computer for seamless play-along. And with a \$399–\$1,199 retail price, Fretlight guitars are by no means toys. They’re gig-ready, Fender-style axes with such pro features as Fralin pickups, a bird’s-eye maple top and locking tuners.

As a track plays onscreen, the tablature riffs, chords and scales light up on the Fretlight guitar’s fretboard. Users can adjust the



tempo or remove instrumental parts of real songs and various fingerboard exercises. It’s powered by Fretlight’s Studio software, but Shaffer recently entered an agreement with Guitar Pro 6, so customers are able to expand their tablature library.

The company also plans on releasing acoustics in January and basses in March. Plus, at

press time, Optek announced a partnership with Hal Leonard to make certain play-along videos work with Fretlight.

At Funky Munky Music in Shawnee, Kan., owner Pat McCann said Fretlight guitars have attracted a specific audience.

“[Fretlight] knows who their prototypical customer is, and they have a lot of data to back

them up,” said McCann, who added that his typical customer is over the age of 35, with an erratic job schedule that isn’t conducive to lessons. “They’ve definitely done their research.”

HANDS-ON ACCESSIBILITY

To pique the interest of end-users, Shaffer has created an interactive in-store experience: an intuitive plug-and-play display — complete with laptop and headphones.

“Putting this on sale is not going to sell it,” he said. “It has to be explained and demonstrated.”

The walls of Funky Munky, for example, are rife with Fretlight signage. “You just take the guitars that you order and set them all up around this laptop that goes on a shelf that they provide,” McCann said.

Fretlight has also taken a unique approach to Internet sales. To ensure price protection and dealer margins, customers are redirected from the retailer’s website to Fretlight’s site to make the purchase. Optek then ships its product to the dealer for customer pickup, and the dealer makes a commission.

“We want [dealers] to be successful,” Shaffer said. “When all that’s left to argue about is price, it takes away the added value they could give a customer.” **MI**

WEBNEWS

Gemini's Web Synergy

Gemini has rolled out a new branding campaign employing two distinct divisions of its brand: DJ and pro audio. In conjunction with this strategy, the company unveiled new websites to support the brand distinctions. The sites include geminisound.com, geminidj.com and geminiproaudio.com.

All Gemini products will be branded as Gemini DJ or Gemini Pro Audio, depending on their function and intended application.

Moving forward, all future products will follow this same model.

To reinforce this plan, Gemini has unveiled a new landing Web page at geminisound.com, which offers links to the company's two main websites, geminidj.com and geminiproaudio.com.

"This new plan offers simplicity and specificity for our customers and our internal operations," said Alan Cabasso, Gemini's president. geminisound.com; geminidj.com; geminiproaudio.com



BURKART GETS INTERACTIVE

Burkart Flutes and Piccolos has launched a new website geared toward engaging flute and piccolo players around the world. The site, burkart.com, boasts a modern, interactive design. Among the added features are vivid pop-outs and descriptions as users scroll over a page. Visitors can study the G-sharp facilitator of a piccolo, view options for the flute in detail and get an upclose view of key engravings. The pop-out feature is found throughout the website when scrolling over certain highlighted items and pictures. burkart.com

AHEAD'S SITE LOOKS AHEAD

Ahead Armor Cases recently redesigned its website, aheadarmorcases.com. The interactive site includes extensive information on its full line of cases, along with videos, reviews, links to social media and a dealer locator. The website also offers a gallery of world-renowned drummers, including Thomas Pridgen, Eric Singer and Daniel Glass. aheadarmorcases.com



SABIAN.COM GETS A FACELIFT

Sabian recently launched the new sabian.com. The site is completely redesigned, incorporating many of the most recent advances in Web technology, such as mobile optimization and smooth integration.

"This was a huge undertaking but one we felt was long overdue," said Stacey Montgomery-Clark, Sabian's vice president of marketing.

The new website features a redesigned products section where viewers can search for cymbals by type or series. A new filtering system lets players quickly hone in on the right cymbal for their needs. Also featured is a robust shopping system, including a Shopatron option designed to create more sales for the brand's dealer network. sabian.com

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NAMM | LEGAL

NAMM URGES SUPPORT OF RELIEF ACT

NAMM is encouraging music product retailers and suppliers to contact their members of Congress in order to support H.R.3210, the RELIEF Act.

According to NAMM representatives, the act provides a legislative fix to the 2008 Lacey Act amendment and also supports three years of consensus activity developed by business and environmental organizations.

A consensus document signed by 57 industry, environmental and non-government organizations outlines changes that are addressed in the act. namm.org



FRET-KING | OUTREACH

Fret-King Auctioned for Charity

A celebrity-signed Fret-King Esprit guitar raised more than 1,000 pounds during a recent eBay auction.

The guitar, donated by Fret-King brand owner John Hornby Skewes & Co., was autographed by Billy Bragg, Phill Jupitus, Amy MacDonald, Catherine Tate and Ellie Goulding during a tribute concert to the late

singer-songwriter Kirsty MacColl.

"Support from friends and fellow musicians all over the world has been brilliant," said MacColl's band member Gary Sanford, who organized the event. "The artists who performed at the Kirsty tribute gig and who signed the guitar, especially Billy, Amy, Kim Wilde and Andrea Corr, really got behind it." jhs.co.uk



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MARTIN | DISTRIBUTION

MARTIN GUITAR NAMES AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR



Martin recently appointed Electric Factory as the authorized distributor of the full line of instruments for Martin Guitar and Martin Strings in Australia.

The agreement will go into effect Jan. 1. This is the first time that Martin Guitar products will be sold by a single distributor in Australia.

"We are very pleased to be working with Electric Factory to distribute Martin Guitar and Strings in Australia," said Steve Carletti, Martin's vice president of sales. "Australia has a great deal of growth potential for our company, and we are confident that we have chosen the right single distributor for our instruments in this market." martinguitar.com



Zenph Sound Innovations' George Litterst (left) with Yamaha's Mike Bates

YAMAHA | PARTNERSHIP

YAMAHA PARTNERS WITH ZENPH

At the annual CMS-ATMI Conference on Oct. 20, 2011, in Richmond, Va., Yamaha Corp. of America announced that it formed a partnership with Zenph Sound Innovations and will begin including Zenph software with its Yamaha Disklavier reproducing piano.

Beginning last fall, Yamaha began bundling Disklavier and Disklavier Pro models with Mac and Windows versions of such Zenph products as Home Concert Extreme, RePerform and Inter-

net MIDI, all of which integrate seamlessly into the core technology of the piano.

"The Disklavier has earned a solid reputation as both a fine instrument and technological marvel over the years," said Jim Levesque, Yamaha's Disklavier marketing manager. "At the same time, Zenph is unparalleled when it comes to developing software that unleashes the power of our instrument's interactive and distance-learning capabilities." yamaha.com

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NAMM | EVENT

NAMM MARCHES DOWN SESAME STREET

NAMM collaborated with Sesame Street during the recent 85th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The organization helped assemble a floating stage for the cast of "Sesame Street."

At 32-feet long, 20-feet wide and two stories tall, the "1, 2, 3 Sesame Street" float emphasized the importance that music plays in the lives of children.

"Thanksgiving is a time when people take the time to share memorable experiences with friends and family, and playing music is often an activity that brings people closer," said NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond. "NAMM is grateful for its collaboration with Sesame Workshop to demonstrate the fun and magic that playing music adds to any occasion." namm.org



NAMM's float at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade



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XCHANGE | TECHNOLOGY

XChange Market Platform Released

The XChange Market Corp. has launched the Xchange Market Platform (XMP), a serial code point-of-sale activation system for software companies that do business with brick-and-mortar resellers.

XMP provides instant access to the full product range of a music store's software suppliers.

At purchase, customers are given a unique serial code, which lets them unlock and download software from the manufacturer's website.

XChange Market Corp. Chairman Steve Garth said that Antare, Acoustic, FXpansion and Innovative Music Systems have already signed up for the program.

"It is important to note that software manufacturers can be secure in the knowledge that we are independent and not in the business of developing competing software products," Garth said. xchangemarket.com



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MIAC | SHOW

MIAC CHANGES VENUE

The 41st annual Music Industries Association of Canada (MIAC) Show will be held May 13–14 at the International Centre in Mississauga, Ontario. The show will be located in the newly renovated Halls 1, 2 and 3 — a unified space, unlike in the past. New brand offerings will provide a fresh environment to enhance the event experience, both at the trade show and conference.

“When scheduling conflicts developed for 2012 at our previous venue, we took the opportunity to examine what our exhibitors and attendees were seeking in our show environment and to look at venues across the country that could meet those requirements,” said Dale Kroke, MIAC chairman. “The International Centre will enable MIAC to present a dynamic trade show floor and conference in a unique environment to enhance the attendee and exhibitor experience and strengthen the conference programming.” miac.net

CORT | ARTIST

Cort Guitars Honors Gary Sinise

Cort has presented actor and musician Gary Sinise of *CSI: NY* with an Artisan A4 bass for his work with U.S. military veterans.

The company also recognized his charitable efforts with the Gary Sinise Foundation, which creates community programs for the troops and their families.

The presentation took place during a Chicago fundraising event that benefited the United States Veterans Arts Program (USVAP).

USVAP provides artistic tools to wounded service members of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. cortguitars.com



Gary Sinise

APPOINTMENTS

Dansr Names VP of Sales

Dansr recently appointed Gary Winder vice president of sales and marketing. He has worked for G. Leblanc, Coda Music Technologies and Yamaha.

“We are delighted to add Gary to an already impressive sales and marketing team,” said Dansr President Michael Skinner. “The breadth of knowledge Gary brings to the Dansr team is substantial, which will position us nicely as we continue to grow. As the vice president of sales and marketing, Gary will use his extensive experience in the band and orchestra space to increase efficiency internally and create new and exciting opportunities for our dealer network.”

“I am very excited to work with this young and talented team and use my management experience and skills to expand on the incredible growth that is occurring at Dansr,” Winder said.



Gary Winder

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

Blue Microphones recently tapped Brian Biggott as chief technology officer.

Gemini has hired Jim Rockwell as its new director of marketing.

Korg USA recently announced a bevy of new appointments, including Doug Reynolds as district sales manager for the Midwest region, Matt Phillips as DSM for the Mountain States and John Pasarelli as an ISR. The company has also named Brian Piccolo tuner product manager and

John Hamer key account manager.

Lab.gruppen recently welcomed Jon Alkhagen as its new managing director.

Vishal Joshi has joined **The Music Group** as the customer support manager for India.

Music industry veteran Ed Bezursik has joined **Yamaha Corp. of America** as its piano marketing manager. **Yamaha Artist Services Indianapolis**, which serves as a liaison between Yamaha Corp. of America and the company’s Band & Orchestral and Drum and Percussion artists, has hired Chris Dolson to the position of artist relations specialist.

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The Band Perry performs at the CMA's

SHURE | ARTISTS

SHURE'S NIGHT TO SHINE

Shure shared the spotlight with several of country music's top artists at the 45th annual Country Music Association (CMA) Awards show, which aired live on ABC on Nov. 9, 2011. Monitor engineers Jason Spence and Mike Parker used the new Shure PSM1000 Personal Monitor System for most of the live performances in Nashville, Tenn.

"The sensitivity and the noise floor on the PSM1000 are amazing," Spence said. "Sonically, the stereo spectrum is wide and the system has unbelievable clarity.

"What I can provide to artists with this system both sonically and in RF stability allows me to do my job better."

Fourteen channels of PSM1000 were used for the broadcast with 28 receivers covering almost all of the performances on the main stage and on a satellite stage at the back of the Bridgestone Arena.

Artists using the Shure mics included Sara Evans, Vince Gill, Luke Bryan, Taylor Swift, Rascal Flatts and The Band Perry, which also used three custom-painted Shure Super 55 microphones during its performance. shure.com

AURALEX | EVENT

AURALEX SPONSORS CEDIA

Auralex Acoustics was the sole acoustics sponsor at the CEDIA China 2011 Expo and Conference, held at the Shanghai International Convention Center from Nov. 23-25, 2011.

"We are excited to represent the acoustics industry at CEDIA China, as we are currently expanding our presence throughout Asia," said David Fischer, CEO of Auralex Acoustics. "Not only does this show support Asia's emerging audio and home cinema industry but it will be the most impactful international exhibition for the residential electronic systems technology industry across the region." auralexacoustics.com



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SHOWS



PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY ANNUAL CONVENTION | BY KATIE KAILUS

CELEBRATING 50

Drumming enthusiasts recently filled the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis for the Percussive Arts Society Annual Convention (PASIC). Held Nov. 10–12, 2011, the show attracted more than 5,100 attendees and celebrated the Percussive Arts Society’s 50th anniversary.

“PASIC 2011 was the perfect

PAS turns 50 and celebrates a booming small goods market

close to a year of celebrating our first 50 years as the leading percussion organization in the world,” said Michael Kenyon, the

Percussive Arts Society’s executive director. “Throughout PASIC, there was a terrific sense of camaraderie among performers, teachers and students.”

BORN IN THE U.S.A.

A sense of patriotism resonated throughout the halls of the convention center. Several exhibitors mentioned their U.S.-made products being the fastest

movers in 2011.

“This has been one of the best years for American-made products,” said Jim Catalano, director of marketing for Ludwig. “They are more popular than ever. With what is happening

1. Tama’s Jason Ranck; 2. Mapex’s Bob Berheide; 3. Yamaha’s Doug Steinmetz (left) and Travis Goodwin; 4. Alfred’s Dave Black; 5. From left: Pearl’s Steve Armstrong, Shawn Lafrenz and Dan Twiford; 6. Gator Cases’ Ken Fuente (left) and Bruce Schneider; 7. D’Addario’s Richard Markus

with the economy, it seems like everyone is feeling a little more Americana these days. Customers are much more discerning about what they are buying and where it is made.”

John Palmer, product manager for Gretsch Drums, agreed and said he’s seen a “return to patriotism.”

“There is a lot of value in American brands for the American market,” he said. “It feels good for Americans to buy something that is made by other Americans.”

ACCESSORIZED & HANDY

Small goods continued to be a strong seller this year, while suppliers reported higher-end instrument sales continuing to wane.

“Accessories are driving business right now,” said Victor Filonovich, director of product management for Toca and Latin Percussion, which debuted a new line of egg shakers.

