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THE 2012 GEAR GUIDE

A SNEAK PEEK AT 2012'S NEW & NOTE-WORTHY PRODUCTS

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Photo by Karen Solem

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

JOIN A GROUP — OR START YOUR OWN

I'm always surprised how many retailers don't take advantage of sharing groups. To me, this is like sailing across the Atlantic without a life raft. A sharing group can be a treasure trove of great business ideas and often the backbone of your support system.

Don't wait to be invited to an exclusive organization. Reaping the benefits of sharing groups can be as simple as picking up and going to The NAMM Show. I'll bet you can take home five great business ideas just talking shop with a fellow retailer at the Marriott bar in Anaheim. You can also develop an invaluable peer network.

Once, Music Matters owner Aaron Soriero told me about his peer/mentor relationship with columnist Pete Gamber. They'd met at a NAMM show soon after Soriero opened his doors and bonded over a mutual passion for music lesson programs.

"Just knowing he was a phone call away made all the difference," said Soriero, who went on to grace *Music Inc.*'s July 2009 cover.

Don't stop with NAMM. Drill down a little deeper, and you'll find a wealth of more specific industry groups. Among them, Independent Music Store Owners (iMSO) is one of the industry's fastest-growing organizations and open to all brick-

and-mortar retailers. And one of its recent initiatives revealed a great use of sharing groups: promotional muscle.

This past holiday season, iMSO held its third annual Strings for Food event. A canned food item got customers free string changes at participating dealers. (See page 17 for the full story.) The promotion not only raised a total of 11,772 pounds of food for charity but, for several participants, also brought new traffic into their stores and made them community heroes. Uptown Music alone changed 160 sets of strings. Just think of the foot traffic.

Then there's niche groups, such as the National Association of School Music Dealers and the Retail Print Music Dealers Association (RPMDDA). These are much broader in their focus and membership than you might think. Over the last decade, I've watched the annual RPMDDA convention transform from a print music expo into a three-day peer-to-peer intensive workshop on business strategy. It's still one of the industry's best-kept secrets.

All of these groups got off the ground because of the ingenuity, perseverance and need of a few retailers. Like them, you might even want to form your own group — maybe a regional association. I checked in with Gordy Wilcher, owner of Owensboro Music Center and current head of iMSO, who has been with the organization since its inception.

"The biggest thing I would advise would be to be prepared to commit personal time," he said, adding that he put in an extra 10 hours a week during iMSO's early days. If that sounds like a lot of work, think what it could ultimately mean to your business. **MI**

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Thanks From Sam Ash

Thank you for the generous article you did on Sam Ash Music in your December “The Best of 2011” issue.

We appreciate you highlighting our efforts to keep on improving and making our stores better for not just the customer but my staff, as well.

The year 2012 promises to have a number of surprises and improvements still to come. We are in the process of building more lessons schools and improving even more stores.

Just one correction, though: We have been around for 87 years, not 45 ... but who’s counting?

Sammy Ash
COO
Sam Ash Music

Deep Concern Over REX Winner

I cannot help but express my extreme disappointment in the December “The Best of 2011” issue of *Music Inc.* To praise a “retailer” like Hello Music, which received a Retail Excellence Award, for being inventive, successful and a model retailer for the industry is just outright disgraceful.

To highlight the fact that Hello Music has a good relationship with high-volume suppliers, or partners, is a sham and a disservice to the customer. This is a clever way of saying that it is purchasing its products sideways from “partners” rather than through the proper channels.

Hello Music is not an authorized dealer for most of the lines it sells. It is admittedly a third party in the transaction. This results in customers not being offered a warranty for the



products they purchase.

Hello Music violates copyright agreements by using these unauthorized brand logos and products on its site, and it puts real dealers — who work hard to support the products they sell and follow all the guidelines and rules set out by the manufacturers — in a hole to deal with Hello Music’s shortcomings.

Even more upsetting is the fact that Rick Camino, president of Hello Music, mentioned that Hello Music’s employees “often refer business to local brick-and-mortar retailers due to the company’s lean inventory.”

What’s more likely is that they will guide a customer to a local music store that has much more extensive knowledge of products and the MI industry

to support the products they have sold.

This is not to say that pure Internet retailers are bad. Unique Squared and Sweetwater are two great examples to be followed and admired.

Hello Music is taking sales from these hard-working businesses, not having an additive effect on them, and putting their dirty laundry in local MI retailers’ baskets.

Hello Music’s marketing tactics might be ingenious and effective, but at a time when we should value our local MI retailers that work hard to support, inform, educate and assist customers day in and day out, a retailer that takes a “lean” approach to save themselves money and dump the work on others

should be the last retail model being praised, especially in an industry magazine.

Name withheld upon request

Seek and Ye Shall Find

Since running our story, “Optek Seeks Dealers,” in *Music Inc.*’s January issue, we’ve seen amazing sell-through by our dealers — multiple guitars per week.

We know that Fretlight’s value is outstanding, and we’re working to drive customers into stores. Independent music dealers have been very responsive to our unique dealer program, so it’s shaping up to be a huge win for all involved.

Rusty Shaffer
CEO
Optek Music Systems

Cover Story Praise

I would like to thank *Music Inc.* and its editor, Zach Phillips, for highlighting our company, Willis Music, on the cover of the January issue.

My team and I look forward to receiving the magazine each month and have learned a great deal from your articles and writers. On behalf of the music products industry, please keep up the great work.

Kevin Cranley
President
Willis Music
Florence, Ky.

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Collect 11,772 pounds of food
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Welcomes Jojo Mayer for clinic
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Unite to hold Drum Fair
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RETAIL

THE MUSIC FARM | BY DAVID WOLINSKY

PLOWING FOR PROFITS

Apparently, Brian Robinson, owner of The Music Farm, didn't get the memo about 2012. As futuristic as the year may still sound, the Orrville, Ohio, retailer has prepared for its next phase of business, in part, by going old school.

Robinson launched The Music Farm in 2004 as an e-commerce venture. As the company began to grow, he decided to forgo conventional wisdom and, in 2007, opened a brick-and-mortar store, largely to keep pace with that growth.

"We honestly just needed a bigger warehouse and found a place that we couldn't *not* open a store inside," said Robinson, who employs nine people. "It was a gorgeous 7,500-square-foot furniture store with a warehouse."

COMMUNITY JAM

But invading the tangible world of brick-and-mortar means more overhead and, oftentimes, more headaches. That said, Robinson acknowledged there have been fewer migraines since the transition. He mentioned that he sorely needed the extra space and figured he'd also use the physical realm to bolster community outreach and his company's presence in its own backyard.

The Music Farm does that, in



Brian Robinson

Photos by AmlancheMedia.com

large part, with the Rock 'N Blues Jam, a biweekly freestyle jam session. Launched in October 2011, the event is held in the store's 1,000-square-foot performance area. Rock 'N Blues Jam is "not a big money maker," according to Robinson, but it gets people in the door. (Some drive from as far as three hours away to attend.) And his company seals the deal with that walk-in traffic by offering low prices.

"We're an online retailer that will cater to our local customers with online discounts," he said.

Not only does the store cater to clients, it nearly pampers them

with service. "We receive over 250 e-mails daily and reply to each one, within minutes usually. That generates repeat business."

ONLINE OVERHAUL

At press time, The Music Farm was relaunching its website, which was 18 months in the making. It's not only aesthetically pleasing but also offers such new features as a "best offer" option on certain items.

"A customer has three options when landing on a particular product: add to cart, add to wishlist or make offer," Robinson said. "We review the offer, contact

the customer and make the deal."

Eighty percent of the company's revenue still comes from its online customers. This doesn't diminish the role of service in helping face-to-face clients, though. And Robinson's crew is a well-oiled service machine.

"We don't employ different staff for the retail shop," he said. "The same people who create content for our site are the same people who answer the phone."

Since October, some of those people have also donned driving gloves to take The Farm Wagon around town. It's both promotional vehicle and mobile showroom and came about "as an idea to promote the website and store without having to think too hard," Robinson said. The Wagon is an 18-seater bus, a cross between a limo and music store, and it's fully stocked with guitars on the walls, amps ready to rock, flat-screen TVs and custom-built leather couches.

"We took it to the Cleveland Browns game and received great exposure," Robinson said. "Customers came in the next day and said they saw The Farm Wagon at the game."

So that's one more thing from the past that The Music Farm has embraced: fossil fuels. Sometimes, the best ways are the old ways. **MI**

+ Walk Through

THE MUSIC FARM IN ORRVILLE, OHIO



The Music Farm's brick-and-mortar store. Inset: The Farm Wagon, the company's new promotional vehicle and mobile showroom.



Inside The Music Farm. "We also acquired two acres along with the building, knowing we would eventually outgrow it," Robinson said.



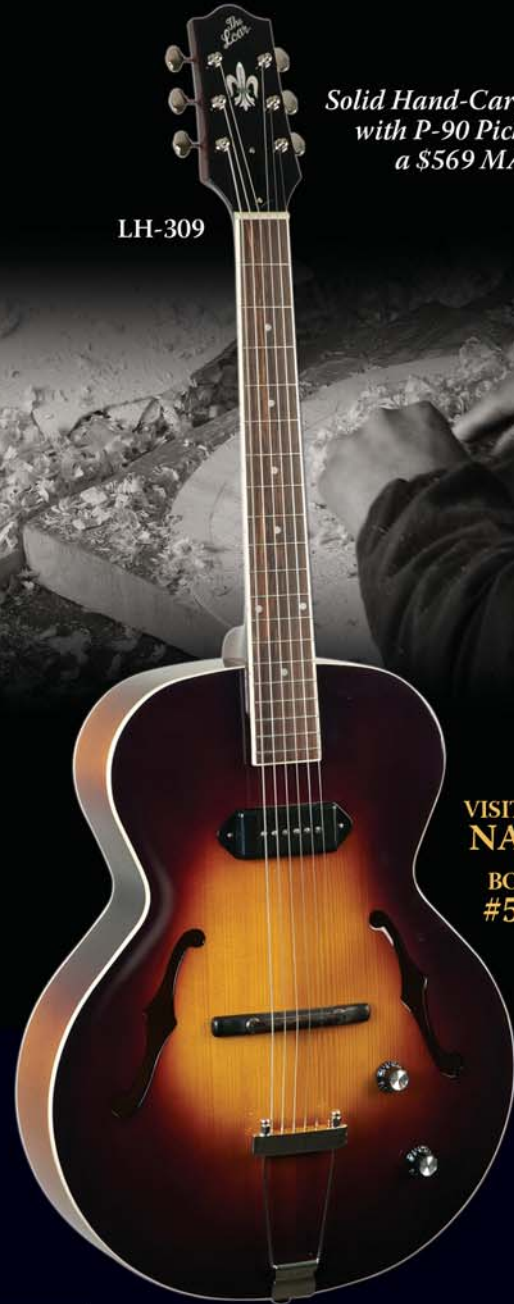
The acoustic and electric guitar areas take advantage of colored slatwall. Notice the flooring in the electric guitar department.

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BLACKCAT MUSIC | BY KATIE KAILUS

FROM STAGE TO SCHOOL

Adam Kary had little business experience when he founded BlackCat Music. A former drummer for the band God Lives Underwater, he opened the Berkeley Springs, W.Va., combo dealership in 2008, at the height of the economic decline.

“Everyone thought I was kind of crazy to open a music shop then,” Kary said. “But I believed in the store.”

Kary’s experience in the music business turned out to be an asset in building his dealership, and in 2009, he moved his one-room shop down the street to a 2,000-square-foot location on the main drag of the tourist-heavy city.

“There were no other music shops around at that time except for a small guitar store,” Kary said. “The owner [of that guitar store] decided he wanted to focus on teaching and giving music lessons. So, we partnered up, and he now teaches here at BlackCat.”

ROCKER, RETAILER & TEACHER

BlackCat’s lessons program is still a work in progress with about 40 students per week, but a School of Rock is helping drive its growth.

The school is held every three months and includes about six students between the ages of 14 and 18 per session. Kary also books two or three local gigs for his students, providing them with what he called “real-life playing experience.”

Kary, whose band toured internationally with the likes of Sublime, 311 and No Doubt,



BlackCat Music partner Jonathan McBee (left) and owner Adam Kary

BlackCat Music owner Adam Kary transfers his experience from the road to the lesson room

said he believes being a professional drummer has added to the experience for students in the School of Rock.

“I spent many years on the road playing live in all kinds of venues, from small clubs to huge arenas,” he said. “Young kids in my School of Rock have dreams of touring in a band, and I offer them advice on how to get there, as well as inspire them to go for it.”