“I think because of the economy people aren’t investing in bigger purchases. Instead, they are enhancing the sound they already have.”

Musicians are also taking advantage of small goods to give their sound a makeover.

“The accessory market is strong because customers can create a whole new vibe to their music for just \$20,” said Brian LeVan, Remo’s national sales manager.

Among the new accessories at the show, Ludwig rolled out a snare drum Heirloom Bag featuring blue and olive tones — the company’s trademark colors in the 1960s and ’70s. Toca also released a new djembe stand, which feeds into another strong trend: hand percussion.

Tony Lapsansky, business developer for Tycoon Percus-

1. Remo’s Brian LeVan (left) and Chris Hart; 2. Dream Cymbals’ Craig Snowden; 3. Ludwig’s Jim Catalano; 4. From left: Latin Percussion’s Andy Krol, Victor Filonovich and Sergio Bonsignore; 5. Bosphorus’ Michael (left) and Kevin Vosbein; 6. Hal Leonard’s Brian Swinehart (left) and Derek Byrne; 7. Alesis’ Rich Curtis; 8. Roland’s David Garza; 9. Tycoon Percussion’s Tony Lapsansky; 10. Yamaha’s Tom Griffin (left); 11. Gretsch’s John Palmer

sion, said that while cajons have been popular since 2009, they continue to gain popularity every year.

“I think these [hand percussion] instruments are looked at as gateway instruments for drum set players,” said Lapsansky, whose company unveiled its Vertex series cajon at the show. “They are really popular at bars and clubs, and a lot of bands have added them to their setups.”

Gon Bops’ U.S. Sales Manager Randy Chaisson said that hand percussion instruments, such as djembes and cajons, are in high demand because anyone can play them. Chaisson also noted their convenient size lets musicians easily carry them around to gigs.

“It is awesome for drummers because, like guitarists, they can now go into a gig with only one bag,” he said.

And the craze doesn’t stop there. Print music publishers have seen a rise in hand percussion print sales, as well.

Alfred has expanded its selection, which at one time included only a select number of titles, to an entire rack of just hand percussion books.

“It’s so funny because we have turned around from seeing a lot of books for drum sets to seeing a lot for hand percussion,” said Dave Black, vice president of school & church publishing for Alfred.

“It is now by far the fastest growing category for us, and we have devoted a whole rack to the segment.” **MI**





Left: the GC Pro exhibit space; right: a demo at the Avid booth. Avid used the AES show to debut several high-profile wares, such as Pro Tools 10

AUDIO ENGINEERING SOCIETY CONVENTION | BY DAN DALEY

CROSS-MARKET POLLINATION

The Audio Engineering Society (AES) convention is changing. The show has settled into a smaller footprint over the last decade, a reflection of pro audio's diffusion in general and music recording expanding across multiple platforms in particular.

Another indication of this change is how pro audio manufacturers are spreading new product announcements over the course of the year and often across various sector shows. The putatively iconic shows, such as AES and NAB, are no longer necessarily the launching pads for significant products.

For instance, this year's AES show, held Oct. 20–23, 2011, in New York, had a grand total of

A smaller AES show draws a larger range of MI, broadcast exhibitors

five press conferences scheduled at its opening bell. But even those few events spanned a significant range of silos. These included the expected, such as Avid's introduction of its comprehensive new Pro Tools 10, to products for broadcast, such as Clear-Com's new HME DX210 two-channel 2.4-GHz-band wireless intercom system or TC Electronic's DB2 loudness correction processor.

SSL and API showed off studio mixing consoles, but so did Calrec and Lawo, two brands closely associated with broadcasting.

Several executives from broadcast-centric manufacturers said the show's location in New York City, close to major-network clients, made AES a draw for them. Michael Mueller, vice president of sales at Lawo, pointed out that this year's AES was more like a localized version of the NAB Show, which in recent years has taken on a broader, more international scope. "But at the end of the day, it's still all about audio," he said.

STRADDLING SILOS

In that context, maybe it wasn't surprising to see Gibson, a

dedicated MI manufacturer, at AES. (The guitar maker had also shown at the 2007 show.) Gibson's sparsely decorated booth focused on demos of the Firebird X, which Ken McMahan, a company product specialist, agreed could act as a bridge between the MI and pro audio sectors.

The guitar, based on the classic 1960s Firebird design, carries a substantial high-tech load, including Gibson's fourth-generation Robot tuners for automatic tuning, on-board processing effects based on computer plug-in technology and wireless Bluetooth-connected pedals. The instrument's also designed for compatibility with hardware and applications from third-party developers, a paradigm that has

radically changed how processing is developed for pro audio in the last decade.

Historically, there's always been a pool of manufacturers that have straddled the MI and pro audio silos, including Peavey, Yamaha and Alesis. But their MI offerings have almost always centered around keyboards — hybrid instruments and recording and sampling devices. The trend toward such higher-tech guitars as the \$5,570 Firebird X might make that bridge a little wider in the future.

MOORE'S LAW

But things aren't as straightforward when it comes to Avid's new products, rolled out in a theatrical event at a space in Jazz at Lincoln Center's complex. About 50 journalists in attendance were joined by several thousand others watching a live stream feed from the venue. Avid President Kirk Arnold unveiled the new products after a fast-paced video of celebrity Pro Tools users who'd already played with the new software and hardware.

Pro Tools 10 offers a slew of new features, including faster editing and mixing with the Clip Gain feature, which lets users adjust and match gain levels pre-mixer within a user-defined clip. It also offers the ability to use multiple audio formats in a session, including interleave, without file duplication. And users can record and master at higher resolutions with more headroom in a 32-bit floating-point format.

On the hardware/firmware side, the new Pro Tools|HDX system lets customers mix larger-scale productions, delivering up to five times more DSP per card, over 1,000 dB of additional headroom, and up to four times the track counts and twice the I/O compared to its Pro Tools|HD

Accel predecessor.

The system can also be scaled to increase track counts, power and I/O, using up to three Pro Tools|HDX cards and multiple Pro Tools HD series interfaces. Users can now choose the Pro Tools|HD Native system if they need the advanced workflows of Pro Tools HD and want to leverage their host computer to get the best performance and lowest latency. Alternatively, they can choose the new flagship DSP-accelerated Pro Tools|HDX system if they require optimized performance and minimal latency to handle bigger productions. Pro Tools HD 10 also introduces the new AAX (Avid Audio eXtension) plug-in format, designed to offer improved workflows and sound parity when sharing sessions between DSP-accelerated and native-based Pro Tools systems.

And Avid proved that Moore's law is alive and well in pro audio: As Pro Tools' performance increased, its pricing decreased. Upgrading from version nine to 10 costs \$299, and upgrading from version nine HD to 10 HDX costs \$999.

ANALOG & DIGITAL UNITE

Pro audio remains a core component of many retailers' strategies. Detroit-based Vintage King had an extended booth on the show floor. Jacob Schneider, a salesman for the company, said the matrix of home studios is as diverse as it has ever been, from high-end pro operations to spare bedrooms, and that diversity is driving sales, particularly on high-end hardware.

"We're seeing more clients buying more analog processing equipment, one piece at a time — pieces costing as much as \$3,000," he said. "Plug-ins are great, but we're seeing customers

that are investing in cornerstone pieces, like high-end compressors. If there's a piece of equipment that you feel is critical and you'll use all the time, you might as well buy the best one you can. That's the thinking."

Schneider added that he's also seeing more customer requests for technical help, particularly when it comes to integrating analog and digital technologies into the same studios.

educational communications, said the videos help keep sales staffers well-informed and let them help customers with questions about microphone choice and placement.

"As long as they're not overly promotional, if they get across some really useful technique information, dealers really take advantage of these videos," he said.

Sennheiser has been using on-site pop-up tutorials at re-



GC Pro Vice President Rick Plushner noted that he's also seeing more combinations of analog and digital products being used by project studios. "That's been there all along, but what's happening is that the demand is increasing for more affordable analog gear, too," he said.

MIC MARKETING INNOVATIONS

Pro audio manufacturers have had to become more creative to differentiate their products in an increasingly crowded, software-based market, and microphone makers seem to be leading the pack.

Shure has been releasing how-to videos from its website and to retailers, who can offer them through their own Web portals to customers and also as tutorials for their sales staffs. Chris Lyons, Shure's manager of technical and

tailors for several years as part of its Recording Sound Academy program, and the company used AES to announce a new promotion. For \$99, participants can download three songs by "American Idol" singer-songwriter Bo Bice, written and recorded using Sennheiser and Neumann microphones, with software for remixing them. Entrants' remixes will be evaluated by a panel of mixers, including Al Schmitt, Cool & Dre and Tim Palmer. The winner receives a Neumann U87 microphone.

"They really like the idea that their mixes will be heard by some of the best in the business, and it also gives retailers a chance to interact with customers and talk about technique," said Joe Ciaudelli, Sennheiser's director of market development and education. **MI**

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IDEAS

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INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

SIGNS, SIGNS

We boomers are old enough to remember the original Five Man Electrical Band version of “Signs,” later covered by Tesla. The song transcended its pop-culture status in an era when rebellion against authority was hitting its stride.

“Do this, don’t do that, can’t you read the sign?” The lyric resonated in my teens, and I have to confess it still speaks to me. It wasn’t just about directive, communal authority. It was a reaction to Madison Avenue and the media bombardment of junk advertising, which is now exponentially more prolific. And as retailers, there is one stage where we need to be very sensitive to the impact of signs: our stores.

Volume. Your first concern about signage is frequency. The more words you put in front of a customer, the more invisible the words become. (Have you read your iTunes user agreement lately?)

You must choose your words carefully, as the more you clutter your showroom with signs,



especially regarding policies, the less likely people are to read your message. Where things are (restroom, cashier, lessons, repair) is the single most important text in your store. Relegate less relevant information to fine print — there’s nothing wrong with keeping exchange policies and returns as small as possible. Even better, have them printed on the back of receipts. One percent of your customers will take you to task on some esoteric point. The other 99 percent don’t need the clutter to interfere with a rich, pleasant purchasing experience.

Tone. Rule No. 1: No negative signs. “No cash refunds.” “No touching without a salesman’s help.” “No loitering.” You might as well add, “No fun.” There are positive ways to communicate these messages. “We want to help you enjoy this instrument.” “Thanks for limiting your playing to 30 minutes.” I’d argue that we oversign areas, and a sign laced with sarcasm or passive aggression — “You break it, you buy it” — is a huge turn off. We live in our showrooms. Our customers are company, especially new ones. They should be treated like guests.

I recall visiting a friend’s house in college. The mother spent 10 minutes outlining the house pool rules, as if we were grade school kids. Funny how none of us felt like swimming after being belittled.

Verbalization. The way words are used on the sign, not only their grammar and spelling but also their sophistication level, speaks volumes about your business. Signs should be expressive, concise and uplifting. Text should only be fashioned

by your best staff wordsmiths and painstakingly proofed — by several people!

Aesthetic. Outside of an expensive cosmopolitan bistro, signs should never be handwritten. A sign in black Sharpie tells your customer your business can’t afford a computer. Avoid multiple fonts, and again, use as few words as possible. Also, art and text should always be kid-appropriate and consistent in appearance to the other signs in the store. Use a clean font (Arial), and avoid hard-to-read art fonts.

Internal. You probably have two kinds of signs in your store — one for the customer and one for the employee. Be polite to your employees, too. Insist on no personal (“grudge”) signs in the break room or near the time clock. If they don’t apply to everybody, they don’t belong.

“And the sign said, ‘Everybody welcome, come in, kneel down and pray.’” **MI**

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

MY TURN | BY BILL JONES

Treadmills & RMM

When we started our business in 1973, our reps and others in the industry referred to a robust piano industry that was selling around 350,000 units a year. As I remember, that number remained steady for several years. Fast-forward to 2010, and the published number of acoustic and digital pianos (not keyboards) was down to 156,000 units. Yes, there's a recession, but in general, people don't seem to desire or buy pianos like they used to.



Small, inexpensive keyboards have done for our piano industry what the home treadmill has done for the weight loss of millions of Americans — absolutely nothing. Years ago, when my wife and I entered into mid-life, we started to pack on the pounds like so many Americans. I purchased a high-quality treadmill, and we soon found that treadmills are great for hanging clothes on. (Side note: I strongly suggest you purchase an exercise bicycle. You can hang more clothes on a bike.)

However, we found a way to keep those pounds off and significantly improve our overall health by hiring a personal trainer, who we've now been with for more than 10 years. Notice we hired a trainer — we didn't join a gym.

Likewise, I once got a call from a man who wanted to sell back his easy-play digital piano. Despite the instrument's easy-play features, he never "got around to it." At that moment, I realized that for the past 38 years, we'd been a piano store that offered a few lessons on the side. We decided to shift our focus 180 degrees and become a music school that offered pianos for sale. And during the transition, I learned a few things worth sharing.

A LESSON ON LESSONS

First, I had been approaching recreational music making (RMM) incorrectly for the past several decades. My approach, which I believe mirrors that of the industry, was to offer free or very inexpensive classes to prospective students at no more than \$29 for six to eight weeks. Frankly, these classes seldom resulted in

enough sales to justify the weeks of teaching, cost of materials, advertising and humongous effort we put forth to maintain them.

My perspective changed when a part-time employee left our store to start a music studio of his own. He expanded and brought on several teachers. Before long, he was making more money teaching than I was selling pianos. His secret was simple: He never gave away the lessons.

After re-evaluating our position, we began to charge full tuition for lessons of all types, including RMM classes. The results to our bottom line have become an important part of our profitability, and the promise of future profits is nothing short of spectacular. We average \$62 profit per student on lessons. Every 100 students adds \$6,200 to our monthly revenue.

To boot, we're actually selling more pianos this way. When the lessons were low-cost or free, salespeople often taught the lessons. Students realized that these low-cost lessons had to be subsidized by sales and became leery.

With real teachers doing the teaching and achieving better results than sales-oriented classes, our RMM students end up coming to us and asking to look at pianos. **MI**

Bill Jones is the owner of Bill Jones Music in Knoxville, Tenn.

'Every 100 students adds \$6,200 to our monthly revenue.'

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TECHNOLOGY | BY GRANT BILLINGS

The Facebook Effect

As Facebook passes 800 million members, it's more important than ever to make the most of your company's page. This means posting events, offering deals and encouraging users to "like" the page.