His experiences have also transferred over to help him become a knowledgeable business owner.

“I learned so much [on the road] that it now helps me help my customers,” Kary said. “I learned so much about the gear used on tour and what worked

well or what didn’t. This has helped me inform my customers better when they’re choosing what to buy.

“From drums and guitars to stage monitors and light shows, I’ve had experience with them all. I think my customers respect that, and they feel good about buying from BlackCat because of it.”

And while a new store owner might be tempted to pocket his first profits, Kary continually reinvests in his company to nurture its growth.

“I put everything right back into the shop,” he said. “I always do that. And we are continuing to broaden our horizons, as well as our suppliers.”

BlackCat, in fact, has gone from selling used gear to becoming a dealer for such suppliers as Sabian, Zildjian and Godin Guitars.

So what sets the company apart from other retailers and helps it gain momentum during a downturn? Again, Kary claimed it’s all in his street cred.

“[Experience touring] is something we offer that many of the big-box and online stores do not,” he said. “I think most customers would choose to buy from someone who has used the product and can help them find the right gear for their needs rather than search through pages online just to save \$5.”

BlackCat also offers customers a laid-back, comfortable atmosphere, with a couch and coffee table for parents.

“We don’t have any signs in the store that warn customers to not touch the guitars or merchandise,” Kary said. “We invite everyone to play everything.” **MI**



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GUITAR CENTER | LEGAL

GUITAR CENTER FIGHTS VENDOR MAP POLICIES

On Dec. 16, 2011, Guitar Center sent a letter to its vendors stating it might advertise products below vendors' minimum advertised price (MAP) policies.

Signed by John Bagan, GC's executive vice president and general manager, merchandis-

ing and supply chain, the letter explained that GC becomes uncompetitive and wastes significant resources when MAP "is inconsistent with actual market pricing." The statement also mentioned that the chain retailer spent \$75 million in 2010 to promote products, and it will

take "whatever actions it deems appropriate to maintain its competitiveness in the marketplace and to achieve a fair return on its substantial investments in its vendors and products."

"These actions may include competing with and matching the lowest prevailing advertised

price in the market, seeking vendor chargebacks or other concessions to restore [GC's] expected return on investment, canceling purchase orders, terminating some or all product lines of a vendor, or taking any other action it deems appropriate," the letter read.

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WHITE HOUSE OF MUSIC | VENTURES

White House Goes Boutique

White House of Music recently took its stringed instrument business to the next level with White House String Shoppe.

Located within the dealership's Waukesha, Wis., headquarters, the newly designed string boutique offers educators and musicians expert service and a deep selection of orchestral instruments, accessories and sheet music.



The company hosted an open house for White House String Shoppe on Nov. 14, 2011.

"White House of Music's five locations will continue to offer educators, students and hobbyists the full inventory of products and outstanding services we always have, but the White House String Shoppe allows us to provide our string customers the specific services and products they deserve in a unique, focused way," said Chris White, company president and CEO.

White House String Shoppe boasts such aesthetic touches as hardwood floors, track lighting and a wooden table. According to White, the room was designed to feel like "an inviting, comfortable, welcoming room in your house. Unhurried and quiet. An oasis for string players to audition instruments for themselves and students."



IMSO | COMMUNITY

STRINGS FOR FOOD HITS RECORD

Independent Music Store Owners (iMSO) recently completed Strings for Food 2011. iMSO members participating in the initiative offered free string changes to customers who donated canned goods. Each music retailer then donated the food to the food bank or charity of his or her choice.

This year, participating retailers collected 11,772 pounds of food and changed 1,573 sets of strings. According to iMSO representatives, this is the highest number of collections to date. D'Addario, Curt Mangan Strings, Planet Waves and SIT served as sponsors for the initiative.

Jim Nardi, owner of Uptown Music in Keizer, Ore., changed 160 sets of strings, and the staff of Watermelon Music in Davis, Calif., changed 154 sets of strings. Jacksonville, Fla.-based Discount Music of Jacksonville owners Clark and Lisa Kirkwood collected the most food, with a total of 1,500 pounds.

"This year, with the help of D'Addario and Curt Mangan, we changed around 60 sets of strings and collected 1,500 pounds of food," Lisa Kirkwood said. "We are very proud of our local musicians and supporters of this yearly event."

"In the past two years, iMSO member stores changed more than 2,500 sets of strings and collected more than 13,011 pounds of food."

"This was our best year yet with donations — about 250 pounds," said Glen Giles, owner of Gorilla Guitars in Columbus, Ga. "Someone even brought in two cases of canned green beans! We had several bring in donations but no guitars. That's okay."

K.C. STRINGS VIOLIN SHOP | OUTREACH

K.C. GIVES TO JOPLIN

Last August, K.C. Strings Violin Shop of Merriam, Kan., donated more than \$17,000 in orchestral stringed instruments to the Joplin School District in Joplin, Mo. The company delivered nearly 50 violins, violas, cellos and basses to help students as they recovered from the tornado in May 2011.

"Your thoughtfulness is sincerely appreciated, and we value your continuing support of our efforts," said Dr. C.J. Huff, superintendent of Joplin Public Schools.

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FULL COMPASS | OUTREACH

FC GETS REAL WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS

Full Compass of Madison, Wis., recently hosted a tour of its facility for Rotaract members. Rotaract is a branch of Rotary for college students, designed to help them develop as leaders in their workplaces and communities.

Participants included students from University of Wisconsin–Madison and Edgewood College.

Roxanne Wenzel, vice president of

sales and marketing for Full Compass, began the event with a company overview. She also led the group on a tour of the facility.

Afterwards, students gathered in Full Compass' largest studio for a 30-minute Q&A session with Jonathan Lipp, company owner and CEO. Lipp spoke openly about the company's origin and future.



Jonathan Lipp speaks with college students in Rotaract

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GIST PIANO CENTER | ANNIVERSARY
Gist Celebrates 40th

Last year, Gist Piano Center, headquartered in Louisville, Ky., celebrated its 40th anniversary with activities all across the state.

"This is an important year for us," said John Gist, company president. "Kentucky has changed quite a bit since my dad opened the business in 1971, and we're excited to be in a position of growth — despite a tornado, an electrical fire, the Watterson Expressway expansion and the worst economy our business has ever seen. After 40 years, we're still Kentucky's trusted piano hub, and we have a lot to celebrate."

The company's yearlong anniversary celebration began with a new video series, Gist's "A History of Service," on the company's YouTube channel.

Additionally, Gist Piano Center, launched an extensive expansion and remodeling project. The initiative included the addition of a new recital facility and piano showroom for the Poplar Level and Watterson location in Louisville and a new piano lessons facility, recital hall, print music department and digital piano showroom for the Harrodsburg Road and Man o' War location in Lexington.

"Over the years, we have emerged as the last local, family owned, full-service piano house in the state," Gist said. "To meet Kentucky's growing need, we're maintaining our commitment to fine acoustic pianos like Steinway & Sons, while expanding into print music, education and digital technologies."

The retailer also held a number of concerts, a workshop by Alfred editor and composer E.L. Lancaster, a new promotional fundraiser for The Lexington Philharmonic and an underground piano recital.

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WEBNEWS

Social Media Milestones

Sweetwater's social media program recently hit three milestones. The company's Facebook "likes" surpassed the 100,000 mark in mid-December 2011. For 680 videos posted on YouTube, total upload views also recently surpassed 10 million, and channel views exceeded 250,000.

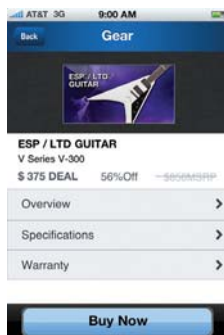
Sweetwater posts at least twice each weekday on its Facebook page. These posts include special offers, product demo videos and unique features. Each Friday morning, a Sweetwater Minute video, hosted by Mitch Gallagher, the company's editorial director, features product demos, interviews and announcements.

Most Sweetwater YouTube videos are product demos and embedded on the appropriate product pages at sweetwater.com. Videos range from interviews with artists and producers to performance footage. The company's Twitter feed, which has more than 11,000 followers, functions as a gear forum for answering customer inquiries. Tweets include deals and new product updates.

Hello Mobile

Hello Music has launched Hello Music Mobile, a free iPhone app that provides immediate access to the company's products and services. The app delivers each day's new "Awesome Opportunities" on music gear and musician services, such as studios, mastering and digital distribution.

"We know how fast-moving and unpredictable the life of a musician can be — we're musicians ourselves," said Rick Camino, CEO of Hello Music. "Bringing the Hello Music opportunity marketplace to mobile enables us to bring success to even more musicians and better serve a highly mobile membership base."

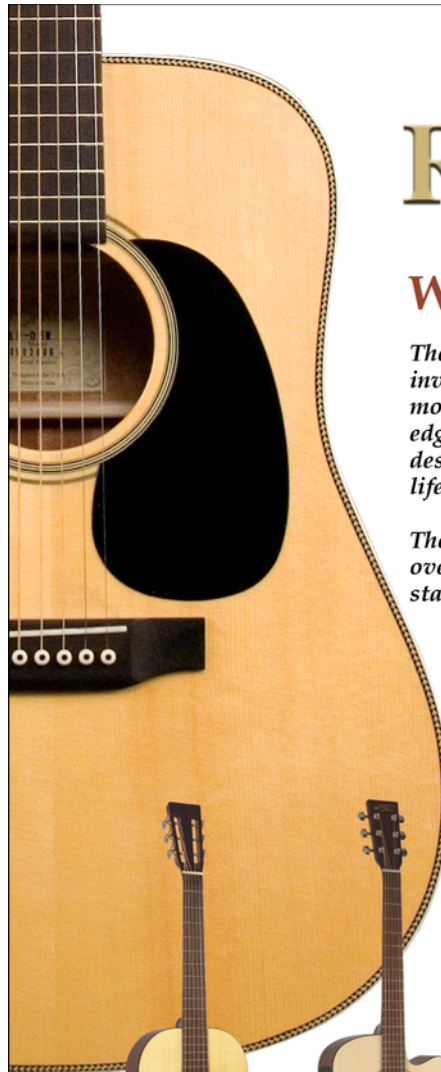


WEST MUSIC | CLINICS

JOJO BRINGS MOJO TO CORALVILLE

On Dec. 1, 2011, West Music held a clinic with drummer Jojo Mayer at the Coralville Center for the Performing Arts in Coralville, Iowa. More than 80 drum and percussion enthusiasts showed up.

During the clinic, Mayer presented some of his signature influences and techniques, such as reverse engineering, where he plays programmed jingle drum and bass rhythms on an acoustic drum kit. Afterwards, Mayer answered audience questions, and Sabian sponsored a product giveaway.



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GUITAR CENTER | VENUES

GC EXPANDS IN NEW YORK

Guitar Center hit 224 stores on Dec. 15, 2011, with the opening of its newest retail location, Guitar Center Ridge Hill in Yonkers, N.Y. The store marked the company's 10th opening of the year. The location features GC Garage, the company's on-site guitar repair services.

To celebrate the opening, GC hosted a grand-opening weekend featuring exclusive savings, gear giveaways and free events. Throughout the month, it also offered free restringing or 50-percent off first setups on any stringed instrument.

"The New York City metro area is one of the most important music markets we serve," said Gene Joy, executive vice president of stores for GC. "With the addition of our Yonkers location, musicians from Westchester County and beyond will now have easier access to Guitar Center's vast assortment of new and used gear at great prices."

GC also opened a new Orange, Calif., location on Dec. 1 and a store in Stafford, Texas — near Sugar Land — on Oct. 27. Both feature Guitar Center Studios, GC's in-store music lessons and rehearsal facility, and GC Garage.



Inside Guitar Center's new Ridge Hill store

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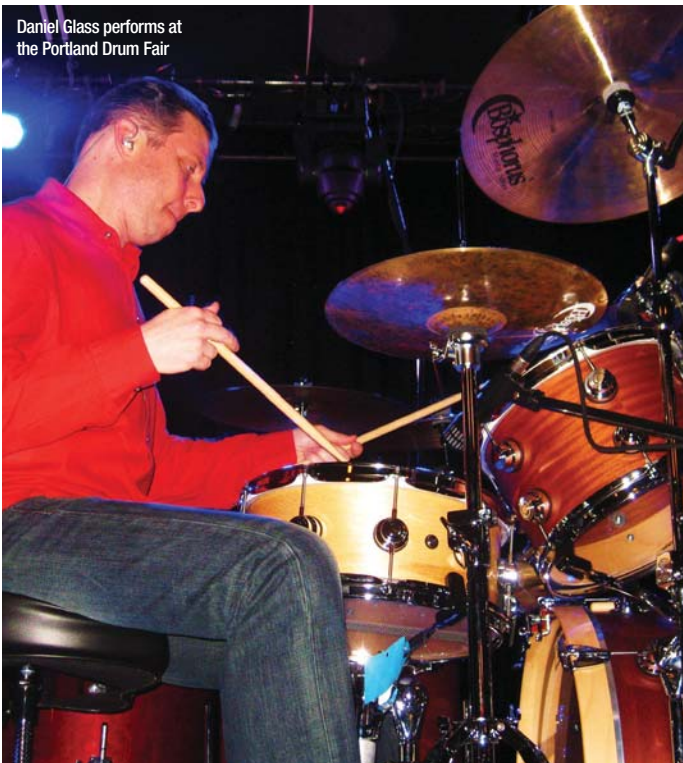
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REVIVAL DRUM SHOP, RHYTHM TRADERS | EVENT

PORTLAND DRUM DEALERS HOLD LOCAL DRUM FAIR

Revival Drum Shop and Rhythm Traders of Portland, Ore., joined forces on Nov. 27, 2011, to host the second annual Portland Drum Fair.

The event included multiple regional and boutique drum crafters, vintage drum collections, performances, and product giveaways. This year's drum fair also featured a clinic by Daniel Glass, which brought in a capacity crowd of more than 200 attendees. The Portland Drum Fair is designed to celebrate drum builders, drummers and local drum shops.

The fair featured a vintage drum and cymbal exhibit that included rare drum sets, snare drums and cymbals from local private collections, as well as 20 vendors. Plus, a consignment area let attendees buy, sell and trade instruments. Proceeds from the event benefited the Creative Science School in Portland.

"A lot of my colleagues were shocked that we'd team up with another drum shop to host an event," said Bradley Boynton, owner of Rhythm Traders. "But that's how we do things in Portland. We work together to grow our community and to provide an experience you obviously can't get online. The response was huge, and we can't wait to do it next year."

"Our shops are complementary, and we think our camaraderie not only gives customers a compelling reason to support their local drum shop but we think this could be a model for the industry," said Revival Drum Shop owner Jose Medeles.

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Note from Joe

Innovation, NAMM U and a Few Words about the Show

"Marketing and innovation are the only two factors that generate business, everything else is an expense."
-- Peter Drucker

Many NAMM Members are reading this at the show in Anaheim, or just upon returning home. I'd like to thank you for being with us and hope your investment pays off in the year ahead. Support of the NAMM Show fuels your association's "Circle of Benefits" business model and creates year-round efforts to promote music-making and music education, represent your interests with policymakers and provide world-class education through NAMM University.

Our industry has always thrived on innovation, and it seems to me that based on what we've seen here in Anaheim, this year could be one of the most important in memory for new products and new ways of doing business. We began this year's NAMM Show on Thursday morning with a Breakfast of Champions session focusing directly on the theme of innovation and featuring NAMM Member companies that are reinventing the products we use—and how they're bought and sold. Our goal was to inspire and challenge everyone to apply the theme of innovation to their own business so they can find success in today's rapidly changing economy. To me, innovation refers to anything (technology or otherwise) that brings greater

advantage, access, impact, interest, connection, trust and buying motivation to the customer. Innovation can apply to manufacturing, retail, distribution, marketing, and even how music is taught.

I'd especially like to say a few words of thanks to those who sacrificed and traveled long distances to attend. We understand how hard it can be to make this happen, especially considering the challenges of the past few years. In fact, a good friend wrote to me just before the holidays saying he may not make it to Anaheim this year. He owns a small community music store and, in many ways, is the quintessential NAMM Member Retailer. I told him I understood and indeed had been in his shoes before, starting with my first NAMM Show 30 years ago!

Interestingly, the economy in January 1983 looked a lot like today. We had just been through a bruising recession; the government seemed incapable of solving anything; and technological innovation was changing the industry dramatically. But the owners of Andy Penn's Drum and Guitar City decided to send their two young staffers to the NAMM Show! In spite of the tight cash flow—I was the bookkeeper and painfully aware of how challenging the year had been—Scott Cameron (who is still in the industry with DW Drums) and I flew from Sacramento to Anaheim where we were able to meet with our vendors, gain some new product and marketing ideas, and come back completely motivated for the year ahead. I'm sure our customers noticed the difference, and the experience and lessons from the show helped us create a successful recovery as the economy picked up that year. As it is for so many NAMM Members, that first show also started a life-long commitment to this industry that continues to this day.

Innovation starts with a spark, and there is no better place to find that spark than at your industry's trade gatherings. I hope my friend decides to come—it's surely an investment he won't regret!

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO



NAME NAMM News February No 2012

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SUPPLY

CORDOBA | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

CORDOBA'S CRITICAL MASS

Cordoba isn't just trying to sell guitars. It's trying to sell a whole new product category. And that means turning the public's idea of a nylon-string guitar on its head.

"I always tell dealers to call our product 'nylon-string guitars,' not classical guitars, when addressing customers," said Jon Bingham, the company's national sales manager. "And a number of times, I've heard dealers say, 'I can't believe that really works. It made the difference.'"

It's certainly made a difference for Cordoba. Last year, the Los Angeles-based manufacturer saw a 40-percent spike in revenues. According to Tim Miklaucic, company CEO, it drove that growth through positive online buzz, attractive price points and, of course, niched product: nylon-string guitars that are as easy to play as their steel-string counterparts.

"I think it's a critical mass thing," said Miklaucic, who founded the company in 1997. "The category's beginning to grow, and I think we're also the only game in town that's really creating a brand and brand awareness."

"No longer do you need to be a classically trained musi-



cian to buy a nylon-string guitar. We're trying to tell the story differently."

INDIE OPPORTUNITY

These days, the company's team is trying to tell its story to more independent retailers. "The indie part of the business is where the real growth

is happening right now," said Jay Morrissey, director of sales, key accounts, who added that Cordoba has a robust international and chain-retail business.

"Over the years, we've refined our product line and developed more models that work for the indies," added Jon Thomas, managing director. "And our goal is to increase that as a percentage of our business."

A few of those models include the popular GK Studio (pictured), used by The Gipsy Kings, and Fusion, which is ideal for steel-string players looking to transition to nylon. Both fall into the retail-friendly \$200-\$1,200 price range, a sweet spot Cordoba has been catering to more recently.

Instead of blanketing dealers with inventory, the company can also stock retailers with selections cherry-picked for their particular markets. "We're not going to put a \$3,000 Spanish classical guitar in a rock shop," Morrissey said. And Cordoba's sales team continues to educate dealers on how to sell nylon-string instruments.

"We make the guitars very easy to play," Miklaucic said. "We've done that by making sure the necks are perfect with a very light truss rod and very precise fretwork."

MEETING DEMAND

But maintaining high quality during a growth spurt poses its share of challenges. Miklaucic pointed out that scaling up manufacturing can be especially difficult when building handmade guitars — among other reasons, materials need to be seasoned over time. To manage growth, the company recently opened a new warehouse and hired more quality-control professionals.

"When we grow 40 percent and we have to make 40-percent more product, we're not just borrowing a little more of the capacity from a huge producer," said Miklaucic, adding that his company has factories in Spain and China. "We're building guitars by hand. This is hard to scale."

Chances are, it's a challenge that's not going away any time soon. Bingham mentioned that consumer demand for nylon keeps rising.

"When you get guys starting to reference popular music artists, ranging from Alex Lifeson of Rush to even James Hetfield of Metallica, those guys have all recorded over the course of history with a nylon-string guitar at one point. That really broadens the perspective of what you can do with the instrument." **MI**

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Wanda Jackson



90TH ANNIVERSARY



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PRESONUS | BY HILARY BROWN

SONIC PARTNERS

PreSonus' dealer relationships are much like its products — efficient and extremely flexible.

“Small, medium or large, any dealer can do business with us,” said Rick Naqvi, PreSonus' vice president of sales.

Lately, PreSonus' success has stemmed from the large-installation category, a thriving market even in a lukewarm economy. But the company has also cast a larger net, aiming to lure in more recording neophytes with affordable dealer programs and a bevy of online content.

NEW PROGRAMMING

Naqvi explained that one of PreSonus' most attractive incentives for new dealers is its retail programs, which take into consideration the burden of inventory costs. By using the company's new Virtual Stock Software Distribution (VSSD) program, dealers can stock PreSonus software and eliminate inventory costs altogether.

“We program with freight considerations, as well as display considerations,” Naqvi said. He added that all PreSonus hardware ships with Studio One Artist, an entry-level version of the company's signature DAW software. This creates built-in customer demand for software upgrades, such as Studio One Producer and Studio One Professional, which dealers can sell with a nominal inventory cost.

“It's a great add-on sale for dealers, and because they can carry the upgraded software without the inventory cost, it's pure profit,” Naqvi said.



PreSonus' Rick Naqvi working in his studio with a StudioLive mixer and Studio One software

Adam Levin of Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center in Washington, D.C., explained that the inclusion of Studio One Artist software with such PreSonus products as StudioLive 16.4.2 and 24.4.2 mixers has enhanced their value for customers. “It's a great bonus for the customer, and it makes PreSonus products highly appealing,” he said.

By bundling its hardware with Studio One software, PreSonus has also boosted the merchandising potential of its products. Chris Basile of South Jersey Music in Sewell, N.J., even cross-merchandises the PreSonus AudioBox 44VSL bundle with Blue recording microphones — he called this his “most effective display.”

All PreSonus hardware is also tightly integrated with the same Studio One software, so dealers can cater to all customers, regardless of skill level or gear setup.

“You just cannot be a full-rounded musician today if you don't have recording as part of your skill set,” Naqvi said. “We make products for the total beginner to the total professional.”

SUPPORT GROUP

Since last year's winter NAMM show, PreSonus has debuted a wireless digital-mixing app, a trio of mixers and a feature-filled second version of Studio One. But the company is also driving its success with dealers through a new website — a multichannel online support system that has exploded with content.

At any given moment, engineers and developers readily participate in the website's community forums to take the guesswork out of troubleshooting software and hardware. And in addition to the more than 150 live clinics that PreSonus con-

ducts at dealerships and schools, the site features a wealth of online webinars and events.

“When you install our software, it comes with an hour of video tutorials that get installed on your computer,” Naqvi said. “When the store or PreSonus tech support is closed, the customer can click on some videos, even if they don't have Internet access.”

TechTalk Live, PreSonus' technology Web “show,” recently made its way into actual retail locations, where it was broadcast live. Dealers are reaping the benefits of the webcast, especially with customers outside of their immediate regions.

“It brings people into the store and exposes the dealer to people who may not be in their city,” Naqvi said. “It's like a clinic, but it's not just the people who show up live. It's all of the people online, and that becomes a resource for the dealer.” **MI**



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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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PianoDisc

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SABIAN | ANNIVERSARY

SABIAN CELEBRATES 30-YEAR RIDE

From left: Stacey Montgomery-Clark, Andy Zildjian, Nort Hargrove, Robert Zildjian, Willi Zildjian and Peter Stairs



Sabian is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The introduction of AAX and HHX; the early signing of such endorsers as Larry Londin, Phil Collins and Harvey Mason; the Signature series; and the “Sonically Matched” professional-level box sets are just a few of the landmarks in the company’s history.

“It’s been quite a ride,” said Sabian President Andy Zildjian. “Having been here from the very beginning to watch our growth firsthand, I can say that our spirit of innovation, the quality of our products and the relevance of our brand have consistently been our focus from day one. And I can confirm that will never change.”

Sabian has also launched “Obsessed,” a new advertising and brand campaign that celebrates the company’s endorsees. sabian.com



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HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

HAL LEONARD GOES BLUE



Hal Leonard has entered an agreement with Blue Microphones to distribute select mics and accessories to the U.S. market. The deal went into effect Dec. 1, 2011.

"Audio and technology products have been a massive growth area for Hal Leonard," said Doug Lady, the company's senior vice president of sales. "We've gotten into the game with all aspects of gear — hardware, software, interfaces, speakers, how-to books — and we've seen many of our retailers expand their recording departments as a result.

Mics are a natural progression, and Blue mics are just cool. We are proud to be associated with this well-respected company on the rise."

Hal Leonard will distribute specific Blue lines, including the Essential series, the enCORE live performance series, a full range of desktop USB mics and a variety of accessories.

Blue will continue to offer support to its retailers directly through its Technical Sales Regionals, product support team and service center.