But first, it's critical that you avoid certain social media faux pas. There are significant differences between promoting your business with a profile, which people "friend," and promoting your business with a page, which people "like." Understanding the difference is key to using Facebook effectively in your marketing strategy.

With a business page, "liking" a company and enjoying the benefits are instant. Click and done. The relationship instantly appears on the user's wall for all of his or her friends to see. On the other hand, trying to get customers to be "friends" delays the creation of the relationship because nothing happens until the business accepts the friend request.

POST YOUR EVENTS

I recently received an e-mail newsletter from a friend announcing that she would be performing in a town where I know a lot of people. Being a nice guy, I wanted to share the upcoming concert with my friends. A quick visit to her Facebook page should've done the trick, only she hadn't created one. Next, I visited the Facebook page for the store where she'd be performing. Nothing.

If I'd been able to click "share" to promote the event to my 25 "friends" who actually live in town, their 200 "friends" would have seen the posting on their walls, creating 5,000 impressions in about 15 seconds.

And here's where Facebook's synergy can really take over.

According to Facebook, its average user has 130 friends. Let's say her concert would have been within an hour's drive of just 1 percent of her followers. Promoting the event via Facebook to those six people would have made 780 impressions. If it's fair to assume that 25 percent of the store's Facebook followers are people far away like me, promoting to the other 75 percent — the locals — would have made 62,400 impressions. Yet many of the business-faithful Facebookers are

missing out on this powerful feature. Post your events!

OFFER DEALS

A study conducted last year by ExactTarget found that 40 percent of people say they will follow a business page to receive discounts and promotions, 36 percent to get a freebie and 30 percent to get updates on upcoming sales. In other words, customers "like" your business because they want you to market to them.

Better yet, deals don't have to be a big deal. Your Facebook deals can include promotions you're already running or an extra incentive — maybe a small discount or free gift for "checking in" to your store. (Facebook offers the ability for users to check in when they go to a physical location to let their friends know where they are.) Or, offer a free set of strings with any guitar purchase over \$249 if a customer "likes" your Facebook page.

When used properly, Facebook can be a modern way to build an old-fashioned relationship with your customers. By establishing your business page, promoting your events and offering deals, you will attract new customers and build even more loyalty with your existing base. **MI**

Grant Billings is the owner of Billings Piano Gallery in Madison, Wis.



Take advantage of Facebook's features for creating and maintaining customer relationships

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Inventory Isn't Wine

Starting immediately, we're going to put a whole new spin on inventory control. Our goal is to have nothing but the slowest movers in stock. The longer an item has been in stock, the more it becomes the object of your affection — kind of like wine. The older it is, the better. Those pesky quick-turning items are an annoyance that keep you from focusing on what matters most: dead stock.



Sounds pretty absurd, right? Well, let's try another scenario. You place an order with a supplier. The merchandise comes in quickly, and after a couple weeks, it's all gone. You're excited about these new products because they show a lot of promise, and your customers have been voting with their pocketbooks. When the rep contacts you to see how the widgets are selling, you tell him they're all gone. He asks if you want to place the same order as before, but you decline because you have tons of inventory that hasn't been moving as you'd hoped, and you've got more bills than Carter has liver pills. You plan to replace the items eventually, but now is not the time.

What's the difference between these two hypothetical scenarios? Absolutely nothing. Failing to replace your fastest-selling items is like choosing to focus on your dogs. No matter how justified you feel and no matter how real the pressures are of your bills and excess inventory, any business that fails to focus on quick-turning inventory is on a collision course. Yet I see this happening regularly.

HARSH LESSON LEARNED

Understand the thinking that goes into these ill-advised decisions. As my business lumbered through its waning days, I felt I was being responsible by focusing on trying to sell remaining stock and not spending money on

replenishing sold-out inventory. My concern was making ends meet. Every dollar spent on inventory, no matter how desirable that purchase, kept me one step further from meeting my obligations. At least that's what I thought.

My very harsh lesson learned came when I finally decided to close my business. At that point, the amount I paid for the items I

had in stock made absolutely no difference. As they say, I couldn't take them with me.

So, I found the magical price points that made each and every item go away. During my going-out-of-business sale, I created cash flow by moving out old inventory and through the generosity and wisdom of some suppliers who realized sending me desirable new stock created its own positive cash flow. I was actually able to order fast-selling merchandise that earned handsome profits and helped ease my burdens. Through buying highly salable new inventory during the six-week going-out-of-business sale, I was able to produce turns that would annualize to about 100. I also created a heck of a lot of cold, hard cash that went a long way toward financial reconciliation.

For those of you who cling to the idea that you need to get every last penny out of your inventory, I propose that you consider my experiences during those final weeks of my business.

What would've been the outcome if, years earlier, I'd started creating cash with old inventory and invested it in my fastest-turning SKUs? Ironically, I believe that if I ran my business as if I were going out of business, I might actually still be there. **MI**

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

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DigTech
by HARMAN

THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

New Year's Resolutions

I always start my new year's resolutions with what I want or don't want from my business. At the top of my list every year is to leave work (sometimes early) and not worry about every little detail. Throughout the year, I'll make sure I'm accomplishing these goals, but I also keep in mind this is a to-do list that can be referenced perennially. With some planning, you can make 2012 your most successful resolution year ever. Here's my list for 2012. Happy new year everyone.



There's no better time than the start of the new year to reinvent yourself and your business

1. Clean out the clutter. Straighten the sales counter, and wipe dust off your work areas. Throw out old paperwork and vendor catalogs from three years ago, and clean out your files. Make your work areas more clutter-free. Having everything in its right place saves you and your customers time.

2. Liquidate old and dead stock. Get rid of it, even if you have to give it away. And if you don't want to give something away, see if the item will work in your music lessons department. Maybe you can depreciate the item's value by using it in your studios. Or, host a contest where you give it to a student.

3. Go on a business diet. Got an employee who's been dragging productivity and other employees down? Cut 'em loose. You're doing the person a favor. Now that employee can make a resolution to better him or herself for another job. Streamline your business, and keep it that way. One resolution I had in 2009 and keep today was to stop the glut of expenses we'd built up from 2002 through 2008. I'm better prepared for future downturns now more than ever.

4. Paint the shop. Fresh paint not only livens up a showroom but makes the work atmosphere feel new. Go for colors that make your inventory stand out. If you're not good at picking colors, hire a decorator for a few hours. It's worth the money.

5. Rearrange the store and your stock. The top of a new year is a good time to shake up your store. Move displays, or take fixtures out of the mix altogether. I'll paint a fixture, move it to another department or take it off the floor and store it.

6. Refresh your website. Freshen up your website's keywords to optimize search results. I spend about 15 minutes a

day working on our Google AdWords and Places accounts, as well as all other Internet and social media outlets. And at the beginning of every year, I take a few days to work with a search engine optimization specialist. I have this person comb through our AdWords and keywords to find anything he thinks we can improve upon or delete.

7. Update equipment in teaching studios. Nothing says "tired lesson department" like teaching on equipment from 2002. Update it. Put new drumheads on drum sets and new amps in the guitar rooms.

8. Update your POS software, and back up data. Each time you skip a software update, you may be missing out on a great feature that will save you time and money. Only skip it if it's not a huge improvement. Also, make this the year you start backing up your computer data daily.

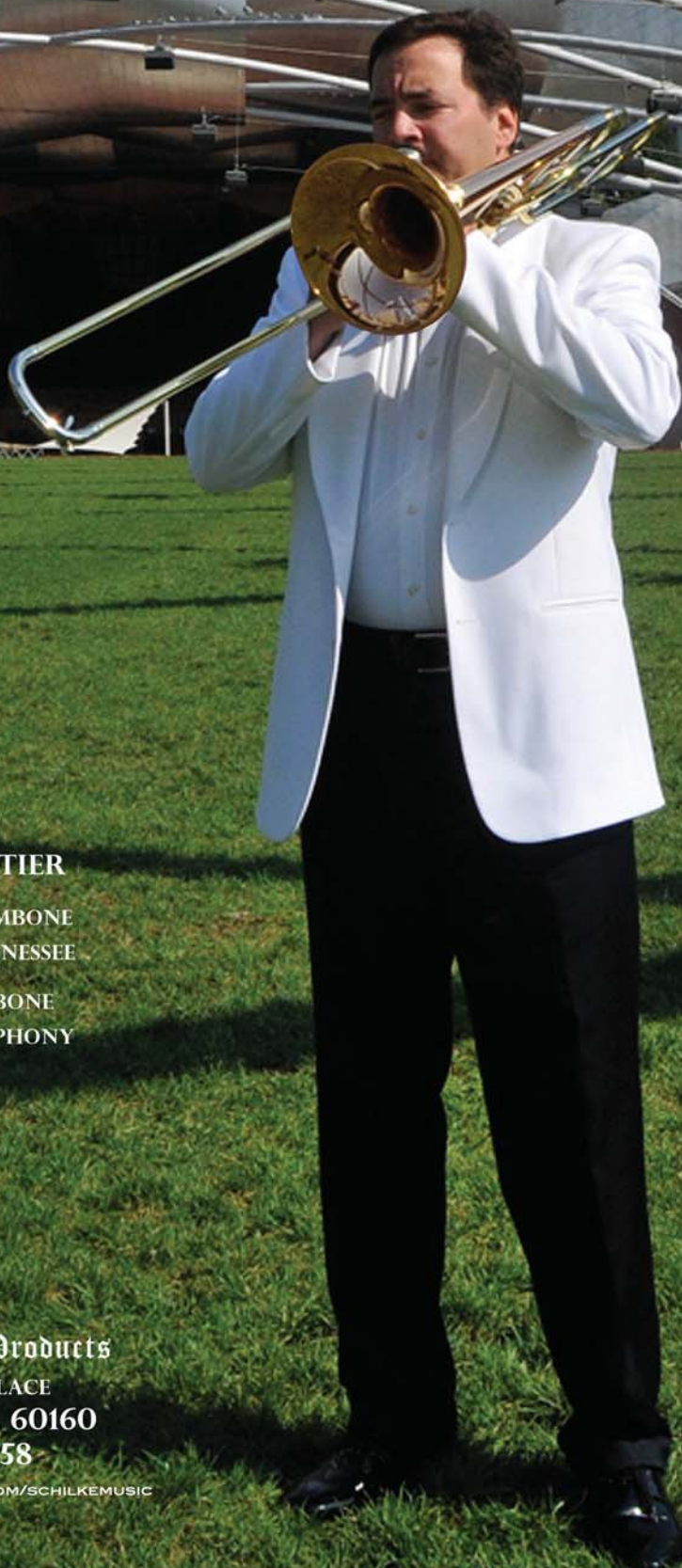
9. Start preparing for next year's taxes. It's never too early to start saving money. Organize your receipts, and talk with an accountant.

10. Take a business course at a community college. You don't know everything. Try to take at least one course online or in person. It's worth it even if you pick up a small piece of information that you can use. **MI**

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

DANIEL CLOUTIER

PERFORMS ON SCHILKE



DANIEL CLOUTIER
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A portrait of Kevin Cranley, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, smiling. He is wearing a white, long-sleeved button-down shirt and dark trousers. He is seated in a wooden chair, and his hands are resting on his lap. The background is dark. A large, semi-transparent blue text overlay is visible across the middle of the image.

Kevin Cranley

TRANSP

BY ZACH PHILLIPS
PHOTO BY RICK LOHRE

How Willis Music builds a great team with open-book management

TRANSPARENCY

At Willis Music, very little is open to interpretation.

Salespeople can track their daily performance using the company's Intranet. Managers from each of Willis' seven stores are privy to balance sheets, income statements and budgets. If an employee lags behind, management can pinpoint specific areas to help nurture improvement. If an employee gets let go, it's almost never a surprise.

+ WALK THROUGH Willis Music's New Cincinnati Store



GREATER Foothold Willis Music's new Cincinnati store is located in an affluent part of town. Kevin Cranley noted that the company already has a foothold in the Cincinnati market with two other stores. "We've become far more convenient to a lot of customers," he said of the new store.



UNUSUAL DISPLAY Willis Music Vice President Dan Herbert invented the company's unique scaffolding-like electric guitar display system (right). On the bass wall, gray slatwall complements the burgundy paint job.



PERFORMANCE SPACE An auditorium rounds out the music lesson studio area. Its industrial ceiling motif runs throughout the store.

"I think the sharing of information is key to a lot of the success we have," said Kevin Cranley, Willis president and the third-generation Cranley to own the Florence, Ky.-based combo retailer. "We don't hide a thing."

Sharing information with employees, in fact, has been critical in fashioning the 113-year-old company into a 21st century retail chain organization. Such transparency has improved store-to-store communications and company culture. But more than anything else, sharing information has been vital for creating a crack team of employees — people who can think on their feet, constantly improve their craft and make good decisions. And these days, having rock-solid people is more important than ever for Cranley.

Last July, he began his two-year tenure as NAMM's chairman, the most prestigious, and maybe time-consuming, volunteer position in the music products industry. Within the first four months, he was called on the road for multiweek trips to China, Japan and New York. In the meantime, he opened a third Cincinnati store and battled new national competition on the homefront.

"They say one of the biggest reasons for failure of a successful retailer is opening a second store," said Cranley, a tall, laid-back 53-year-old with a slight Southern accent. "The biggest challenge is conveying a sense of ownership to remote locations. And we've done far better recently than we ever have. Getting other people to have your eyes is the challenge. But I think a lot of this sharing of information and key measurements help that."

KEEPING SCORE

employees have taken heed,
 judging from a new lineup

of Willis Music radio spots. These minute-long ads, which were created during recent focus groups, feature a collage of sound bites from satisfied customers. "They're the people that I trust," said one man of Willis Music. "They genuinely want you to be happy," said another. "I honestly think Willis has the best prices." Cranley attributed this praise to his company's core mission of building customer relationships — a competitive advantage in the cutthroat combo market. The moment returning clients walk into a Willis store, employees are expected to know what gear those customers prefer, their children's names, their professions and so on. And to make this happen, sharing information is paramount.