{halleonard.com; bluemic.com}

OVATION | CONTEST

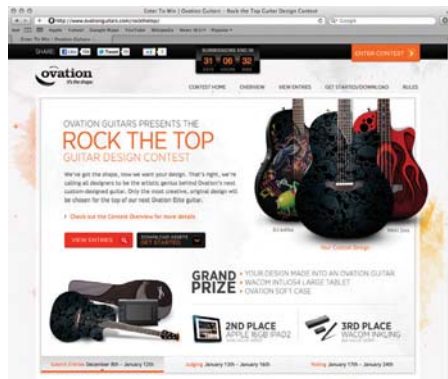
Ovation Guitars 'Rocks the Top'

Ovation Guitars recently held the "Rock the Top" design contest, which invited designers to flex their creativity for a chance to have a design featured on the next Ovation guitar.

Contest designs had to be submitted by Jan. 12 in order to be chosen as a finalist and eligible for public voting.

At press time, a panel of Ovation judges planned to choose the top five designs based on overall impact, creativity, memorable content and reflection of the Ovation attitude. The amount of social media buzz generated by each design was also to be taken into consideration.

The grand-prize winner gets his or her design featured on the top of Ovation's new Elite series guitar, a Wacom Intuos4 large tablet and an Ovation soft guitar case. **{ovationguitars.com/rockthetop}**



UNIVERSAL PERCUSSION | EVENT

BREAKING RECORDS

Universal Percussion has been officially entered into the Guinness World Records in the category of musical instruments.

The entry is for a unique set of wind chimes, created with the help of Treeworks Chimes. It features 1,221 chime bars mounted on 21 hand-finished hardwood bars supported by 21 metal tripod stands.

In order to be eligible for the record, the instrument had to be played during a live performance. The performance took place Aug. 28, 2011, when Universal Percussion hosted its second annual Drumfest at Firestone Park in Columbiana, Ohio.

A notarized videotape of the performance was sent to the Guinness Book's publishers, ultimately earning the chimes and Universal Percussion the title of "World's Largest Wind Chimes." **{universalpercussion.com}**

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PREMIER | ACQUISITION

Premier Takes on KD Drums

Premier recently acquired KD Drums. The acquisition will see the formation of The Premier Drum Co. Ltd., which will be the research, development and U.K. manufacturing operation for Premier Music International Ltd.

The Premier Drum Co. Ltd. will operate and manufacture from the new factory premises in Lancashire, England, starting in February.

“As Premier celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2012, we are excited that this acquisition kick-starts the celebrations and sees Premier return to its natural heritage of manufacturing high-quality products in the United Kingdom.” premier-percussion.com



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D'ADDARIO | PROMOTION

D'Addario Unveils New Campaign

D'Addario has introduced its Music Starts Here campaign. The company launched a viral video, which conveys the parallels between how music starts on D'Addario's factory floor and with the musician. This is the first in a series of minute-long videos showcasing D'Addario's commitment to its artisan manufacturing processes and artists.

“More than a campaign, Music Starts Here is the company's philosophy,” said Jim D'Addario, CEO. “Committed to excellence in manufacturing, creating jobs in the United States and ultimately giving a voice to musicians worldwide, Music Starts Here is the true purpose of the company.” daddario.com



Seymour's on the Hunt

Seymour Duncan recently teamed up with Godin, Cort, Richmond Guitars, Schecter Guitars, Jarrell Guitars and U.S. Music to unveil The Great Tone Treasure Hunt, an online scavenger hunt. Launched Jan. 1, the hunt is conducted through tonehunt.com. Each hunt has three clues, and when a user has solved them, he submits his answers through the “Dig for Treasure” menu. Once a winner is chosen, the prize and the answers will be announced. tonehunt.com

TRIBUTE

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

Ruth Billings

Ruth Billings passed away on Nov. 3, 2011. She was a sales representative with Hal Leonard for 14 years. Billings came from a musical family and as a child sang duets with her father. She studied piano at the Milwaukee Conservatory of Music and taught the organ for more than 20 years at the Zeb Billings Piano and Organ Co. in Milwaukee. She's survived by her two sons, Rick Omar Billings and Timm Billings.



Budd Johnson

Budd Johnson died on Dec. 4, 2011. He was 69. Johnson was a key member of the Teac team that oversaw the development of the American branch of Tascam. His product spec sheets and ads later proved to play a key role in the popularity of Tascam's reel and mixing units. He also played an early and important part in the success of Fostex and served as the company's president.

BUDDY BLAZE GUITARS | VENUES

Blaze Makes a Move

After six years of crafting guitars in Kona, Hawaii, Buddy Blaze and his wife, Joyce, are relocating the Buddy Blaze Guitars production facility to Kansas.

The couple is teaming up with Jake Willoughby, longtime retailer of Buddy Blaze, to enable Blaze to increase production while reigning in shipping costs.

"The opportunity to centrally locate production and bring in someone with Jake's experience was too good to pass up," Buddy Blaze said. buddyblaze.com

AMERICAN DJ | AWARD

ADJ'S DAVIES HONORED

Scott Davies, general manager of American DJ, was recently awarded the first-ever Crystal Disc Lifetime Achievement Award by *DJ Zone* magazine at the 2011 LDI Conference in Orlando, Fla.

Sid Vanderpool, publisher of *DJ Zone*, presented Davies with the award for his contributions to the DJ industry and bringing affordable lighting and audio products to the market.

"This award is such an honor since most of my life I have been a part of this industry, and this industry means so much to me," Davies said. americandj.com

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YORKVILLE | DISTRIBUTION

YORKVILLE & LOS CABOS JOIN FORCES

On Jan. 1, Yorkville Sound became the exclusive distributor of the Los Cabos drumstick line in Canada.

Los Cabos Drumsticks is the newest addition to Yorkville Sound's growing distributed brands catalog. The company also recently added Mapex Drums and introduced the Granite Percussion line to Canada.

{loscabosdrumsticks.com; yorkville.com}



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APPOINTMENTS

Yamaha Shakes It Up



Eric Aparicio

Yamaha recently made changes to its upper management. Jay Schreiber, former Band & Orchestral (B&O) division general manager, will now serve as general manager of the Pro Audio & Combo (PAC) division.

Garth Gilman, recently assistant general manager of the PAC division, has been promoted to general manager of the B&O division. John Shalhoup is moving from his position as national sales director of the PAC division to director of administration for the B&O division. Eric Aparicio has shifted from the B&O division's director of admin to the PAC division's director of administration. Shoji Mita has left his position as planning director of the YCA customer sales and marketing group to accept a new role with Yamaha Corp. Japan.

B&C Speakers has brought on Bennett Prescott as its new U.S. sales manager.

Prentice Practice Pads recently named William Ludwig III marketing director.

Vic Firth has promoted Jim Doyle to vice president of finance and administration.

Bob Moses, longtime **Audio Engineering Society** (AES) member and officer, has been named executive director of AES.

Cavanaugh has hired Jan Sumner as its director of sales.

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beyerdynamic, the German audio specialist, continues its strong tradition of quality as it celebrates the debut of its new Touring Gear microphone series. A complete product range of more than 25 different microphones for live performance, the Touring Gear Series showcases a new uniform and elegant design, top specifications, and a clear, easy to understand classification system.

ALLEN & HEATH



Allen & Heath are pleased to announce a new revolution in digital mixing, the GLD series. Several new additions to the popular Zed product lineup will also be on display.

KURZWEIL



One phrase that says it all... "It's The Sound". Kurzweil continues to lead the pack with cutting edge technology resulting in pristine digital instrument reproduction. The newly updated "Live Edition" PC3LE features unlimited sound and program editing taking full advantage of Kurzweil's world renowned VAST architecture.

Fostex



Introducing the Fostex AR-4i Audio Interface for iPhone 4. Designed to enhance the video you capture with your iPhone 4, the AR-4i provides professional stereo audio quality for iPhone videos complete with LED input level metering, gain control and headphone monitoring.

ALPINE
HEARING PROTECTION



Alpine MusicSafe Classic™ contains two different and interchangeable sets of music filters with outstanding sound characteristics, perfect for medium and high attenuation rates. These special music filters guarantee optimal protection without loss of clarity, while at the same time ensuring a pleasurable listening experience.

sonomax



Sonomax introduces the Eers custom molded earphone system that fit perfectly in your ears isolating ambient noise. View live Eers fitting sessions at our booth.

HIGH PERFORMANCE RESULTS

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Wharfedale
Pro



Wharfedale Pro introduces the next generation of legendary performance with the Kinetic and Delta series passive loudspeaker systems. Since 1932, Wharfedale has been at the forefront of loudspeaker technology - these seventy-five years of experience in the design and manufacture of audio systems make Wharfedale Pro Products second to none.

studilogic®



Studiologic proudly announces the addition of 2 new products. The new Numa Compact, a lighter version of the Numa piano and the Sledge, an analog modeling synthesizer modeled after the classic Minimoog layout featuring 3 oscillators, 2 LFOs plus many additional envelopes and effects processors.

Vestax



Vestax is launching their newest MIDI DJ Controller to the US market, The VCI-400. A big hit at the recent BPM show in the UK. Vestax Corporation manufactures the finest and most innovative DJ gear on the planet.

nord



New offerings from Nord include Nord Drum, a unique and full featured drum synthesizer module as well as the Nord Piano 2 and Nord Organ C2D. Nord continues to lead the pack when it comes to task specific instruments.

Turbosound



Turbosound announces the introduction of the MiO 10" 2 way active loudspeaker to it's popular line of Milan series portable loudspeakers. Turbosound is also proud to announce the return of the TMS Series to it's lineup. TMS is a modular 3 way portable loudspeaker system.

XONE



Xone will be debuting several new world class product entries in the professional DJ arena including the DB2 mixer and K2 compact controller module.

THANKS



FOR MAKING



US #1



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*Overall sales of tuners & metronomes as reported by MI Salestrak for 2011

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KORG

IDEAS

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INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

SMALL-MINDED

Last November, my business partners and I felt compelled to participate in a national Small Business Saturday program.

The theme, “Shop Small,” was intended to resonate with the masses on Black Friday weekend, when deep-pocket big-boxes drown out local retailers with \$39 Blu-ray doorbuster deals and Thanksgiving Day newspaper circulars that require a wheelbarrow to get in the door.

It was a noble idea, and I’m never opposed to the local guy tooting his own horn. That said, I’ve also never felt guilt was the best motivator to capture a sale.

I believe small business merchants do themselves a disservice when they rely solely on plucking that home team heartstring. Yes, there’s probably a remnant die-hard, loyal customer fan base, but if we’re truly good enough and they’re in a buying mood, aren’t we already tight with them? It’s likely we’ve already lost the battle with the chronic coupon shoppers, so it’s really the in-betweeners we need to be chasing. The poor-me underdog mentality is unattractive in dating, and it doesn’t fare well in



Don’t think small just because you’re a small retailer

attracting shoppers either.

So what are the components necessary to attract new customers? Obviously, we need to play from our strengths — a carefully chosen, smartly stocked, competitively priced inventory (blah, blah, blah). Then, there’s something patently illusive we call service.

What too often escapes us is a painfully honest look at

what service means. Nobody denies the power of a handful of doorbusters and traffic-building events, but what do you do with customers once they actually show up? How are they treated?

A tangible personal touch ought to be our best foot forward. A small business should be famous for intimacy with the customer, but is your sales staff equipped to meet customers’ needs? It’s the little things that matter. Say a customer asks for a product, and the store is out. Is your answer: 1) We’re out? 2) We’re out; how soon do you need it? 3) We’re out; was there something else like it we might have, and in what circumstances are you needing it?

These three answers illustrate the spectrum of customer service. No. 1 is how a clerk responds, with pedestrian “yes” or “no” answers. Clerks work for big-box operations and shouldn’t work for you. No. 2 is a commonplace salesperson, but No. 3 goes the next step to engage in dialogue and dig to know the customer better. Service isn’t just ringing up sales or answering questions about price or amp wattage. Service is investigative, prescribing

solutions and giving helpful advice that enhances lives. If we aren’t doing this, no matter how “home team” we are, we aren’t any better than a box store.

Of course, we can tip the scales in the wrong direction and be overbearing. We hire musical experts for our team who know the product and customer but get pushy with their own well-meaning advice. We owe it to customers to put the advice out there and let them decide. “The 50-watt would be better for your situation, but if you can only afford the 30-watt, that’s still a good value.”

Technology and multichannel marketing have even blurred the concept of local. Is it town, state, country? Is it money that goes out of town but still gives local citizens a viable livelihood? Is an independently owned franchise local?

We should never let size be an excuse for poor performance in competing for our customers. Small businesses that do are just that. Small. **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*.

THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

Do You Believe in Magic?