The information exchange at Willis centers around the company's nifty Intranet system, dubbed "the dashboard." Updated at the end of each business day, the dashboard includes such critical figures as an employee's invoice count, sales, gross profit, invoices per hour, items per sale and profit per hour. It also tracks the percentage of customers a salesperson adds to Willis' database and e-mail list. And, of course, it shows the person's current commission. In other words, it helps employees have Cranley's eyes, so to speak.

Denise Smith began at Willis' Florence store 11 years ago as a salesperson and received a promotion to co-manager last February. She pointed out that the dashboard has helped boost not only her own total items per sale but also that of her staff.

"I've got people who, when I first started managing the store in February, were at two [items per ticket], and they're almost at three now," she said of this critical measurement of profitability.

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“You can have an idea of what you’re doing, and it may or may not be right. But when the numbers are there in stone, you can say, ‘Wow. I really didn’t sell the best stuff.’”

Additions to Willis Music’s customer database and e-mail list are especially critical dashboard ratios, especially for building relationships. “That is the way we communicate with our customers on a regular basis, with

‘Everybody at Willis Music should be an entrepreneur. Everybody should have all the information they need to know why they’re succeeding and why they’re failing.’

newsletters, events and sales,” Cranley said.

The dashboard was created by his computer-whiz son, Eric, five years ago and pulls its numbers from the company’s POS software, S2K. Being a rich source of numbers also makes the dashboard an effective employee goal-setting tool. To prevent information overload, the company’s manage-

ment has employees focus on improving only three strategic ratios per month.

“And it may be the same things for several months in a row,” Cranley said. “I don’t want to tell someone they have to improve in these 10 areas. It just doesn’t work. It’s all about making them successful.”

Likewise, the dashboard doubles as a training tool. Bill Phipps, the company’s executive sales manager, praised the Intranet system for raising employee awareness.

“If you tell someone, ‘We need more gross profit out of you,’ we really can’t train on that,” Phipps said. “But what areas that you have control over that we can track add to that gross profit? And that’s what we can drill down to and work on, which is going to improve the overall picture.”

MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE

But the dashboard is a mere cog — albeit an important one — in Willis Music’s training machine. Every brand-new employee goes through a sales tutorial with Phipps, and after a month, they meet at Willis’ Florence headquarters to learn the finer points of company culture, sales and customer service. The company hosts a one-day quarterly training blitz for all salespeople — usually a time for manufacturer rep visits. And, Cranley noted, Phipps is “always out there coaching” and often pulls ideas from NAMM’s online retail training. The point is to not only teach employees how to build relationships but also to maintain excellence and consistency

across all seven Willis stores.

“Everybody at Willis Music should be an entrepreneur,” Cranley said. “Everybody should have all the information they need to know why they’re succeeding and why they’re failing.”

Managers are also critical in communicating the Willis way of doing business across multiple locations. As Cranley put it, “the strongest manager creates the culture in the store.” For this reason, the company’s careful to promote management from within.

“Historically, we have always tried to find people from the outside, and that’s been our least successful area,” Cranley said. “Our best success has been promoting from within. It goes back to the culture. Looking back, every manager we have started out as a salesperson. There’s only one person working for us who started as a manager.”

Monthly manager meetings have developed into “an incredible sharing group,” according to Cranley. During these democratic gatherings, managers bring issues to Willis executives that they weren’t aware of, and everyone kicks around solutions. Financial figures are shared openly. Best practices get analyzed, and new ideas are brought to the table.

“They’re learning more from each other,” Cranley said. “It’s all about, ‘What is this manager doing down in Lexington that can be transferred to all the stores,’ and we’ll give him 15 minutes to explain. That has just improved so much over the last year.”

COMPETING HARDER

These improvements come at a good time. Last March, Willis closed its Dayton, Ohio, store after seven years in the market, a move driven by new national competition and a dreadful local economy. Retail sales have also been down slightly at the company’s Louisville, Ky., location — again, new competition is a factor. And more than anything else, the recession has put extra pressure on foot traffic. Cranley acknowledged that Willis Music never felt the worst of the downturn, but lately, these influences are forcing the company to compete harder than ever for consumers’ discretionary dollars. Still, he’s cautiously optimistic.

“We’ve been around since 1899, and we’ve been through worse times than this,”

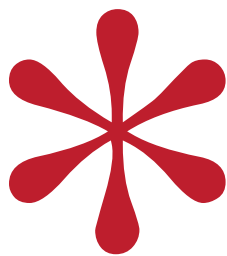
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REDEFINING NAMM

Cranley's role as the association's new chairman

NAMM's new mission statement fits on a single page. The document, which outlines the organization's new vision, mission and objectives, is the result of a year-long research project to redefine the trade association. And during Kevin Cranley's term as NAMM chairman, it's his job to set the plan in motion.

Not that members will notice any sweeping changes at the association. More than anything else, the new plan's purpose is to help NAMM's staff focus on what the organization does best. "The NAMM staff can now incorporate this into their goals and focus on the things that matter most to members and the industry," Cranley said. The document also creates a framework for NAMM to help prioritize its many requests for funding and assistance.

"Quite honestly, in the past, our mission statement was eight pages long," Cranley said. Jokingly, he added, "You could look at just about anything happening in the world, and somebody could say, 'NAMM has to fix that.'"

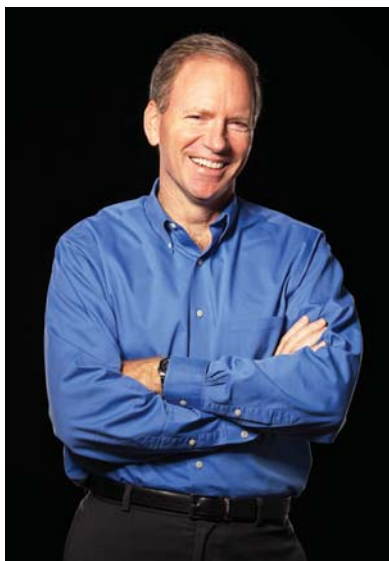
Previous NAMM Chairman Tom Schmitt spearheaded the initiative, which involved surveying thousands of NAMM members. The project culminated in the establishment of a committee of industry members to draft the final vision, mission and objectives for board approval.

"There's nothing specific that was taken out," Cranley said. "It's just we were kind of everything to everybody before."

Along with helping implement this new focus, Cranley has a second overarching plan as NAMM chairman. He wants to make the organization an even more powerful conduit for solving industry problems.

"There are issues like The Lacey Act that come up that are bigger than any one member, industry category or even NAMM can solve, but we can convene key stakeholders, provide resources and expertise, and together we can improve conditions for all," Cranley said.

"As NAMM chairman, Kevin Cranley joins a short list of dedicated industry leaders who, over the past 110 years, have believed that one's responsibility goes beyond their own business interests," said NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond. "By serving first on the NAMM board and then on the executive committee, Kevin has dedicated countless hours to improving the industry for all participants and, in turn, bringing more music to the world." — Z.P.



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Cranley said. “We’ve been through the Great Depression. It’s just been a challenge over these last few years. I can relate very well to a lot of these independent dealers. We’re all going through the same thing.”

Several factors are helping offset major revenue dips. For starters, the company’s diversified in print music publishing, which

accounts for roughly half its business. In 2005, it kicked publishing into high gear by partnering with Hal Leonard. The move effectively put Willis’ illustrious catalog — which boasts such authors as Edna Mae Burnam and John Thompson — into the hands of the print publishing powerhouse. Ever since, Cranley said the partnership’s

been “fantastic.”

He’s also optimistic about his new Cincinnati store. Unlike Dayton, his company is entrenched in the Cincinnati market, where it already has two existing locations. The new store is situated in an affluent part of town, and soon after opening, it yielded impressive instrument rental numbers from the back-to-school season, Cranley said. (Rentals make up roughly 10 percent of Willis Music’s total retail business.)

Used gear only accounts for about 7 percent of Willis Music’s combo sales, but the category’s margins are incredibly generous. The Florence location has the highest used gear margins of any Willis store by far, according to Cranley. Rick Fuchs, co-manager of the store, said conservative buying helps ensure turns and profitability — he only accepts a little more than half the used product that comes in. And with more musicians selling instruments to make ends meet in the sluggish economy, Willis has been able to acquire some quality used inventory.

Fuchs said he’s upfront with customers about how much more money they can make selling used gear by themselves. Ironically, this transparency seems to help Willis Music.

“We’ll tell [customers] how to sell it,” Cranley said. “We’re not trying to rip anybody off because, hopefully, this is the same person who will turn around and use that same cash to buy something new. So it’s all about being upfront and telling them exactly what you plan on doing.”

Plus, good salesmanship, particularly with add-ons, has insulated Willis somewhat from the worst of the economy. “We know we hold higher margins for our combo business than most,” Cranley said. “We sell a whole lot of accessories. We do a lot of print. Print holds a higher margin.”

And Willis Music’s involvement in industry groups, including the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants, provides a generous flow of new ideas.

“Some people are finding better ways to compete, and we feel like we can always continue to learn,” Cranley said. “That’s valuable. I’ll steal an idea from anybody. If something has worked for someone else, there’s a good chance it will work for us. As the industry grows, we grow.” **MI**

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THE RECORDING MARKET ON-RAMP

BY ED ENRIGHT

The way Glenn Roop sees it, self-expression is now only a USB port away from anyone with a creative flair and a laptop.

The executive director of business development for CAD Audio speaks to the popularity of USB microphones, the fastest and easiest way to record professional-quality audio on a computer. And the list of potential users in this category isn't limited to musicians. Podcasters, YouTube-inspired videographers, Skype enthusiasts, online gamers and businesses that rely on advanced telecommunications are all in need of simple, effective ways to create crystal-clear-sounding digital audio using their laptops and mobile devices.

There's a rapidly growing market for microphones that plug directly into computers and effectively bypass the need for bulky (and often expensive) mixers and audio interfaces — products that were commonly used in the past to convert analog audio into digital information. And USB mics fill that need like no other product. With a wide variety of models available, relatively low cost and simplicity of operation, their popularity continues growing with a vast customer base — a promising scenario for music retailers of all types.

"USB microphones give people the opportunity to create and express themselves," Roop said. "Most importantly, for our industry, the USB mic is an on-ramp



Shure's
Stephen
Kohler

USB mics boast easy operation and a colossal user base, making them a promising category for nearly all MI retailers

for the consumer into the music and recording industries, just as an entry-level acoustic guitar captures and inspires folks to become our lifelong customers. USB mics create more customers."

"It's a combination of several factors, all related to the digital world becoming a bigger part of our everyday lives," said John Maier, CEO of Blue Microphones. "We've finally reached a critical mass where the average person's day is filled with interactions in their digital world, whether Skyping with a friend, jotting down a song idea, posting a video on YouTube and so on. Creating quality content and communications has become more important, and easy-to-use, plug-and-play USB mics are a big part of that equation.

"Now, with just a computer and a USB mic, the average user has the recording tools and capabilities that used to cost thousands of dollars in a recording studio."

Gary Boss, marketing director of retail, live sound and studio for Audio-Technica, said he believes the trend opens a new novice user base for computer-based recording.

"With a USB mic and audio-editing software that comes with your computer — or is easy to get online — you can be up and recording in just a few minutes," Boss said. "This can be for recording your band, recording musical ideas, creating a podcast, doing voiceover on a home movie or just messing around."

CALLING ALL RETAILERS

USB mics are a natural item for music retailers to stock, even if pro audio only makes

up a small percentage of their bottom line. Manufacturers are producing high-quality, economical models in just about every form factor of a traditional microphone. Retail stores should take advantage of the variety of USB microphones available and serve the music, computer, education and gaming markets.

“While pro audio resellers could still be a bit biased toward USB microphones, there is no disputing that USB mics are generating a new breed of home recording engineer,” Roop said. “We want those retailers to educate and mature that customer. We need to grow the market in general by creating more customers for USB mics.”

Traditional music retailers, including drum shops, band and orchestra dealers, or any store with a lessons program, can benefit from the trend, as well.

“USB mics allow all users to turn their computers and tablets into digital audio learning environments and drastically increase the average playing time,” said Mark Menghi, director of marketing for Samson Technologies. “They make instruments more than just something to play.”

“Dealers whose customers include musicians at any proficiency level will find that USB microphones are an active product niche,” said Stephen Kohler, Shure’s director of product marketing in the Americas. “Beginners want to record themselves and practice editing, and working musicians need a convenient way to capture song ideas without hauling out all of their live performance gear.”

Kevin Peckham, product manager with Full Compass Systems in Madison, Wis., noted that USB microphones have become a significant and distinct product category.

“Computer audio applications are obviously what give them a purpose, and as those applications have exploded, the need for a wide variety of compact and easy-to-use USB microphones has followed,” he said. “While it would seem intuitive to consider them simply a microphone variation, from an application perspective, they are actually more closely related to audio interfaces and hand-held digital audio recorders, two product categories that they compete with as an alternative in the computer recording arena.”

He noted that the mics’ simplicity makes them popular with non-techies, adding, “While this describes part of the market, we also sell USB microphones to very experienced professionals working in broadcast news and sports coverage. The ability to easily work from a laptop in a hotel room or ad hoc interview location is what drives that appeal. In those cases, the choice is likely between a USB mic and the wide range of hand-held digital audio recorders.”

The consensus among suppliers is that dealers would be wise to recognize the increasing importance of this product category and market USB mics accordingly.

“As the product category matures, even advanced USB microphones with added features are becoming more affordable, offering the home recording enthusiast more choices and expanding the market,” said Toby Nady, COO and president of Nady Systems.

THE DEMO FACTOR

Audio-Technica’s Boss said she’s hard-pressed to think of a retailer who shouldn’t carry USB mics, based on their ease of use and wide range of appli-

**‘Familiarize your sales staff with the unique problems involved in computer recording and how a good USB microphone can solve them.’
— Stephen Kohler**

cations. “The product is super simple to demo: Plug into a computer and hit record,” he said. “The demo speaks for itself. Also, use the tools manufacturers provide. We recently created an online video that shows how to interface our AT2020 USB with an iPad. I think there are a few of those iPad devices out there.”

As with any new technology, retailers need to educate the customer. “In-store tutorials showing how quick and easy it is to use these products will help dealers achieve better sell-through when used along with hands-on demos that let the customer experience USB products,” Roop said. “Many music stores have made their living off of lessons and rentals. Cross-sell these customers on a recording tool that they can easily use as they develop their love of the arts. Music teachers should incorporate the technology into their curriculum. It helps the student to feel accomplished as they learn while also documenting their progress.”