In the days after our most recent event, I heard from two doctors who were suffering from “Physicians’ Talent Show withdrawal.” Only 90 days earlier, these same professionals were telling me how busy they were and that they didn’t know if they had time to commit to the show.

They weren’t the first performers to crash after a gig. Anyone who has ever participated in community theater, a church Christmas cantata or even a simple piano recital knows the feeling. When people come together in a creative endeavor, something magical happens.

Certainly, the nervous stomach and adrenaline rush of performance are powerful, but the effect of the group dynamic is more profound. Performers and crew become friends, and strong emotional bonds are formed. Even political and religious differences disappear — or at least become irrelevant.



ESPRIT DE CORPS

If there’s a scientific term for the magic that happens when individuals join in a creative effort, it has escaped my research, but it is magic nonetheless.

Any artistic collaboration requires courage and a certain sublimation of ego. People who are rehearsing make mistakes, and artists searching for something great produce a lot of failures along the way. Experimentation, imagination and constructive criticism encourage risk, and freedom to fail fosters trust.

Trust, incidentally, is an interesting human invention. Once we develop trust in one area, it broadens and generalizes. We like people we trust more than we trust people we like, so by the time the show goes on, new friendships have been formed and we have what the French call *esprit de corps*.

Human collaborations also require leadership. We tend to develop emotional bonds with those who lead us. We remember our high school band, chorus and drama teachers’ names decades after the memory of other fine teachers has faded. Maybe, because they led us through a creative group endeavor, they left a stronger impression than those who just imparted knowledge.

FOCUS ON THE DREAM

Our customers come to us with a vision. Maybe it’s their daughter performing at Carnegie Hall. More likely, it’s her performing in a recital or playing Christmas songs for the family. But it’s probably not all about lessons and practice. Practicing a musical instrument is not an end. It’s a means to an end. We err when we focus on lessons and practice rather than the pure joy of making music.

Many perceive the study of music as a solitary effort. While private practice is necessary, the real magic happens when we start playing music with and for others. Whether it’s the worship team or choir at church, open mic night at a local pub, a ukulele circle, or jamming with friends and family in our home, everything changes when we start to play.

Taking music lessons and practicing are admirable activities, but playing is what really matters. This is a message we need to take to our customers and parents.

And there’s an obvious financial benefit for dealers who get people playing. This year, docs returning to our Physicians’ Talent Show had new electric guitars, a new Selmer soprano sax, a very expensive custom flamenco guitar, four new ukes and countless accessories. We sold one Steinway to a doc before the

‘The key to turning first-time customers into lifelong customers is getting them playing and performing with others.’

show and have sold two more since. NAMM's Wanna Play?, Weekend Warriors, New Horizons and other programs are proven, turnkey methods you can use to get your customers playing right away.

'We err when we focus on lessons and practice rather than the pure joy of making music.'

In the classic film about our industry, "The Music Man," Marian the Librarian perfectly captures the essence of being in the band in her climactic defense of the hapless professor Harold Hill.

"It all happened just like he said: the lights, the colors, the cymbals and the flags. It was in the way every kid in town walked around this summer and looked and acted."

When we talk with our customers, let's stay focused on the dream. Magic really does happen when a kid joins a band (grade school or garage), when a soccer mom joins the worship team or, as I saw this fall, when an 85-year-old physician picks up a ukulele he hasn't touched in decades and joins the fun.

The key to turning first-time customers into lifelong customers is getting them playing and performing with others. Unlike professor Hill, let's make sure there really is a band for them to join. **MI**

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



+ REAL-LIFE MAGIC

Fifteen doctors showed off their musical gifts at the 7th Annual Steinway Physicians' Talent Show. Held Oct. 25 at The Sugden Community Theatre in Naples, Fla., the evening was hosted by the Steinway Piano Society of Southwest Florida, the nonprofit arm of the Steinway Piano Gallery of Naples. The event raised nearly \$50,000 for the Neighborhood Health Clinic and the Steinway Piano Society Scholarship Fund.

Pianist Priscilla Navarro, a 17-year-old sophomore at Florida Gulf Coast University's Bower School of Music, gave a special performance during the show.

Dr. Bill Lascheid, the 85-year-old co-founder of the Neighborhood Health Clinic, performed in the All Physician Ukulele Orchestra with a uke he brought back from the Korean War.

"Our six previous shows have generated over \$125,000 for the Neighborhood Health Clinic, but with so many still underemployed, the need for our support is greater than ever," said Steinway Piano Society Chairwoman Sara Billings.

The Neighborhood Health Clinic delivers medical care to low-income, working but uninsured Collier County adults.

FROM THE TRENCHES | BY MYRNA SISLEN

I Love You, Goodbye

Last week, I opened my latest Hal Leonard new issues and found a vocal score of Stephen Sondheim’s “The Frogs.” I knew a customer who would be thrilled to see it, so I did what we all do and alerted him. He said he would come by the next day to purchase the music. And he did, and I was happy that he was happy to be the first one to get the new score. A job well done by a local music store.



But the next day, he e-mailed me and expressed how much he wanted to support my business. Then, he told me that after purchasing “The Frogs,” he looked it up on Amazon.com, which sold the score for \$37.42 — almost 40-percent less.

“If it were a difference of \$5, or perhaps even \$10, I’d feel it was worth it unquestionably to support you,” he said. “But in this case, it feels as if I’m basically making a donation of \$22.58 to your store to purchase this single item.”

Here we go again: I love you, I love you, goodbye.

SUPPLIER MUSCLE

This scenario plays out every day for us. I forwarded the e-mail to David Jahnke, vice president of sales for Hal Leonard, to get his perspective. He responded immediately:

“Welcome to the wonderful world of the Internet! Amazon sets their own pricing, and they can list it and sell it for whatever they want. If they can stay in business by only making 8–10 percent on an item, that’s their choice, and there’s not too much we can do about it. They also have the advantage of supplementing their operational costs by selling ad space, referrals, affiliates, etc.

“Amazon is a discount retailer, and their business model is based around selling huge amounts at low profit margins. Point out to

your customer that, as a local retailer, you’re offering a service to the community *and* you’re adding to the needed tax base, as well. Remind him that Amazon can supplement their operational costs by selling ad space, affiliate programs and having additional revenue streams that aren’t really available to brick-and-mortar retailers.”

I forwarded David’s response to my customer and told him that

I would give him a store credit for the book. (There was no way on earth I was going to give him a refund.)

He responded: “Thank you for taking the time and making the effort to pursue this as far as you have. As I said before, I treasure you and Middle C Music and do indeed wish to support you. While I appreciate the offer of a store credit, I will not take you up on that kind offer. The fault — if there is any fault — is mine. And I do plan to continue shopping at Middle C. Please don’t hesitate to call me again when something you think might interest me comes in. It’s that kind of thoughtfulness that makes the price difference worth it.”

Well, my friends, what have we learned? There are many words that come to mind, none of which I should use in an article. I know you are all feeling and have felt my pain. But it’s important to remember that we have some muscle behind us. The response from David Jahnke was extremely helpful in dealing with the situation — and better than any response that might have come from me.

Today, my customer called to order the vocal score for “A Little Night Music.” “Be sure to tell Myrna that I made this order,” he said. All’s well that ends well. Until next time. **MI**

Myrna Sislen owns and operates Middle C Music in Washington, D.C.

How to exploit your power as a local retailer when facing cutthroat online competition

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Inventory Isn't Wine, II

Last month, I discussed the all-too-common mistake of focusing on recouping an investment in slow-moving inventory instead of creating cash flow by stocking quick-turning items. It's a natural impulse. I certainly did it before I learned my lesson. Having "invested" in inventory, you expect a return on that investment. The problem you run into is that tastes change, the market shifts, and sometimes the whims of the buying public are just unpredictable.



Here's a simple truth: Once inventory goes bad, it's unlikely to get better until decades later, when it might acquire vintage appeal. In fact, it's likely its value will keep eroding. So the faster you address the issue, the more likely you'll be able to cut your losses.

I can hear it now. "I put my hard-earned money into that widget, and I'm not giving it away!" The fallacy is that money is all but lost when the slow-moving inventory sits on your sales floor. Selling the inventory at any price creates cash that you can use to buy items that will sell quickly, over and over again — earning the return you sought on your original investment.

So how do we make that inventory go away?

Here are a few practical tactics you can put into place immediately.

COMMIT TO AN ITEM

For starters, define your tolerance for inventory turnover. If you're not a numbers person, work with your accountant to determine how many times you need to turn your inventory to realize your financial performance goals. Once you define how much time you will give your inventory to sell, you can have a dispassionate formula for what to do and when to do it. For instance, if your goal is

four turns annually, then as you approach three months, it's time to take action.

There are several forms that action can take. First and foremost, there needs to be a firm commitment to do *something*. The passive resignation that lets excuses creep into the conversation is a sure-fire formula to end up with a store full of old inventory

and poor cash flow.

One course of action is simply to focus on the item. How's about a new display? A new position in the store? Better signage? Or, maybe it's a home page spot on your website with an improved editorial description. When a product moves slowly, we're quick to blame the product, when the solution is sometimes our own ineptness in displaying and promoting it. Give everything you carry the full force of your marketing muscle, and slow turns may never be an issue.

On the other hand, some products never get traction, despite your best efforts. Sometimes, you've chosen a product that doesn't match your clientele's tastes. Some of your better suppliers may be in a position to help if the inventory is still in new condition. Don't hesitate to ask about stock balancing, an oft-forgotten tool. And don't be shy. It's in your suppliers' best interests to be sure all their products move well.

THE POWER OF EBAY

If all else fails, it may be time to adjust the product's price. On occasion, you can decide to motivate your staff with spiffs, and that little extra push may get the job done. If it comes down to discounting, a little knowledge goes a long way. With few exceptions, everything will sell

Strategies for turning slow-moving inventory — including my secret little weapon

at a certain price. That price is determined by a combination of what competitors are doing and what customers will pay.

You can experiment to find the right price, but that can be an arduous, slow process. The easiest and most accurate tool is eBay. Whether or not you're using the auction site to sell, it's a fabulous research tool.

Look up the item in question, and search for completed auctions. eBay is an open market comprised of millions of shoppers and sellers. You have the power of these sheer numbers to help determine the current market value of almost anything imaginable. Use this as a guideline, and you're well on your way to finding a home for your inventory.

THE SECRET WEAPON

The final tool I'll offer is a little secret weapon I used as a retailer. I shared it many years ago with fellow *Music Inc.* columnist Alan Friedman, and he requested permission to write about it in his column. I had reasons at the time to deny his request, but I'll now share this trick. This is the piece that Alan would've presented.

It has long been accepted that paying commissions based on profitability is the most powerful way to improve your business' profitability. It occurred to me that, likewise, I could improve inventory turns by tying them to commissions. The truth is, it's easier to sell when you have tons of inventory. Conversely, it takes more talent to sell from a

compact, controlled inventory, and salespeople deserve to be rewarded for their extra effort and skill.

Here's how my system worked. At the beginning of each month, I looked at inventory levels. From that, I calculated a series of plateau goals based on inventory turns. Each sales associate was given specific sales targets at the start of the month. Each target got progressively more aggressive and was rewarded at a higher level.

For instance, if the sales associate sold X dollars, that would equate to Y turns annualized, and the associate would receive a multiplier added to the gross profit-based commissions. To be a little less abstract but hypothetical in the numbers, if he

hit the sales plateau that was equivalent to four turns, he would receive 110 percent of his normal commission. If he hit the next plateau, he'd get 120 percent of his commission, and so forth.

The result was a sales staff that focused simultaneously on profitability and clearing out inventory on hand. The team was less excited about having a warehouse full of stuff and more motivated to be solid contributors to the company's financial well-being. Think about your business. Wouldn't that be a refreshing change? **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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THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

Resolutions, Part II

In my last article, I outlined my 10 new year's resolutions. Now that I have those carefully planned, I like to establish a set of short-, mid- and long-term goals. These may go hand in hand with my resolutions, or they become something that will indirectly help achieve an end result. Resolutions often fade, but goals can stand as mini-resolutions year-round.

SHORT-TERM GOALS

Short-term goals may include putting a fresh coat of paint in the bathroom at work, cleaning out a file cabinet or rearranging your store's floor plan. The point is to set a small task to be completed outside of your daily routine, so you feel the accomplishment immediately. (Do not delegate these goals.)

Developing your short-term goals will help break the cycle of procrastination and monotony. Don't enter these items in your iPhone, iPad or BlackBerry — it's too easy to silence the alarm when it goes off. Write the goals down in pen, so you have a daily list. Once you accomplish an item, check it off.