Jim Mona, national sales manager/pro audio division for MXL Microphones, recom-

mended that retailers consider marketing USB mics as a way to meet their customers’ needs — “to make our work and social projects easier, and with the quality that exceeds the currently built-in features of our laptops and personal computers.”

“Beyond hooking up a demo unit to DAW software and showing potential users how easy USB mics are to use, dealers must identify a customer’s needs to recommend the correct product,” Menghi added. “Do they need a portable solution like our Meteor Mic or Go Mic for quick on-the-go laptop or iPad recording, or do they have a stationary desktop studio setup that would complement the C01U? Do they need a USB mic that has audio inputs like the G-Track? There is nothing more frustrating for a user than not having the correct tool for the project at hand.”

As with many other product categories, knowledge of computer-based recording is the key to sell-through with USB mics.

“Familiarize your sales staff with the unique problems involved in computer recording and how a good USB microphone can solve them,” Kohler said. “Customers, especially novices, are more willing to buy from a salesperson who can answer their questions confidently and specifically. Shure’s free ‘Introduction To Home Recording And Podcasting’ can help your sales staff get up to speed quickly.”

And for music stores that stock music making software and other computer-based recording and broadcasting products, suppliers agreed USB mics should always be mentioned as a potential add-on sale.

“Dealers can achieve better sell-through by effective product promotional bundling with other home recording equipment, such

+ USB MIC BREAKOUT

AUDIO-TECHNICA AT2020 USB

Based on the acclaimed AT2020 cardioid condenser microphone, this side-address studio condenser model is well-suited for home studio recording, field recording, podcasting and voiceover use. It features a low-mass diaphragm, custom-engineered for extended frequency response and superior transient response. audio-technica.com



AUDIX USB12

The USB12 is a miniaturized USB condenser microphone used for recording voice and acoustic instruments. Featuring a uniformly controlled cardioid polar pattern, it provides ideal isolation and control at the sound source. The USB12 sits on top of a stable desktop base and can be easily adjusted to any position. audix.com



CAD AUDIO U37 USB

A versatile vocal and instrument mic, the U37 USB can be used for creating podcasts over the Internet, audio for video, and songs and soundtracks. Its smooth, extended frequency response makes it suitable for singing, speech and acoustic instrument applications. The side-address U37 USB has a large condenser microphone element. cadaudio.com



BLUE MICROPHONES SNOWBALL

This professional USB mic boasts dual capsules and three settings, making it useful for everything from podcasting to music recording. Weighing 2.25 pounds, the Snowball is a direct plug-and-play condenser mic.

With the iOS 4.3 update, Apple's camera connection kit now lets the Snowball be used on an iPad with any recording app. bluemic.com



MXL USB.009

The USB.009 offers plug-and-play recording with high-performance sound quality (i.e., 24-bit, 96-kHz). This simple, all-in-one recording solution features a large-diaphragm, 32-mm capsule — similar to what's found on high-end analog microphones. mxlmics.com



NADY USB-1C, -2S & -5H

In addition to Nady Systems' best-selling USB-24M dynamic mic, the company has released these three upgraded large-diaphragm studio condenser models. The USB-1C is pictured. nady.com



SAMSON C01U

This classic USB studio condenser mic bridges the gap between midlevel USB audio adapters and pro-line products that require additional drivers, special software and excess cabling. The C01U is USB-compatible with any Mac or PC, as well as most DAW software programs. It comes with Cakewalk's Sonar LE digital audio workstation software. samsontech.com



SHURE PG27-USB

The PG27-USB is designed to deliver the natural audio reproduction of the PG27, enhanced with digital output, control and flexibility. The side-address condenser microphone easily plugs into a computer USB port for the convenience of digital recording. It has a 20 Hz–20 kHz frequency response. shure.com



as software, interface equipment and controllers, as well as with ancillary products, such as drum machines," Nady said. "In light of the current struggling economy, it is also very important to offer the best value with respect to features, performance and affordable pricing."

STAYING POWER

USB mics have proven their staying power, and manufacturers continue to improve on their design and function as computer recording technology moves forward. The Audio-Technica AT2020 USB, for example, has been one of the best-selling USB mics in the market.

"Its No. 1 feature has been its sound quality," Boss said. "That has driven great reviews, awards, word-of-mouth and, ultimately, sales."

The Snowball is Blue Microphones' original USB mic. Released five years ago, it continues to do well.

"We've sold hundreds of thousands of them," Maier said. "At the same time, the new kid on the block, Yeti, has matched Snowball's sales rate from its first day. It has really captured the customer's imagination, and we get great feedback about all the different ways they're using it."

In 2005, Samson released the C01U USB studio condenser microphone, and it remains the company's best-selling USB mic.

"The C01U is USB-compatible with any Mac or PC, as well as most DAW software programs, including GarageBand," Menghi said. "It also comes with Cakewalk's Sonar LE digital audio workstation software. The C01U is essential for any level of musician, but its versatility can be applied to create audio solutions for anyone who records audio, particularly podcasters, educators and business professionals."

Indeed, Full Compass Systems' Peckham noted that USB mics, which came on the scene initially as large-diaphragm condensers for podcasters and musicians, now include podium gooseneck, tabletop and dynamic models targeted toward language lab, conferencing and distance learning applications in the corporate and educational markets.

Nady noted that while the company's USB-24M dynamic mic continues to be a top-seller, upgraded large-diaphragm studio

{USB MICROPHONES}

condenser models with additional features, such as Nady's USB-1C, -5H and -2S series, are catching on in the studio recording markets.

The Audix USB12 is a popular model that fits the expanding profile of USB microphone technology.

"It's a small-diaphragm, gooseneck-style mic aimed at desktop use," said Cliff Castle, Audix's vice president of sales and marketing. "It has a programmable on/off switch and is very convenient for music and speech applications."

CAD Audio has contributed to the success of the USB market by offering high audio performance at affordable price points and responding to the market's need for innovation and value, according to Roop.

"Our side-address cardioid condenser recording mic, the CAD U37, leads the way in top-selling formats," he said. "But as consumers begin to appreciate the ease with which audio can be incorporated into meetings, presentations, gaming and telecommunications, the CAD U1 USB cardioid dynamic mic, U2 USB stereo headphones with cardioid condenser mic, U7 USB omnidirectional condenser tabletop recording mic and compact U9 USB MicroMic are growing in popularity, as well."

MXL's USB.009 is a 24-bit, 96-kHz mic that meets the audio standards currently being used in high-definition projects.

"The converter offers a wider dynamic range and stunning audio quality," Mona said. "The .009 also offers a headphone input, which allows for near-zero latency."

Zero latency has also proven to be a major selling point for Shure's PG27-USB. It's a side-address condenser with headphone monitoring that lets users adjust the balance between the mic output and the playback from their software, allowing musicians to sing or play along with a previously recorded track.


"A precise input level control makes it easy to optimize recording levels for different sources or distances, from a soft vocal or a loud instrument," Kohler said.

"In general, any USB computer peripheral is extremely relevant in MI these days," Menghi said. "All products that facilitate the 'young creator' will be most prevalent in the years to come." **MI**



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THE GUIDE

THE NAMM SHOW 2012

THE NAMM SHOW 2012 | BY KATIE KAILUS

MAKING IT COUNT

NAMM has challenged attendees at this year's show, held Jan. 19–22 in Anaheim, Calif., to “make it count.” And the organization is returning the favor by making a few tweaks to its biannual convention.

NAMM has reworked the show floor layout this year to create better segmentation and flow for showgoers.

“This change should bring a new look to our show and make it easier for the attendees to navigate,” said Joe Lamond, president and CEO of the trade association.

For foodies attending the convention, NAMM has worked with In-N-Out Burger to produce NAMM's California Cookout, located in Hall D.

“The new concession area is for those die-hard Double Double fans who can now stay right on the show floor and still enjoy this California favorite,” Lamond said.

Added to the show last year and continuing this year is the collaboration between NAMM and the TEC Foundation to co-produce the 27th annual TEC Awards on Friday evening at the Hilton Anaheim Hotel.



These awards recognize outstanding achievement in professional audio production and product design. This year's Les Paul award, which honors musicians who have been innovators in the creative application of audio technology, will be given to guitar hero Steve Vai.

“The TEC Awards really demonstrate the convergence happening between the MI, pro-audio and live sound segments,” Lamond said.

“[And it demonstrates] how these amazing products are used to create some truly creative work in our society.”

SUPER SESSIONS

The H.O.T. (Hands-On-Training) Zone, which debuted at last year's show, supports professionals in the live audio, house of worship, and stage and lighting industries.

One new addition to the H.O.T. Zone is The National

Systems Contractors Association, which will host a mini-conference on “Best Practices in Identifying, Selling and Managing Systems Integration Projects.”

Also, the first NAMM University breakfast session “Breakfast of Champions,” held Thursday morning, features Lamond with a group of industry “champions” spilling their secrets for success.

“Our opening ‘Breakfast of Champions’ could be the best one we've had yet,” Lamond said. “There are some big topics on everyone's minds, and we'll be hitting them head-on.”

Plus, Saturday morning's breakfast session will explore the biggest Web marketing trends.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

While the economy continues to get back on track, NAMM has reported a surge in exhibit sales and attendee preregistration for this year's convention.

“While I believe our members are still experiencing some of the most challenging conditions in a lifetime, based on what we're seeing here, it appears the overall industry seems bullish in the year ahead,” Lamond said. **MI**

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



Unless otherwise noted, the following events will be held in NAMM's Idea Center (booth 5501 in Hall B). Sessions start every 30 minutes.

THURSDAY, JAN. 19 BREAKFAST SESSION 8 A.M.

Breakfast of Champions
Moderator: Joe Lamond, NAMM President and CEO
Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms
Joe Lamond welcomes the show's attendees and sits down with a group of industry "champions" for up-close-and-personal discussions about where they've been and where they're headed. (Free breakfast served 8-8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.
Making the Most of Your Store's Staff
Rand and Cindy Cook, The Candyman Strings & Things
Join Rand and Cindy Cook of The Candyman Strings & Things and learn how to incorporate job descriptions for the music retailer to ensure tasks that need to be accomplished are assigned to staff members who are sure to embrace and follow through on their assignments.

11 A.M.
NAMM Show Tips Revealed
Learn how to make the most out of your NAMM show experience as Donovan Bankhead shares some of his NAMM tips that have helped make his store, Springfield Music, a Top 100 Dealer.

11:30 A.M.
Creating Your Store's Personality Through Your Employees
Peter Dods of Easy Music Center demonstrates how he hires and develops his staff and store culture to attract and retain customers.

Noon (Double Session)
What Is My Store Worth? A Quick & Easy Way to Valuing Music Stores
Alan Friedman, Daniel Jobe, other members of CPA firm Friedman, Kannenberg & Co., along with several music store clients, discuss a common-sense approach to valuing your music store in today's market and discovering the things that add value.

1 P.M.
Giving Your Store a Facelift on a Shoestring Budget
Lisa Kirkwood of Discount Mu-

sic of Jacksonville explains how to make store improvements on a shoestring budget and find items for your store by repurposing, reusing and recycling.

1:30 P.M.
Digital Marketing for Tomorrow ... Today!
Join Bruce Treidel of Bethel Music Center as he gives examples of how he was able to use online tools to enhance his business and create new opportunities.

2 P.M.
Getting the iGeneration to Work for You
Grant and Colleen Billings of Billings Piano Gallery offer tips for interviewing and successfully coaching the iGeneration for the benefit of your organization.

2:30 P.M.
Is Your Website Leaving Money on the Table?
Join consultant Michael Newman as he relates real-life results with retailer Stan Werbin. Werbin demonstrates how retailers can easily test their websites for problems and fix them.

3 P.M.
Want More Customers? Learn How to Drum Up More Business
Moderated by Brad Smith of the Percussion Marketing Council, a panel of experts gives snapshot overviews of several programs that retailers can take advantage of for free.

3:30 P.M. (Double Session)
Meet the Music Store Stars: Marketing Secrets of a Successful Retail Store
Jen Lowe interviews Paul Decker and key people from the Music Villa to get into the nitty gritty of what, why, when and how profit is actually being generated from specific marketing techniques.

4:30 P.M. (Double Session)
Can I Find You? Is Your Lesson Program Invisible on the Web?
Music Inc. columnist Pete Gamber explains how to use Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other social media outlets to create new lesson sign-ups, retain current students and prominently position your store on Google and the Web.

**FRIDAY, JAN. 20
BREAKFAST SESSION
8 A.M.**
Real-Time Marketing & PR: How to Instantly Engage Your Market, Connect With Customers and Create Products That Grow Your Business Now
Moderator: David Meerman Scott, author of "The New Rules Of Marketing" and "PR And Marketing Lessons From The Grateful Dead"
Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms
Listen in as David Meerman Scott reminds you what counts today is speed and agility. While your competitors scramble to adjust, you can seize opportunities, open new channels and grow your brand. (Free breakfast served 8-8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.
You're on Facebook ... Now What?

Piano retailers Greg and Grant Billings discuss the most common Facebook faux pas and how to get your business' Facebook presence back on track.

11 A.M.
15 Ideas to Train Your Sales Staff in 10 Minutes a Day
 Bob Popyk of Bentley-Hall lectures on taking a few minutes each day to train your sales staff on prospecting, closing, handling incoming calls, greeting the customer, handling complaints and more.

11:30 A.M.
Planning for Profit – Budgeting Essentials
 Lori Supinie of Senseney Music explains why you should create a budget and how to get started.

12:30 P.M.
The Power of Video to Promote Your Store
 John Pedersen of Pedersen's

Band & Orchestra shares what he's done to build his business through creating YouTube videos and products.

1 P.M.
Getting Things Done: Organization for Creative Types
 Bankhead is back with tips for getting business in order and keeping it that way.

1:30 P.M.
Dare to Diversify Your Marketing Programs
 Jeff Mozingo of Mozingo Music touches on questions, such as, "Is your store appealing?" "What's the vibe and mood of your store?" Hot-button questions to ask your employees will be covered, as well.

2 P.M.
Drive Growth and Profits With a Defined Company Culture
 George Hines of George's Music gives examples to build



Participants at the Idea Center

a defined, high-performance company culture that focuses on your customers and employees to increase growth and profitability.