MID-TERM GOALS

Sometimes, my short-term goal directly influences my mid-term goal. Case in point: I started painting that bathroom in one of my stores and liked the look of it so much that I decided to paint the entire store. The problem was time and budget. I didn't have time to paint the entire store by myself in a few weeks or the budget to hire a crew. Besides, I like doing things myself.

So, it became my mid-term goal to paint the entire 6,500-square-foot store. I would have the store painted in six months by breaking it into sections. This way, it didn't look like a construction zone the whole time, and customers wouldn't have to see partially painted walls.

Unlike short-term goals, your mid-term goals have some flexibility. As other issues came up, I had to find time to paint here and there. The payoff? I learned that quality takes time and to be patient. Instead of taking six months to complete the job, it took me eight, but I finished it — and it looks pretty darn good.

LONG-TERM GOALS

My long-term goals change all the time, and yours probably do, too. Long-term goal-setting is what keeps many businesses going. You may decide that your goal for 2012 is to reach a certain number of students in your music lessons program, or you might want to increase your total guitar inventory over the course of the year. If you have to adjust your numbers a little, that's OK. The goal may change to reflect more realistic principles at play that you can't control, such as the economy.

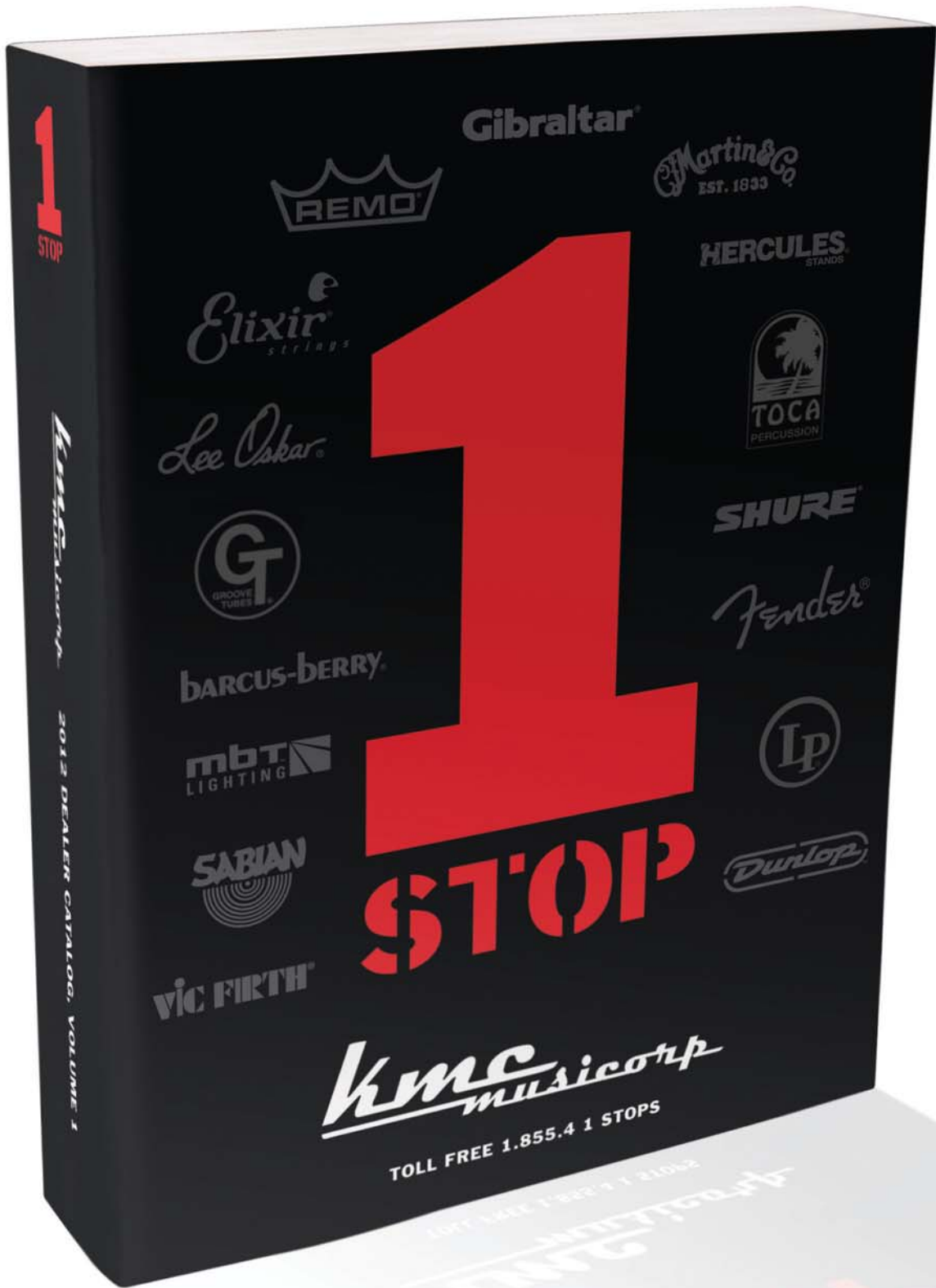
My painting project started to look as if it would become a long-term goal, but I finished it and kept working on another long-term goal I'd started at the top of 2010 — overhauling our entire retail strategy from the ground up, which we did.

Sometimes, long-term goals aren't as defined as you think, and you realize that your short- and mid-term goals actually turn into something long-term. In 1992, I started my company out of the back of my car, and my long-term goal was to stay in business and make enough to get a storefront. That was 20 years ago. Now, my long-term goal is to write another article updating you on how my goals fared between 2012 and 2032. **MI**



How to set and achieve your short-, mid- and long-term goals

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



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THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Evolve Your Lessons

Every new year, I evaluate the evolution of our music lessons program. January and February tend to be a good time to look at what's working and not working well and infuse new ideas for the coming months. Mind you, evolving a program is a bold challenge, but it's necessary.

A critical part of this process is getting your teachers involved. They are in your lesson rooms every day, so they're important to the success of your evolution.



EVOLVE WHAT WE TEACH

This is the time to work new elements into our music lesson programs. Can we include more work from famous musicians? Can we add more styles of music into our teaching? Can we incorporate some new, up-and-coming artists?

Lessons can also include more instruction on instrument maintenance. Drum lessons could focus on tuning a drum kit and changing heads. Likewise, guitar instructors could teach changing strings, and vocalists could focus on microphone technique.

Then there's teaching guitarists alternate tunings, drummers brush technique and trumpeters how to play in tune with a mute. Are your teachers doing this?

Other options include adding a tech track, a songwriting course or a recording class. The point is to come up with topics that enhance lessons and charge your program with new excitement. Make sure to call on your teachers to help develop these ideas and implement them.

EVOLVE HOW WE TEACH

Now's the time to evaluate new print music methods and songbooks that can be incorporated in the teaching process. These materials should correspond with the new ideas discussed earlier.

How about recording lessons and giving students MP3s that they can reference while practicing the following week?

Also, consider starting a monthly group lesson, so different private-lessons students can perform together. Maybe you need

to be more recreational in your teaching approach.

EVOLVE STUDENT EVENTS

Evaluate whether you need more student showcases. Are you hosting a piano festival? A songwriting contest? A blues jam? How about an adults-only showcase? Once again, this is where your music lessons staff becomes invaluable.

Plan cool stuff for the summer months especially. What do you need to improve upon? Again, ask yourself what will enhance the students' music lessons experience when they have a little more time on their hands.

EVOLVE OUR MARKETING

How you evolve your student events will directly affect what you promote. This area of your business sets you apart from the competition, which is likely doing the same old stuff.

Posting events on YouTube, your website and your Facebook page really bolsters your music lesson marketing. You need to be Google-able! If someone does a Web search for "cello lessons" or "rock guitar lessons," you need to be found. In fact, you need to be found in a search for everything you teach. 2012 is the year to make this happen. **MI**

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

The new year is a great time to evaluate your lessons program and make sure it's evolving

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Plan for Profits: Set Up a Levy's Plan-o-gram

"Glen, I just wanted to touch base with you on our new Levy's Plan-o-gram.

The response has been very positive. The main comments have been that the straps are **easy to find** and that we have a **better selection**.

On my end, it is much **easier to keep the rack looking tidy**. Everything has a place and the customers have indicated that in the past they simply gave up looking for what they wanted because everything was all over the place.

Our sales have increased for sure. I am not sure by how much just yet but I would say **40% at least.**"

*Kris Tischbein
Pinnacle Music Studios*

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>>>
SCHILKE
S22C-HD TRUMPET
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YOUR FIRST LOOK AT 2012'S NEW PRODUCTS

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Hal Leonard reveals guitar hero gear secrets

THE GEAR GUIDE



GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

IBANEZ | RG

Pink Attack

Ibanez is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its RG by releasing fluorescent pink and yellow versions of the guitar. The RG features a five-piece walnut/maple Wizard neck and an American basswood body. The guitar also boasts Ibanez's Edge-Zero II tremolo with Zero Point System 3 Fe. MSRP: \$1,267.99. ibanez.com



Photo by Karen Solem



FENDER | SELECT SERIES

Superior Selection

Fender has unveiled the Fender Select series. The five guitars and two basses in the lineup feature choice tonewoods, figured tops, striking finishes, and figured and quartersawn maple necks with compound-radius fretboards. The instruments also boast specially voiced Fender Select pickups that deliver a powerful tone. The Select series is made in the United States. fender.com



HAGSTROM | TREMAR DEUCE-F

What the Deuce

Hagstrom recently added the Tremar Deuce-F to its line of Deuce models. In addition to being equipped with Hagstrom's Tremar system, the guitar also features a Graph Tech Black Tusq nut, T-O-M roller bridge, Hagstrom Custom 58 pickups, dual volume pots and tone controls with independent push-pull coil taps for each pickup. The Deuce-F also boasts a set mahogany neck, semi-hollow mahogany body and maple top complete with customized Hagstrom F-hole. hagstromguitars.com



ESP | SIGNATURE SERIES

Rock Legends

ESP Guitars has added the ESP Rob Caggiano and his LTD RC-600, along with the ESP Frank Bello and his LTD FB-4, to its Signature guitar series. The ESP Rob Caggiano and LTD RC-600 are offered in a See Thru Purple finish and boast an ash body. The ESP Frank Bello and LTD FB-4 are based on the ESP Vintage-4 model and customized to Bello's specifications with a black satin finish. esp-guitars.com



SCHECTER | SYNYSYTER CUSTOM-S

Syn City

Schecter has released the Synyster Custom-S. The new Syn guitar features the Sustainiac, a unique system that resides in place of the neck humbucker and provides controlled feedback sustain at all levels. The guitar also features a mahogany Avenger body with a set-in 25.5-inch-scale mahogany neck, 24-fret ebony fingerboard, Floyd Rose 1000 locking tremolo system and Seymour Duncan Custom Syn Invader humbucker. MSRP: \$1,649.

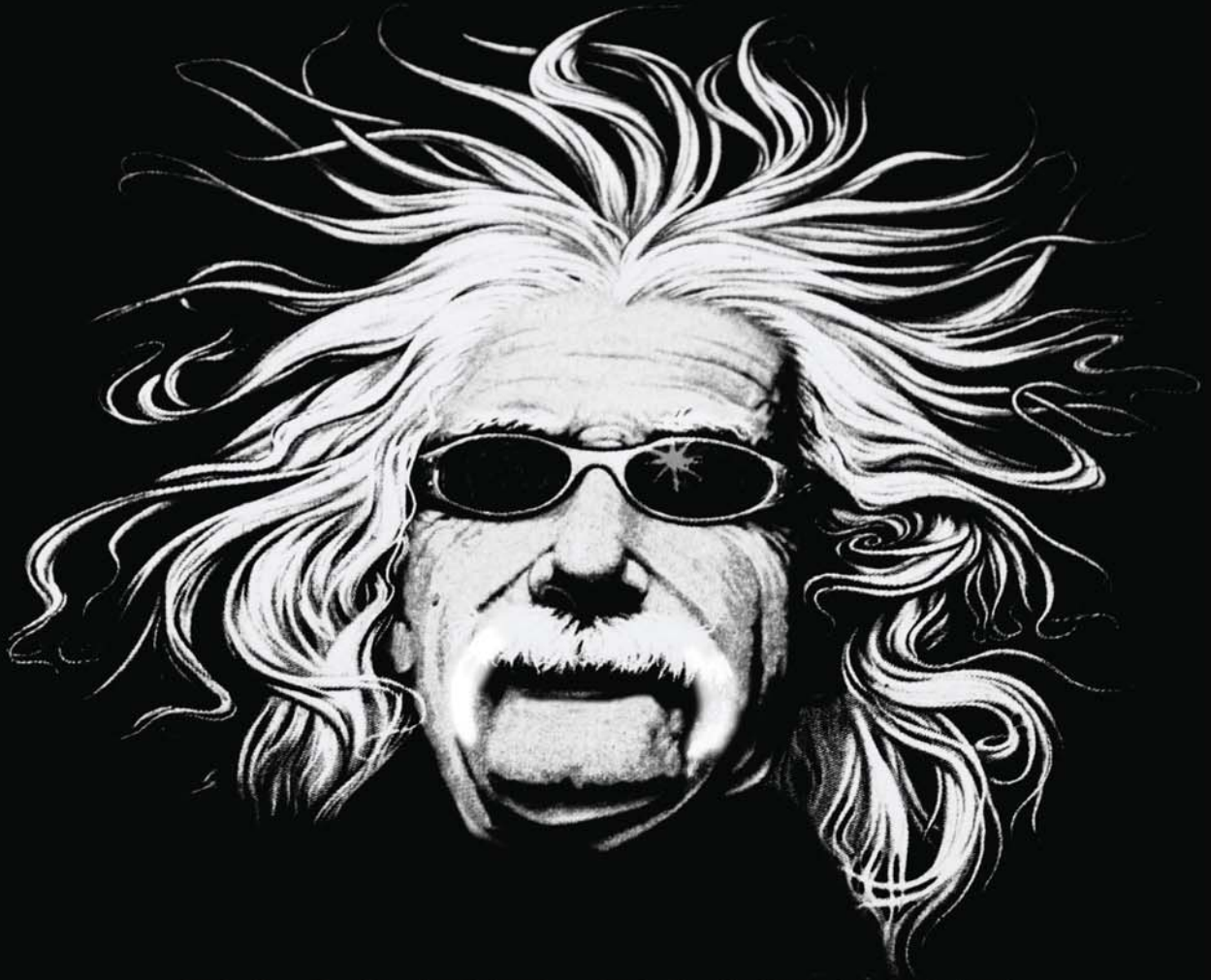
schecterguitars.com



Photo by Karen Solem

Dean Markley
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40th Anniversary



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GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



PEAVEY | HEADLINER

Making Headlines

Peavey's new Headliner is a rackmountable bass amplifier head with matching enclosures. The Headliner packs power and tone into a lightweight 10-pound package. The unit is a 600-watt max head that features a seven-band graphic EQ spaced at optimized frequencies, with each slider providing 15 dB of cut and boost. Other features include a pre-shape contour switch, bright switch and footswitchable optical compressor. MSRP: \$499.99 peavey.com

ORANGE | OR50H

Vintage Amp

Orange Amplification recently reintroduced its OR50H. Featuring a traditional single channel with a three-stage gain section, the OR50 also boasts HF Drive control. As users turn the control clockwise, they can hear the power amp presence increase while adding an extra dimension of power amp gain. The new OR15H offers an alternative specification for those looking for a 15-watt Class A guitar amp but still delivers the vintage Orange tone. orangeamps.com



HUGHES & KETTNER | TUBEMEISTER 5

Transcendent Tone

Hughes & Kettner recently unveiled the TubeMeister 5. This amp delivers immediate response thanks to the single 12BH7 dual triode push-pull power section — two tubes housed in a single glass vacuum. The ultra-compact TubeMeister 5 combo delivers the same response and tone as the head and comes loaded with a newly developed Celestion 8-inch speaker. hughes-and-kettner.com



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GEAR >

GUITARS & ACCESSORIES



REUNION BLUES | RB CONTINENTAL

Midnight Madness

Reunion Blues recently expanded the RB Continental line with the Midnight series. The cases use the same drop-tested construction that has made the line popular for travel but also feature numerous design refinements incorporating user feedback gathered over the last two years. Available for guitar and bass, band and orchestra models are set to arrive in the second quarter of 2012. reunionblues.com

BAM L'ORIGINAL | MADE-TO-MEASURE

Made to Last

Bam l'Original Cases has introduced its Made-To-Measure lineup. Designed in France, all high-tech cases by Bam are lightweight and offer protection against shocks and temperature changes.

Made of a three-ply structure, the cases are an ideal solution for traveling musicians. MAP: \$695.

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GEAR

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

LEVY'S LEATHERS | PRINTED HEMP STRAPS

Green & Groovy

Levy's Leathers has unveiled a line of printed hemp guitar straps. They're 2-inch heavy-weight straps that feature genuine hemp. Pictured is model MSSH8P. The straps are available in six original designs. levysleathers.com



PLANET WAVES | AMERICAN STAGE CABLES

American Masters

Planet Waves has added custom-designed American Stage to its line of cables. The series features In-Out technology for optimum signal transparency, in-line solder joints for superior conductivity and strength, and the patented Geo-Tip design for improved fit in all jacks. The cable's 22AWG oxygen-free copper center provides enhanced signal transfer. MSRP: \$39.99-\$69.99. planetwaves.com



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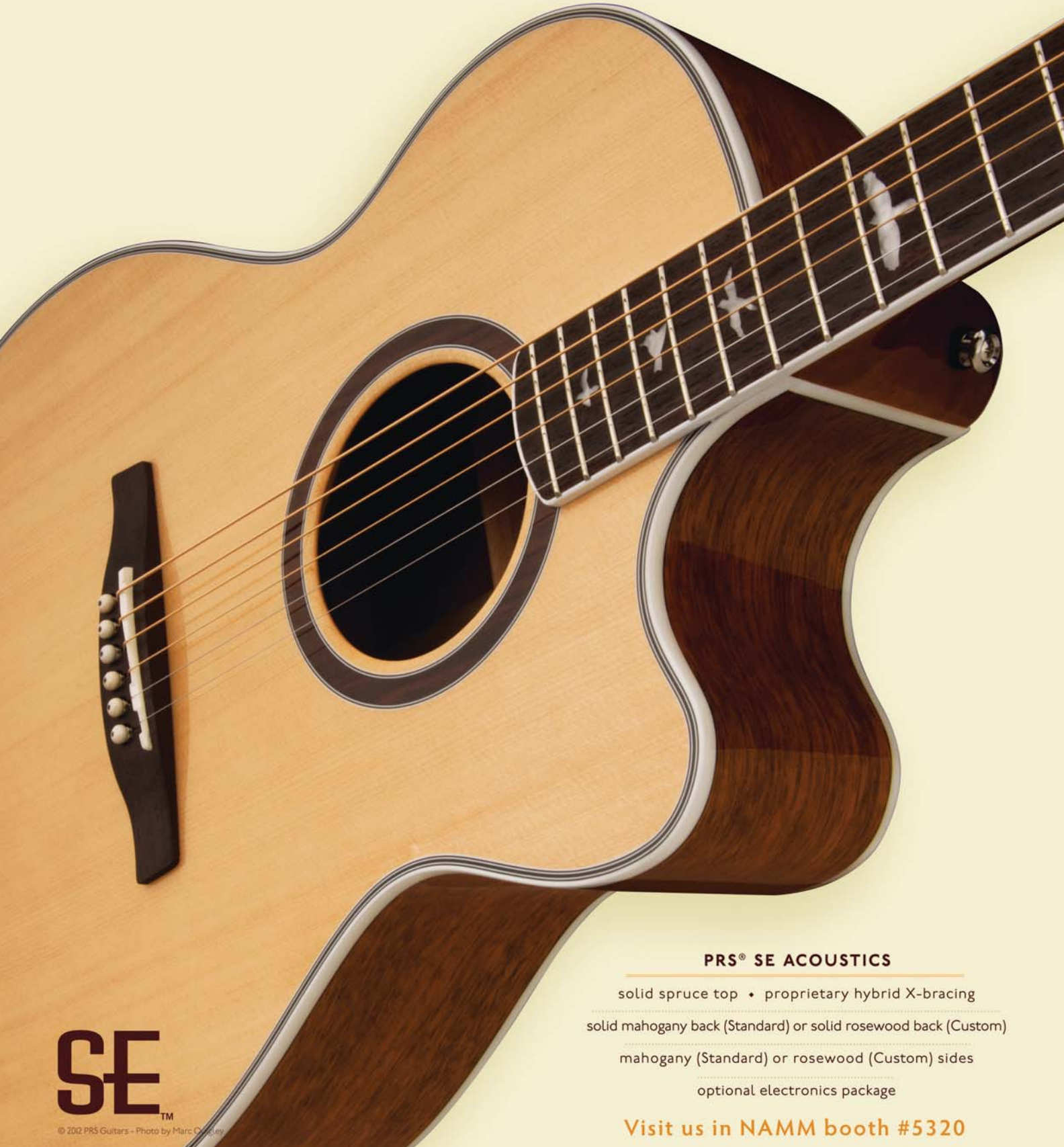


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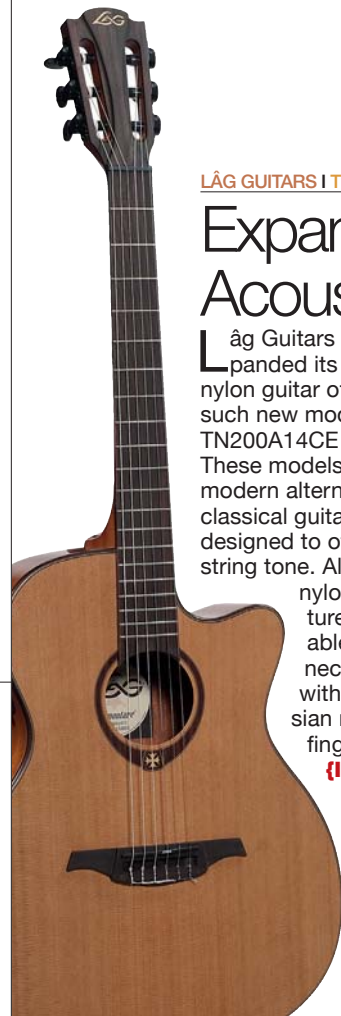
LÂG GUITARS | TRAMONTANE

Expanded Acoustics

Lâg Guitars has expanded its Tramontane nylon guitar offerings with such new models as the TN200A14CE (pictured). These models offer a modern alternative to the classical guitar. Each is designed to offer rich nylon string tone.

All Tramontane nylon guitars feature a comfortable, compact neck topped with an Indonesian rosewood fingerboard.

{lagguitars.com}



Follow Your Passion

Moku Ukuleles

NAMM Hall E booth 1317

mokuukes.com



TANGLEWOOD | TCC CLASSICALS

True Classics

Tanglewood recently introduced TCC classics to North America. The instruments are an extension of the company's Evolution series. The TCC's features include the choice of a spruce or solid cedar top, rosewood back and sides, a mahogany one-piece neck, maple binding, and a bone nut and saddle. MSRP: spruce top, \$229; cedar top, \$379; cedar top with Fishman Isys, \$499.

{tanglewoodguitars.com}

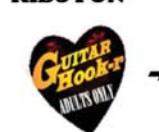


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Masterful Models

St. Louis Music's new Alvarez Masterworks guitar series is made up of 11 models, woods and body shapes. All Masterworks guitars have an open-pore finish to the back and sides. The top and neck feature a satin finish. stlouismusic.com



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Fishman On-board

LPD Music has equipped its Paracho Elite guitars with Fishman Presys on-board pre-amp systems. The pickup enhances the sound of the handcrafted guitars, which feature wood from Paracho, Mexico. The Paracho Elite line includes a full array of Latin instruments. lpdmusic.com



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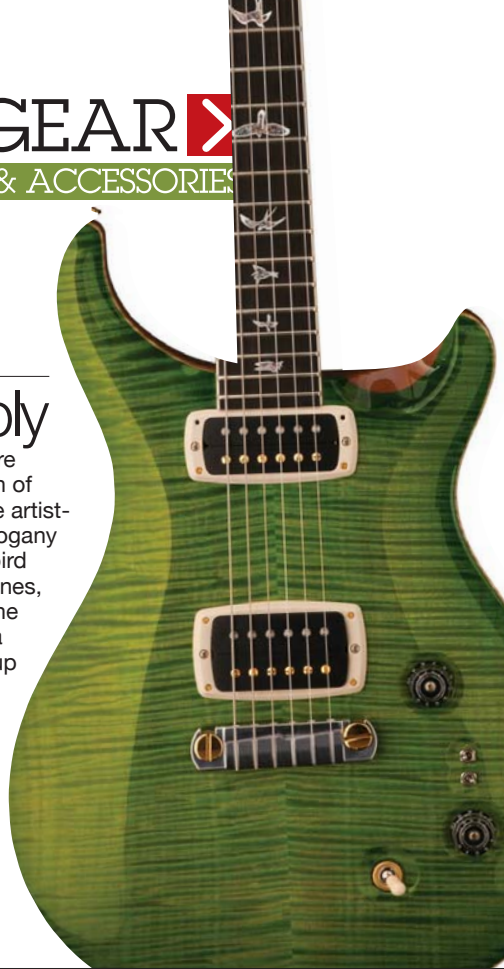
GEAR

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

PRS | SIGNATURE LIMITED

Limited Supply

PRS has released its Signature Limited line, a 400-piece run of guitars. The instruments feature artist-grade figured maple tops, mahogany backs and necks, Paua Heart bird inlays with mother of pearl outlines, and sinker mahogany necks. The Signature Limited also boasts a proprietary Signature/408 pickup system designed to extend the guitar's tonal spectrum and musicality. prsguitars.com



PROROCK GEAR | CASES, STANDS

Working Man's Gear

ProRock Gear recently released a line of heavy-duty cases, gig bags, stands and accessories. The road-worthy cases are designed with the working musician in mind. The cases include a hard-wood-enforced shell and thick foam interiors. apintl.com



THE EMINENCE TONE CENTER

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Loudspeakers are an incredible accessory item for any music store! The poor economy and the consumer's desire to maintain or upgrade their equipment, rather than buying new, makes it even more important and lucrative to consider.