2:30 P.M.
How to Effectively Merchandise Your Store to Gain Maximum Sales
 Tracy Leenman of Musical Innovations demonstrates how to improve your SAF

(style, arts, fashion) quotient to improve cross-selling and add-on sales opportunities.

3 P.M.
Tune In to the Voice That Counts: Insights on Customer-Driven Innovation
 Listen in as Buddy Roger's Music's store managers share their perspectives in a panel discussion led by business consultant Steve Schwandner.

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3:30 P.M.
Surviving the Tough Times
 Lauren Haas Amanfoh of Royalton Music Center discusses several factors she attributes to her store's recent success. These include proven methods to bring more stability to the industry and, ultimately, music to more lives.

4 P.M.
Turn Your Rental Customers Into Your Best Customers
 Liz Reisman of Creative Music Center speaks on the basic tools retailers need to turn a good customer into a customer for life.

4:30 P.M.
How Catching Trends From the Bottom Up Will Improve Your Bottom Line
 Menzie Pittman of Contemporary Music Center shares his strategies for successfully improving his bottom line by simply extracting information from his customers, students and children.

5 P.M.
Create Add-On Sales for Your Lesson Program With Print Music
 Gamber returns, this time with Hal Leonard's Dave Cywinski, for a look at why retailers won't want to miss out on the power of print.

7 P.M.
The 27th Annual TEC Awards
Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms
 The annual awards will be handed out to winners in seven categories of creative achievement in sound production.

SATURDAY, JAN. 21
BREAKFAST SESSION
8 A.M.

The Top 10 Web Marketing Trends for 2012
Moderator: John Arnold, Columnist at Entrepreneur.com
Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms
 Learn the best ways to spend your time and money and how to use such tools as social media, search marketing, mobile devices and marketing locally on the Internet — and how to avoid areas where you won't get results. (Free breakfast served 8–8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.
How to Ignite Your Business in Five Minutes or Less!
 Danny Rocks of The Company Rocks and Scott Robertson of NAMM, along with a panel of retailers, explain how to pick only the best promotional opportunities and then “promote the heck out of them.” Participants will take a full page of ideas home to ignite a fire to get their staff moving.

11 A.M.
How to Handle Objections in Five Words or Less
 Popyk is back to reveal how to answer objections from customers in just a few words.

11:30 A.M.
Call Your Store and Change These Four Things Now
 Raegan Medeiros of John Michael's Music and Sound discusses how she made changes that made it easier for customers to find what they were looking for and generated more money for her store by offering three levels of service plans rather than giving away the service for free.

Noon (Double Session)
How to Get an “A” From the MI Spy
 Dan Ferrisi, editor of *The Music & Sound Retailer*, hosts a panel discussion with music retailers whose stores satisfied the “spy's” criteria. The panel shows how your own dealership can not only get the “spy's” seal of approval but also gain a reputation for meeting customers' needs and servicing them well.

1 P.M.
Inventory: How to Manage Your Biggest Investment
 Friedman returns to explain the time-tested secrets of how to buy, sell and manage your business' largest financial invest-

ment and move that investment from the storage area to the cash register.

1:30 P.M.
Monetize Your Facebook Page
 Arnold returns to discuss how to start making money with Facebook promotions by effectively advertising your products, sharing coupons and creating your own group deals.

2 P.M.
Marketing Locally on the Internet
 Arnold teaches how to use online marketing to reach prospects and customers in a specific geographic area. Participants can get tips on how to advertise their businesses on thousands of local websites, maps, search pages, blogs, social media sites and mobile devices.

2:30 P.M. (Special Double Session)
Financial Questions Every Music Retailer's Afraid to Ask
 Friedman and Jobe return and are joined by Shaun Conrad to tackle any financial questions from the audience in a fun, rapid-fire and interactive fashion.

3:30 P.M.
Revving Up Revenue — Strategizing With Your Staff
 Jobe gives participants a strategy for engaging team members and helping retailers find additional income within their current lesson, repair, rental and sales activities.

4 P.M.
The Changing Face of Mobile Marketing: What Retailers Need to Know Now
 Angelo Biasi of InTunePartners.com explains how to tackle the ever-changing scene of mobile marketing.

4:30 P.M. (Double Session)
How to Implement Your Social Media Strategy
 Rocks explains specific strategies and creates an action plan for implementing or improving social media strategies.

SUNDAY, JAN. 22
BREAKFAST SESSION
8 A.M.
Best in Show — This Year's Hottest Products

Moderator: Frank Alkyer, Music Inc. Publisher
Hilton Anaheim Hotel, Pacific Ballrooms

Music Inc. Publisher Frank Alkyer hosts a panel of retailers and buyers who scoured the show floor and came up with the best products, ideas and trends. (Free breakfast served 8–8:30 a.m.)

10:30 A.M.
Create Your Own Woodstock — In Your Store

Pete Gamber explains how to integrate your print music program, social media and store's heart and soul to thrive. Learn how to create your own Woodstock and make a home for the next generation of music lesson competition.

11 A.M.
Meet the Press: How to Prepare for Your Interview
 NAMM's Scott Robertson and



Jo-Ann Geffen discuss how to speak to the press when promoting an event, discussing music education or talking about what's new at your store. Learn simple tips and strategies to turn your words into news and get great coverage, which is the same as getting free advertising in print, online or on the air.

Noon (Double Session)
Creating New Customers and Musicians With Ukulele Circles
 This session gives dealers all the information they need to create a successful uke circle at little or no cost. The panel includes dealers who have had successful uke circles and experienced ukulele circle leader Jim D'Ville.

1 P.M. (Double Session)
The Music Instinct: Science and Song (Part 1)
 Come follow researcher Daniel Levitin and musician Bobby McFerrin to the crossroads of science and culture in search of answers to music's deep mysteries.

2 P.M. (Double Session)
2012 Best Tools for Schools Awards
 Symphony Publishing editors and guests host the announcement of winning products in the annual Best Tools for Schools Awards.

3 P.M. (Double Session)
The Music Instinct: Science and Song (Part 2)
 Levitin and McFerrin continue their journey into the connection between music and the human brain.

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WHAT to SEE



The Flash

PianoDisc will introduce its new iQ Flash front-end, a modern, flexible MP3 player system specifically designed for use with PianoDisc's iQ player piano technology. Features include 1,024 levels of dynamic expression playback per note, built-in SD card and USB slots, wireless connection, and one-touch record and playback options. pianodisc.com

Alfred Befriends Mario



Alfred will highlight its Super Mario series, which features 34 arrangements of the most instantly recognizable melodies beloved

by generations of gamers around the globe. From Koji Kondo's iconic *Super Mario Bros. Ground Background Music* to the *New Super Mario Bros. Wii* themes, the pieces in the series represent two and a half decades of Nintendo video game favorites. alfred.com



Get a Grip

PickTac is an easy no-mess solution for gripping any guitar pick. Place PickTac on the preferred location of your pick to create an enhanced grip. As your hand heats, PickTac will mold to your finger for a customized grip that allows for easy repositioning when needed. steveclayton.com

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CLASSIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Booth 1348

HOFNER.COM

WHAT to SEE



Red Alert

Los Cabos Drumsticks will highlight its Red Hickory 5A and 5B nylon tip drumsticks. Los Cabos Drumsticks was the first stick manufacturer to introduce a complete line of sticks made from the heartwood of a hickory plant. The resulting red hickory stick line lets the company use a greater portion of the wood from each tree harvested.

{loscabosdrumsticks.com}



Three's Company

Carol Brass will display its Phaedon FX-1100 trumpet. It features a number of innovations, including three sets of interchangeable bracing machined from bronze, stainless steel and annealed brass. Players have the easy option for fine tuning their instruments to suit their tastes and performing requirements. MSRP: \$2,685.

{phaetontrumpet.com}



Jam Time

RapcoHorizon will show its i-JAM 3-n-1 box. The i-JAM is a smartphone instrument interface gateway that taps into the world of amplifiers, recording and instructional apps. The stand-alone practice amp clips on your guitar strap and can work with any MP3 player. Durable aluminum extrusion boxes with 9-volt battery provide robust performance and long play.

{rapcohorizon.com}

WHAT to SEE

Anniversary Mics



CAD Audio has commemorated the 10th anniversary of its GXL series with the release of Black Pearl mics, which feature a black pearl chrome finish and apply to a range of studio and live sound reinforcement environments. The GXL1200BP's transformer-free

design reduces distortion and optimizes low-end response, while the GX-L2200BP features a 1-inch gold vapor-deposited diaphragm. The high-sensitivity, low-distortion GXL3000BP features a 1-inch gold vapor-deposited multipattern and dual-diaphragm capsule for maximum versatility. MSRP: \$79.99–\$249. cadaudio.com

PNOMation Domination



QRS will display its PNOmation II, a player piano system. It offers backward and forward compatibility, as well as no boxes. QRS has also taken the product a step further by making the system fully

wireless. qrsmusic.com

Studio MiCs

Apogee will release the MiC, a compact, studio-quality USB microphone available for iPad, iPhone and Mac. About the size of an iPhone, MiC features Apogee's legendary audio conversion, making it easy to capture your best take with high quality, anywhere your music takes you.

apogeedigital.com

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CRAFTERUSA.COM

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Traynor

No Compromise

Hand built in North America for the player that refuses to compromise, the Traynor YGM-3 vintage re-issue recaptures the exacting tone, warmth, feel and responsiveness of one of the great vintage tube guitar amplifiers of all time.

Built using truly hand-wired point-to-point circuitry throughout, the Traynor YGM-3 uses high grade braided wire for all connections – no printed circuit boards or surface mount components here. High quality electronic components, a superior Jensen P12Q Alnico speaker, true amplitude bias tremolo, and premium hand selected & tested tubes are all key to capturing the purest tone, vintage warmth and unrivaled charm of the early '70s original.



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- JJ EL84 Output Tubes • Vintage Amplitude Bias Tremolo Circuit • Accutronics™ Long Spring Reverb Tank
- Custom Vintage Grill Cloth (Sourced from the Original Supplier) • Solid Plywood Cabinet & Steel Box Chassis
- Hand Made in Canada

VISIT WWW.TRAYNORAMPS.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE YGM-3 OR ANY TRAYNOR PRODUCT.
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WHAT to SEE



Peace, Man

Peace Musical will display its JPE hybrid drum set. JPE, which stands for Jazz, Practice and Electronic, is a unique multifunctional set. It's built with real drum shells, hardware and real drumheads. The product is designed to let drummers effortlessly interchange the set between traditional acoustic drums, practice drums and electronic kits without changing drumheads. {peace-drums.com}

Double Time

Recording King will debut its two new Adirondack 12-fret 0 models with either solid African mahogany or solid East Indian rosewood back and sides.



The new RP series guitars feature an ebony fretboard and pyramid bridge and are finished in a thin coat of nitrocellulose lacquer for resonance. The guitars also boast a classic slotted headstock, adding an element of vintage style. {recordingking.com}

Clear Sound

Inspired by the original Vintage Emperor drumhead, Remo will debut its Clear Vintage Emperor drumhead.

The Clear Vintage Emperor is constructed with two free-floating plies of 7.5-mm clear Mylar film. This creates warm, transparent midrange tones with enhanced attack and durability. The heads are available in 8-, 10-, 12-, 13-, 14-, 15-, 16- and 18-inch sizes. {remo.com}

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WHAT TO SEE



Sinister Ax

Schecter Guitars will unveil the Synyster Gates Custom-S guitar. This model will be available with the Sustainiac! pickup system, which resides in place of the neck humbucker and provides controlled feed-

back sustain at all levels. The guitar also includes a mahogany Avenger body with a set-in 25.5-inch scale mahogany neck, 24-fret rosewood fingerboard, Floyd Rose 1000 locking tremolo system and Seymour Duncan Custom Syn Invader humbucker. MSRP: \$1,649. schecterguitars.com

Dynamic Versatility

EV will expand its line of dynamic microphones with the RE320. This mic contains a high-output neodymium magnet for more efficient transient response and high-frequency detail. The mic's "dual personality" switch engages two separate performance curves depending on user preference. The RE320 also features Variable-D capsules for natural tone, a uniform frequency response up to 180 degrees off-axis and humbucking coil guards for an ultra-quiet signal path. electrovoice.com

Jensen's Jet-setter



Jensen will show the Jet series among its selection of musical speakers. Following the

success of the 12-inch Electric Lightning speaker, the warm, bold 10-inch Electric Lightning speaker offers shimmering highs for heavy playing styles. It also boasts an overdrive distortion for loud rock applications. jensentone.com

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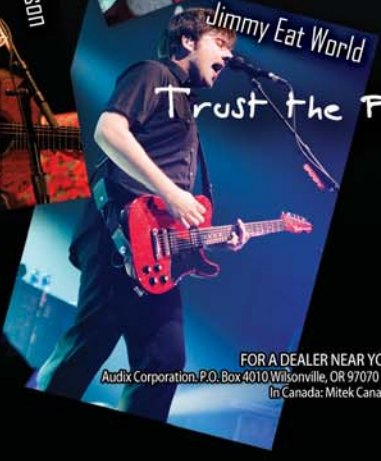
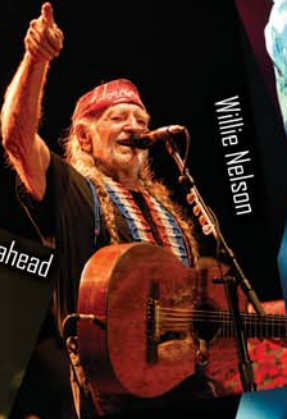
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WHAT to SEE



Gold Medal Uke

Kala will highlight its Acacia ukulele offerings with the Golden Acacia series. A more affordable alternative to Kala's All Solid Acacia series, the Golden Acacia ukes feature a solid acacia top, laminate acacia back and sides, a satin finish, and rosewood binding. Other features include die-cast tuners with black buttons, a rosewood fingerboard and Aquila strings. The Acacia ukulele series is available in soprano, concert with optional EQ, tenor and tenor cutaway with EQ. It is also offered as a part of the Thinline Travel series, which includes a custom bag. kalamukulele.com

Petrucci's Sterling Sound

Sterling by Music Man will display its John Petrucci Signature Model electric guitar. The JP100-3TS features a three-tone sunburst finish over a quilted maple top. The 24-fret ax also boasts a contoured basswood body, locking tuners, Petrucci Shield inlays and a Sterling Modern Trem bridge. Its thin fast neck shape allows for seamless shredding. sterlingbymusicman.com



Captivating Capos



Shubb will introduce its Shubb Lite capos in red, blue, green and violet. The vibrant new colors

are available for the model L1 steel-string guitar and the L9 Shubb Lite capo for ukulele. shubb.com

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WHAT to SEE

Grand Debut

Crafter Guitars will show two new grand auditorium models in celebration of the brand's 40th anniversary. The PG-Rose features an Engelmann spruce top and solid rosewood back, while the PG-Maho has a solid Engelmann spruce top and solid mahogany back. Both instruments offer a 1 3/4-inch neck width, gold-plated tuners, abalone binding, and pegasus pearl and abalone inlays. Other features on the 25 1/2-inch scale models include scalloped T-bracing, an LR-T DX pre-amp with notch filter and LCD tuner, and an L.R. Baggs Element pickup. **{crafterusa.com}**



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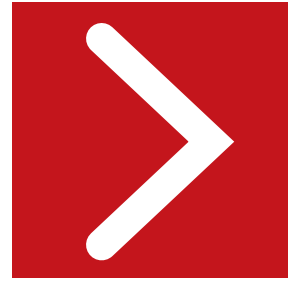
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AVID | PRO TOOLS 10

Perfect 10

Avid's new Pro Tools 10 software offers 24-hour timeline capability and the ability to use multiple file formats and mixed bit depths in the same project — including interleaved — without converting files. Clip Gain allows for faster editing and mixing, as well as the ability to adjust and match gain levels easily, premixer. Users can also record and master higher-resolution sound with more headroom in 32-bit floating-point format. avid.com



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ADAM | A77X

Adam's Ace

Adam's new A77X features the most extensive frequency response, widest dynamic range and highest compression-free SPL levels while also offering the most accurate bass reproduction of any AX series monitor to date. The A77X's two 7-inch woofers are equipped with 1.5-inch large voice coils and 100-watt PWM amplifiers. The woofers cover different frequency bands: one handles the (sub-) bass frequencies from approximately 400 Hz down to 37 Hz. MSRP: \$1,399 per speaker. adam-audio.com



COMMUNITY | VLF SERIES

VLF Grows

Community has added three new models to its VLF series of versatile low-frequency systems. The VLF208LV, a dual 8-inch in a larger-volume enclosure than the VLF208, is designed for applications that require the lowest frequencies from a slim-profile design. The new VLF115 and VLF118 models (pictured) are also designed with a slim profile and offer powerful bass with a half-space sensitivity of 98 dB. communitypro.com



PEAVEY | IMPULSE 12D

Peavey's New Impulse

The new Peavey Impulse 12D is a portable, powered loudspeaker enclosure that combines Peavey's IPR amplifier technology with a true ribbon driver. The loudspeaker enclosure incorporates exclusive Peavey audio innovations to provide power, sound reproduction and light weight. Features include a true ribbon driver based on the Peavey Versarray line array ribbon, a 12-inch Peavey Black Widow loudspeaker engineered with dual-voice coil, push-pull technology and a neodymium magnet. peavey.com



MARSHALL | MARSHALL WHITE

Whiteout

Marshall's new Marshall White headphones include the original Major and Minor models in white. The exterior of the Major's headband is made out of the same vinyl used in Marshall amplifiers, and it bears the original Marshall texture. The Minor is an advanced, hard-working in-ear model with EarClick construction to secure the earphone. The Minor comes equipped with a microphone and remote for use with cell phones incorporating the 3.5-mm standard. marshallheadphones.com

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AUDIO & RECORDING



RJM MUSIC | THE RACK GIZMO

Go-to Gizmo

The Rack Gizmo is the new flagship switching product of the RJM Music line. The Rack Gizmo is a MIDI-based device that enables guitarists to control virtually any combination of available amplifiers and effects units with a simple MIDI footswitch. rjmmusic.com

RADIAL ENGINEERING | MC3

The Wire

Radial Engineering has launched the MC3 studio monitor controller, a straight wire passive monitor switcher and headphone amp designed to provide smaller production studios with a cost-effective but high-performance monitor, sub and headphone management system. Designed for active nearfield monitors, the MC3 is equipped with two stereo outputs and a separate send to feed a subwoofer. radialeng.com



TC ELECTRONIC | DB2 UPDATE

Sure-fire Update

TC has released the version 1.25 software update for its DB2 Loudness Correction processor. The update contains ITU BS.1770-2-based loudness adjustment plus new factory presets for stations conforming to the EBU R128, ATSC A/85, TR-B32 or OP59 standards. tcelectronic.com



NOMAD | MAGNETIC II

Audio Attraction

Nomad Factory recently released Magnetic II, an audio tape warming effect plug-in that gives audio a vintage tape sound. The effect can inject sterile audio with the warmth and character of classic tube circuitry and analog tape saturation. The plug-in features pure analog reel-to-reel tape speeds, tape/tube saturation and tape color effects, as well as a dedicated vintage-style EQ and a built-in boost mastering section. nomadfactory.com



EARTHWORKS | DP30/C DRUM PERISCOPE

New & Improved

Earthworks has unveiled its new and improved DP30/C Drum Periscope cardioid microphone. The redesigned DP30/C features a thicker, more rugged gooseneck that will stay in place even when the snare or toms are struck extremely hard. The new DP30/C maintains the same sound quality and craftsmanship of the original. The microphone capsule housing is designed to withstand a direct hit from a drumstick. earthworksaudio.com

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- David Grissom

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EVH | EVH 5150 III

Eddie's Sounds

EVH has debuted the EVH 5150 III 50-watt Head (pictured) and its matching EVH 5150 III 1x12 Straight and EVH 5150 III 2x12 cabinets, all developed by guitarist Eddie Van Halen. They're ideal for players who want arena volume and tone in a compact package. evhgear.com



DIGITECH | COMBO AMPS

Digi's Latest

Harman has begun shipping its DigiTech DG15R, DG15 and DB15 (pictured) combo amps. They offer a combination of lightweight, easy portability and superb sound, from rich clean tones to roaring distortion. The DG15R and DG15 include gain, volume, treble, middle and bass controls and a clean/overdrive switch. The DB15 bass amp offers volume, treble, middle and bass, making it easy for players to create their favorite sounds. MAP: DG15, \$79.95; DB15, \$89.95; DG15R, \$99.95. digitech.com



VOX | AC15C2

Double Time

Vox Amplification has released the AC15C2 Twin combo amp from its AC Custom series of tube amplifiers. The enhanced version of the AC15C1 adds a second speaker, providing two 12-inch Celestion Greenbacks. The AC15C2 Twin also features the larger spring reverb tank found in the AC30C2. The AC15C2 Twin offers normal and top boost channels, tremolo, spring reverb, an effects loop, and footswitching capabilities. MSRP: \$1,100. voxamps.com



FENDER | MODERN PLAYER

Modern-Day Guitar Heroes

Fender recently debuted its Modern Player series, a combination of never-before-seen appointments and familiar Fender elements. The series includes seven models: four guitars and three basses. They include the Modern Player Telecaster Plus HSS, Modern Player Telecaster Thinline Deluxe, Modern Player Telecaster Bass, Modern Player Jazz Bass and Modern Player Jaguar Bass, among others. MSRP: starts at \$559.99. fender.com



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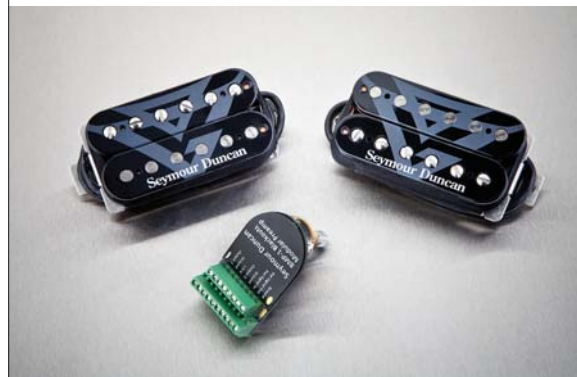
GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

LEVY'S LEATHERS | EMBROIDERED STRAPS

Levy's Gets Stitched Up

Levy's Leathers has released a line of embroidered guitar straps made from a soft garment leather with multicolored, cowboy boot embroidery designs; foam padding; and suede backing. The extra-long taper at the end makes the straps especially suitable for acoustic guitars. The six designs are available in dark brown and black. levysleathers.com



SEYMOUR DUNCAN | GUS G. FIRE

Guitars on Fire

Seymour Duncan has unveiled the Gus G. Fire Blackouts System, a new guitar pickup that combines traditional passive pickups and cutting-edge active designs. The system includes a pair of traditional-looking humbucking pickups and a low-noise, high-output dual-active pre-amp. The system includes two pickups handmade in Santa Barbara, Calif., and a U.S.-made Blackouts pre-amp that replaces one of the guitar's volume pots. seymourduncan.com

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SOLID CABLES | LIFETIME CABLE

The Forever Cable

Solid Cables recently debuted its Lifetime Cable. Features include suspended polymer insulators, all-metal shells, armor and ends that are permanently fused with avionics-grade heat shrink, and hand-soldering. MSRP: \$150. solidcables.com

ST. LOUIS MUSIC | UNIONSTATION

Arriving at the Station

St. Louis Music has launched Unionstation, a new line of accessories that includes straps, gig bags and tuners. The three levels of gig bags include standard, deluxe and professional. The professional series bags feature 25-mm duo-foam construction, a gusseted Cordura exterior, a premium full-length zipper, two carrying handles, four exterior compartments with zippers and an interior accessory compartment with Velcro tie. stlouismusic.com



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FRET-KING | BLACK LABEL

Blackout

Fret-King has unveiled the new Fret-King Black Label electric guitar and bass range. The new Black Label range includes the Eclat, a single cut with a classic look and sophisticated tonal palette. The Country Squire is a fusion of the familiar with the contemporary, while the Elise has a body style with a heritage that spans all musical styles. Other models include the Corona and the Super-Hybrid. The Perception is the latest bass in the range. jhs.co.uk

Clayton NEW IN 2012

 <p>PickTAC</p>  <p>An easy no-mess solution for gripping any guitar pick.</p>	 <p>NutONE</p> <p>Mimics the extraordinary sound of authentic tortoiseshell.</p>	 <p>Exotic</p> <p>New sleek horn & bone</p>
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 <p>Spark Knuckle</p> <p>A ceramic slide that's unmatched in sustain and volume</p>		

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WASHBURN | N7VINTAGE

Vintage Vixen

Washburn's new Nuno Bettencourt Signature series N7VINTAGE guitar offers a slim, aged alder body with a Stevens extended cutaway neck joint. The maple neck has a 22-fret ebony fingerboard and the standard reverse headstock. Features include a Buzz Feiten tuning system and Original Floyd Rose tremolo. washburn.com



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TECH 21 | DOUBLE DRIVE 3X

Double Down

Tech 21's new Double Drive 3X distortion pedal has undergone a Private Stock MOD to feature more aggressive tones, a tighter low end and a wider level taper. The unit's been revoiced for hard rock and metal tones. MSRP: \$215. tech21nyc.com



TC ELECTRONIC | iB MODIFIED

Sonically Pure

TC Electronic has improved iB Modified versions of its G-System and Nova Delay guitar effects. The iB Modified refers to a specific modification that elevates the limited versions of G-System and Nova Delay to a new level in sonic purity. The iB Modified features an analog input buffer tweak. MSRP: G-System, \$2,449; Nova Delay, \$345. tcelectronic.com



MOD KITS | THE INDUCER

Limited-edition Pedal Kit

Mod Kits' new pedal kit, The Inducer, is a limited-edition tube distortion kit designed around a New-Old-Stock 6189W JAN Philips vacuum tube. The premium-grade 12AU7 was ruggedized for reliability in such operations as aviation communications equipment, making it ideal for use in an effects pedal. The tube is characterized by reduced microphonics and longevity. modkitsdiy.com

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BOOTH #1803

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

LOXX | STRAP LOCKS

Lockin' It Down

The new Loxx strap locks for guitars and basses feature one-handed, easy on/off engage and release action. The locks boasts an inner spring, smooth edges and lead-free materials. MSRP: \$24-\$42.50. loxxusa.com



RECORDING KING | ROM-06

The King's Addition

Recording King recently added a solid-top OM model, the ROM-06, to its line of -06 guitars. The ROM-06 has a 14-fret OM body with a treble-side cutaway and Fishman pickup, making it an ideal stage-ready acoustic guitar. With a solid Sitka spruce top, hand-scalloped bracing, and mahogany back and sides, the ROM-06 is comfortable to play thanks to its size and 1-11/16-inch nut width. MAP: \$359.99. recordingking.com



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TANGLEWOOD | EVOLUTION
EXOTIC SERIES

Exotic Imports

Tanglewood, a U.K.-based company, has introduced the Evolution Exotic acoustic guitar series to North America. These guitars encompass a range of Tanglewood body styles, which have been given an exotic twist through the incorporation of luxurious tonewoods. Flamed maple, bubinga and koa are used throughout the series, which is comprised of dreadnoughts, jumbos, super-folk, orchestra, and auditorium body styles, as well as an all-Bubinga acoustic bass. MSRP: \$449-\$799. tanglewoodguitars.com

NADY | AXEHEAD

Crank It Up

Nady has introduced the AxeHead, a pocket-sized amp that plugs directly into a guitar or bass for instant pro-sounding audio. The AxeHead is ideal for practice, eliminating the need for a bulky amp. nady.com



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MSRP: \$29.95.

{bigbangdist.com}



ALESIS | DM10X KIT

Electronic Masterpiece

Alesis has launched the DM10X kit, a professional six-piece electronic drum set. The DM10X offers a six-drum, four-cymbal configuration and features a chrome-plated XRack, which is rugged and boasts an ultra-solid four-post design.

MAP: \$1,699. **{alesis.com}**

EVANS | EC2 SST

Keep Marching On

Evans has released the Marching EC2 tenor heads with Sound Shaping technology as a marching version of the Evans EC2 SST heads. The new heads features the same roll-over hoop design used on other marching tenor heads for greater durability. The hoop design is ideal for use with marching tenor drums because it can handle the tension and wear requirements of the marching activity. The heads are available in 6-, 8-, 10-, 12-, 13- and 14-inch sizes. MSRP: \$26-34. **{evansdrumheads.com}**





ZILDJIAN | DRUMSTICKS

Sweet 15

Zildjian has debuted 15 new drumsticks, including two new Artist series models developed in conjunction with Joey Kramer and Danny Seraphine. Also being introduced are several new maple, maple DIP and birch models. Zildjian has added the Aerosmith logo, along with Kramer's signature, to the Joey Kramer stick, which features a cross-sanded, raw finish. The company has also expanded its maple stick lineup with eight new models designed to offer a lighter feel and darker tonality than hickory. zildjian.com



PORTER & DAVIES | BC GIGSTER

Powerful Gigster

Porter & Davies recently unveiled the BC Gigster, a silent bass drum monitoring system. The unit features a tactile generator built into a throne top and uses bone conduction to deliver powerful, nuanced reproduction without sound. Specs include line/mic, low contour and master volume controls and the user's choice between mic or line inputs. porteranddavies.co.uk



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YAMAHA | EZ-220

Easy as 1-2-3

Yamaha's latest EZ-220 keyboard offers high-tech functionality that interfaces with the Apple iPad. Ideal for families that want to learn to play piano, the keyboard's USB controller with built-in sounds also offers computer connectivity for musical applications. Features include lighted keys and 100 preset songs with digital score. yamaha.com



CASIO | LK-165

Light It Up

Casio has debuted its lighted keyboard, the LK-165. The instrument features the company's proprietary Step-Up Lesson System and lets novice users learn 110 built-in songs, phase by phase, at their own pace. Using the LCD display, players can learn both music notation and correct hand positioning. The interactive Step-Up Lesson System evaluates performance, letting users track their progress and incremental success. MSRP: \$199.99. casio.com



KORG | SV-1

Global Sensation

Korg has released the SV-1, which is available with either 73 or 88 piano-style keys. The keyboard also features the sound of a Japanese grand piano in addition to the traditional German grand piano. Beyond piano, the SV-1 contains authentic electric piano sounds; transistor, tube and tonewheel organ sounds; and a variety of equally authentic vintage keyboard sounds. korg.com



Introducing iQ Flash from PianoDisc

PianoDisc's New iQ Flash front-end is a modern, flexible MP3 player system specifically designed for use with PianoDisc's iQ technology. Features include 1,024 levels of dynamic expression playback per note, built-in SD Card and USB slots, wireless connection and One Touch Record and playback options.

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SAX DAKOTA | DAKOTA XG

Metallic Beauties

Sax Dakota recently released the Dakota XG Type alto and tenor saxophones in two custom metallics. The new models feature hand rubbed antique bronze throughout and a matte black body with silver plate bell, bow and neck, contrasted with 18-karat gold keys, key cups, key guards and trim. Both models include solid stainless steel key rods, low-profile key cups and tempered black oxide springs. MSRP: SDA-XG 303/404, \$3,250; SDT-XG 505/606, \$3,500. saxdakota.com



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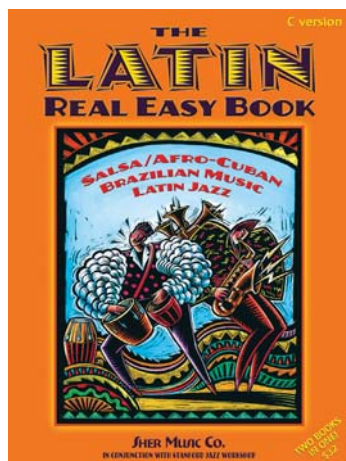
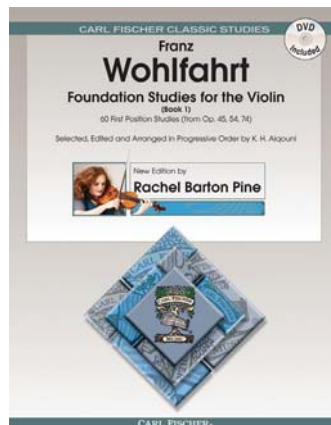
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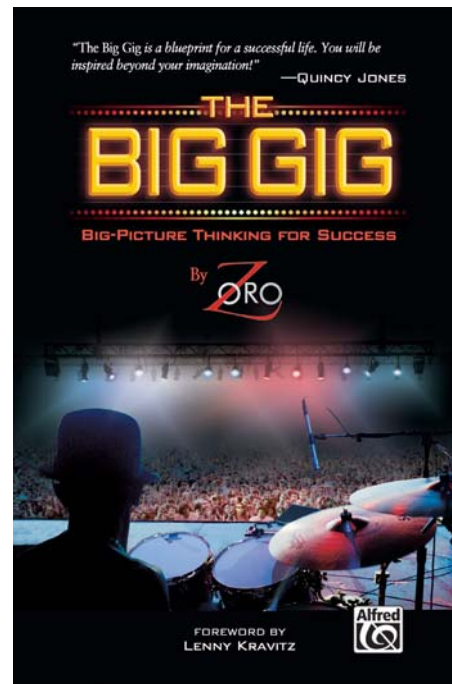
Carl Fischer has unveiled a new edition of the *Wohlfahrt Violin Method*, updated and edited by violinist Rachel Barton Pine. *The New Wohlfahrt Foundation Studies For The Violin, Book 1* contains modernized fingerings, bowings and dynamics by Pine, all newly engraved. This book also includes a DVD of Pine playing all 60 etudes with two camera views for better instruction. MSRP: \$16.95. carlfischer.com



SHER MUSIC | 'THE LATIN REAL EASY BOOK'

Big Easy

Sher Music has debuted *The Latin Real Easy Book*, which contains an in-depth selection of Afro-Cuban classics, Brazilian music and Latin jazz tunes. Designed for classroom or professional use, the book can be used by music teachers, students and pros. The songs are presented in "real easy" format, meaning the tune is on one page and the educational material is on each facing page. The book is structured as two books in one cover. shermusic.com



ALFRED | 'THE BIG GIG'

Alfred's Big Gig

Alfred recently released *The Big Gig: Big-Picture Thinking For Success* from renowned rock musician Zoro. The book is a comprehensive method for independent musicians who want to break into the highly competitive music industry. Zoro offers readers keys to purposeful living, keeping it real and following your vision without losing yourself. MSRP: \$19.99. alfred.com

HAL LEONARD | 'PIANO AEROBICS,' 'BASS AEROBICS'

Ready, Set, Workout

Hal Leonard has introduced *Piano Aerobics* and *Bass Aerobics*. Written by keyboardist Wayne Hawkins, *Piano Aerobics* features a multistyle, 40-week workout program for building real-world techniques. Concepts covered in *Piano Aerobics* include keeping time, hand independence and articulations. *Bass Aerobics* features a 52-week, one-exercise-per-week workout program for developing and maintaining bass guitar techniques. halleonard.com



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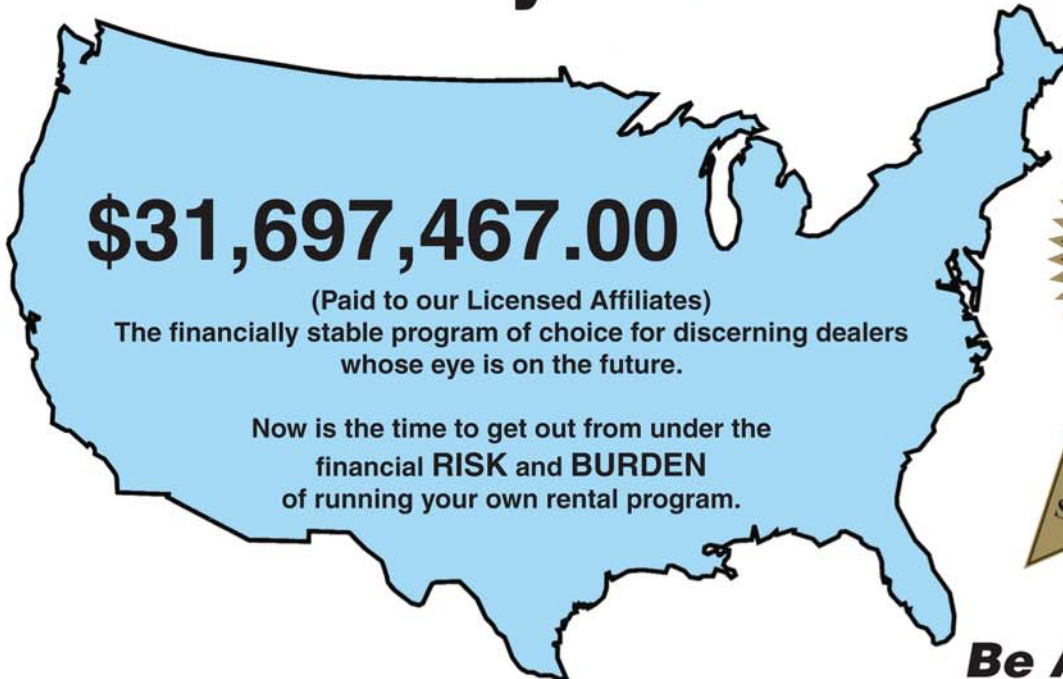
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AMERICAN AUDIO | DV2 USB

USB-powered

American Audio's new DV2 USB is a two-channel pre-amp DJ mixer that features a built-in 4-by-4 sound card and MIDI output. It lets users play and mix music from any DJ software but still keep hands-on hardware control over faders, cueing, scratching and other effects. DJs can also use the DV2 USB as a mixer for analog inputs, such as CDs or vinyl turntables. MSRP: \$399.95.

{americanaudio.com}



CHAUVET | FREEDOM SERIES

Let Freedom Ring

Chauvet has rolled out two wireless fixtures in its Freedom series: the Freedom Par and the Freedom Strip Mini. The fixtures combine RGB wash lights with eight hours of battery power, D-Fi 2.4 GHz wireless DMX and infrared remote control capability for complete wireless control to save time running cables and money on power supply. The Freedom Par and Freedom Strip Mini include a lightweight, rechargeable lithium ion battery that provides up to eight hours of power. {chauvetlighting.com}



GATOR CASES | G-TOUR

On Tour With Gator

Gator Cases has added the Leko case to its G-Tour flight-style case line. Eight specialized EVA foam-padded compartments house individual Leko-style light fixtures. The cases also sport heavy-duty lockable casters and recessed dishes on the lid for stacking.

{gatorcases.com}



PIONEER | DDJ-ERGO

Ultra-compact

Pioneer recently unveiled an ultra-compact controller, the DDJ-ERGO. The new controller incorporates MIDI functionality, making it possible to use with other MIDI-compatible DJ software. The DDJ-ERGO is designed using contoured edges with black, white and gradient colors and a large 115-mm platter for increased operability. The system also features pulse control that illuminates various areas of the controller to assist in the mixing process. MSRP: \$699. {pioneerdj.com}

MARKETPLACE

- Rates: Classified display: \$25 per column inch. Reading notices: \$1.00 per word; \$15 minimum charge. All ads are prepaid.
- Payments: Send check or charge it on MasterCard, Visa or discover.
- Deadlines: Advertising closes the 15th of the month, six weeks prior to issue date—i.e. the May issue would close March 15.
- Send your advertisement to: Music Inc., 102 N. Haven Road, Elmhurst, Illinois, 60126: or FAX your ad to: (630) 941-3210.
- Questions? Call Theresa Hill at (630) 941-2030, Ext. 119.



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Johnny Thompson

Johnny Thompson Music
Monterey Park, Calif.

We are extremely short on space, so we can't have a hands-on mic display where the customers can A-B one mic against the other. Instead, we have an in-house listing of our mics and their prices. It's up to our knowledgeable salespeople to discuss mics with the customer. When needed, we'll test a mic or two in our sound room. We price our microphones partly on perceived value, which may or may not be MAP price. We also stock brands that are not easily found online. Sometimes, we offer a value-added follow-up technical service.

People shop brick-and-mortar stores for convenience, local service and hands-on no-risk, so they're less likely to hardball or shop online if it's affordable.

>>>

John Epifanio

Music Central
Egg Harbor Township, N.J.

I would call our customer base "weekend warriors." Our clients are local bands and wedding DJs, so the installations that we do tend to be on the smaller side. The best way to display to that particular crowd is through Facebook and promotion on the website.

Yamaha is probably our top-selling pro audio line. I have a two-store location, and we've established a local reputation. We're also part of the Yorkville rental program and have a lot of in-store signage on that.

>>>

Chris Basile

South Jersey Music
Sewell, N.J.

Our most effective display is our PreSonus display. It's got the new AudioBox 44VSL with Studio One in the box. The ideal customer comes in looking for some type of interface or computer recording software. It's nice point-of-sale packaging, and they're able to plug in multiple instruments through it. The back of the package shows you windows on the software, so it's also easy to explain. A studio in a box for \$200 is a great deal, and our Blue recording mics are cross-merchandized right next to it, in case a customer wants to pick one up.



>>>

Bryan McCann
Instrumental Music
Ventura, Calif.

What is your most effective **audio or recording** promo?

For our four stores, the whole pro audio category has been in a bit of a decline. So, we do event-oriented marketing. We'll typically have some kind of in-store event, like a recording seminar, with our products. Even when our walk-in traffic has been in decline, when a manufacturer is promoting some kind of workshop, that seems to be what's effective.

For example, we did a recording workshop at one of our Ventura, Calif., locations. We focused on how to record an acoustic guitar. We did a live demo but also included a condenser

microphone in the demonstration. We had 14 or 15 people show up, and that scored some sales. Those customers wouldn't have bought the microphone without the demonstration. The event really created a cult action that showed people what they could do with an audio product.

I think some of the audio brands have chosen to market through other retail channels. A lot of recording brands have broadened their distribution channels via Internet and national sales, which is not a particularly level field for brick-and-mortar retailers.

PreSonus is a brand that has recognized that the independent channel is a good match for its product, and because we get support from them, the brand is very successful.

Condenser microphones, in particular, are sold by salespeople who have a dialogue with the customers. Salespeople inquire about what the customers are using, get that information and show or record someone. Regardless of display, I don't see a lot of sales on studio microphones to customers who don't know that a good mic is key to getting good recorded sound.

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