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The **Eminence Tone Center** is a 4x12 cabinet loaded with four uniquely voiced guitar speakers, and utilizes a foot switch to allow the consumer to play through a selection of speakers using any amplifier of their choice. With full color graphics and product information cards for each model, this attractive retail display makes a consumer's purchase decision easy.


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CORDOBA | ORCHESTRA CE

Steely Composure

Cordoba recently released the new Orchestra CE, which combines the feel and playability of a steel string guitar with the warm sound and construction methods of a nylon string. The model features a thinner neck, thinner nut width and radiused fretboard. MSRP: \$905. cordobaguitars.com

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Patent # 7309825 Other Patents Pending

VINTAGE GUITARS | PAUL SMITH

Hot Model

Vintage Guitars has collaborated with designer Paul Smith to release a limited-edition compact acoustic model. The Vintage Paul Smith guitar features a spruce top matched to a mahogany body. Available in a rich purple finish, the guitar's rosette features the Paul Smith signature stripe. jhs.co.uk



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RECORDING KING | RD-310

King Ax

Recording King recently introduced the all-solid RD-310 with Adirondack top. The guitar also has a solid mahogany back and sides for a traditional dreadnought sound. The instrument features a thin C-profile mahogany neck and 1 11/16-inch nut width, along with deluxe Grover Rotomatic tuners to keep the guitar in tune after hours of playing. MAP: \$499.99. recordingking.com



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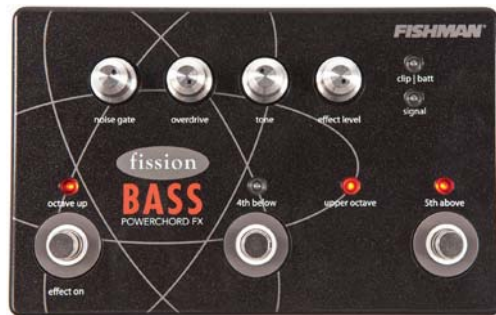
GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

AMPTWEAKER | SWIRLPOOL TREMOLO/VIBE

In the Deep End

Amptweaker's new SwirlPool Tremolo/Vibe pedal can duplicate different types of modulation tones and invent new ones. The two footswitch buttons provide bypass and speed control, letting users switch between two different speeds and vibe settings while sharing a Tremolo control.

{amptweaker.com}



FISHMAN | FISSION BASS POWERCHORD

Funky Fission

Fishman recently launched the Fission Bass Powerchord FX pedal. The unit lets any bassist lay down beds of power by adding stacked harmonies over bass lines. A set of controls and foot switches lets several combinations of octaves, fourths and fifths above the root note combine to produce power chords or octave-up effects. The pedal also features four footswitch LEDs. {fishman.com}

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JIM DUNLOP | FUZZ FACE

Get Fuzzy

Jim Dunlop's new Eric Johnson Signature Fuzz Face pedal was developed with Fuzz Face guru George Tripps and inspired by Johnson's personal Fuzz Faces. The pedal features hand-selected BC183 silicon transistors for higher gain, custom '68-'69 knobs and a vintage-style hammertone finish. The result is a dynamic, expressive pedal. jimdunlop.com



ROCKTRON | ODB

Rocktron on Overdrive

Rocktron has released the ODB (Overdrive Dynamic Blues) stomp box. The ODB provides blues tone and dynamic control in a pedal package that lets users tweak the subtlest nuances. The unit also features Germanium clipping diodes that can be independently assigned to provide "soft knee" clipping compression applied to the positive cycle of the overdrive output, negative cycle of the overdrive output or both. rocktron.com



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GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

GHS | PHOSPHOR BRONZE ACOUSTIC

Packed Up

GHS Strings has introduced Phosphor Bronze acoustic guitar strings in a resealable five-pack. The GHS five-packs are sealed at the factory for freshness in a tamper-proof package that includes a built-in zipper lock. This lets users remove only the packs required at a given time and reseal the package to maintain freshness. ghsstrings.com



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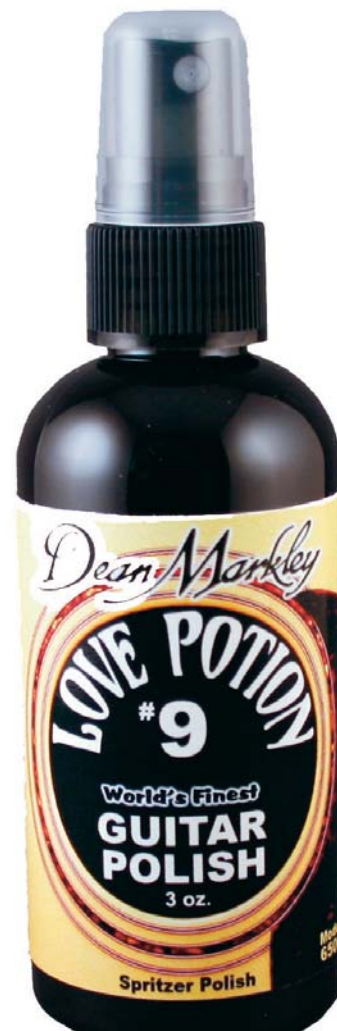


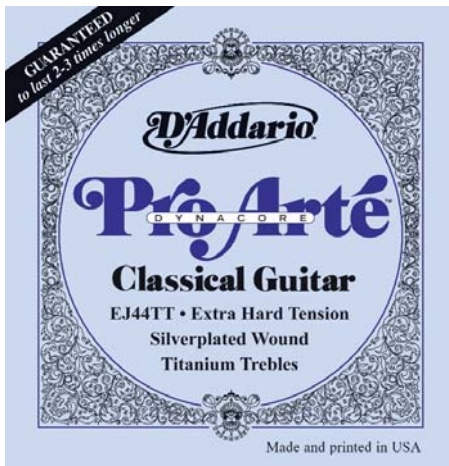
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DEAN MARKLEY |
LOVE POTION #9

Love in the Air

Dean Markley recently reintroduced its original guitar care polish, Love Potion #9. Gentle enough for daily use, Love Potion #9 is a simple, efficient way to care for all wood-crafted instruments. Applied daily, the concentrated formula provides streak-free shine and extends the life of an instrument. MSRP: \$5.95. deanmarkley.com





D'ADDARIO | CLASSICAL STRINGS

Flexible Feel

D'Addario has unveiled Pro-Arté Dynacore classical guitar strings. They have a new core construction that delivers a more flexible feel and quick response. The strings offer a rich round and full tone. daddario.com

ROTSOUND | GUITAR CAPO

Quick Fix

Rotosound has launched a new spring-loaded guitar capo. It's designed to be used with one hand for ultra-quick changes during onstage playing. Made from magnesium alloy, the capo is small, light, and easily applied and removed. Once squeezed into position, it stays in place and gives players complete control over where it's positioned. MSRP: \$24.95. rotosound.com



CABLES MATTER
asterope.com



GEAR

S & ACCESSORIES

KORG | TUNERS

On the Beat

Korg now offers its Pitchclip and AW-2G clip-on guitar and bass tuners in eight limited-edition colors, including, violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red and pink. The Pitchclip's LED display can be angled up to 120 degrees and inverted. The AW-2G relies on either piezo-electric vibrations or the built-in microphone. korg.com



STRING SWING | CC54

Hang With Me

String Swing has debuted the CC54 ukulele rack. Available in three configurations, the CC54 can hold eight, 16 or 24 ukes in a 30-inch-diameter circle. The rack can also be ordered to accommodate the same number of violins. All String Swing fixtures are available to order with different cradles to display any instrument properly. stringswing.com

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BURRISS AMPS | ROYAL BLUESMAN V2

Updated Bluesman

Burriss Amps has introduced the Royal Bluesman v2. The hand-wired, all-tube 18-watt amp maintains all the quality, tone and power of the original but brings a more aggressive gain that retains a clean character based on touch response. burrissamps.com

ELECTRO-HARMONIX | ANALOGIZER

Warm Up

Electro-Harmonix has released the Analogizer, an effect pedal designed to warm up the harshness of a digitally processed guitar or thicken up an already warm sound. The pedal provides the organic tone and feel of an analog delay, without the long delay times. The Analogizer features four controls: gain, spread, blend and volume. MSRP: \$139.80. ehx.com



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Heritage



CLASSIC GUITAR COMBO GETS HERITAGE TREATMENT

The Ampeg Heritage line focuses on the premium. So much more than the average re-issue, we take legendary pieces of gear from Ampeg's rich history and breathe new life into them. This year, we are excited to offer a recreation of a legendary Ampeg guitar combo — the Heritage R-12R Reverberocket. Delivering the authentic tube-driven reverb and smooth, sweet tremolo that made the original one of the most revered guitar combos ever, the Heritage R-12R is simply amazing. Plus, the limited edition Heritage B-15 is back for 2012. With expanded production and plans for worldwide availability, this exclusive bass rig offers an unmatched experience for any bass player who plugs in.

SVT

MEET THE MINI FRIDGE

The Ampeg Micro-CL Stack delivers 100 watts of Ampeg tone into any situation. It features a tough, 2x10" cab and tools like a stereo input and output for silent practice, effects loop and direct out for recording. It's everything you want in a full stack, micro-sized to fit perfectly into your life.



GVT

PLUG INTO AMPEG'S FULL LINE OF TUBE GUITAR AMPS – GVT SERIES

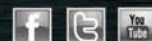
The comprehensive line of Ampeg GVT Guitar Amps range from an ultra-compact 5-watt head, all the way up to a gig-friendly 50-watt, 2x12 combo. GVT heads and combos are all-tube by design, including 6V6 and 6L6 power tubes for unmistakable American feel and tone. Featuring Ampeg's legendary Baxandall EQ circuitry,

which provides unmatched flexibility, the guitarist has a much wider range of tones than competitive amps. Both GVT extension cabinets feature Celestion® Vintage 30 speakers, perfect for translating the feel of the all-tube GVT amplifiers. Plus, rugged build quality ensure years of use out on the road.



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THE GEAR GUIDE

AUDIO & RECORDING

SHURE | SRH1440, SRH1840

Shure Opens Up

Shure has expanded its headphone line with the company's first open-back models: the SRH1440 and SRH1840. The SRH1440 features 40-mm neodymium drivers, which deliver full-range audio with rich, controlled bass and detailed highs in a sleek design. The SRH1840 boasts an aircraft-grade aluminum alloy yoke and stainless-steel grills for durability and lightweight design. MSRP: SRH1440, \$399; SRH1840, \$699. shure.com



LINE 6 | XD-V SERIES

Wire-free & Clear

Line 6 recently launched the XD-V75 (pictured), XD-V55 and XD-V35 series digital wireless microphone systems. With 24-bit, 10 Hz–20 kHz compander-free performance, XD-V series digital wireless systems provide full-range audio clarity and license-free operation. Designed for professional vocalists and performers, the new flagship XD-V75 includes handheld, lavalier, headset and bodypack digital wireless systems. line6.com





FHE SERIES

FHE active speakers are the optimal selection for fixed installation reinforcement and touring show system. High sensitivity, power and efficiency.

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www.soundking.com



128 Channels Expandable to 256
LIVE Production Digital Console



www.cadac-sound.com

CADAC unveils it's new flagship digital live production console, the CDC Eight. Specified for high end sound touring and fixed installation applications, the console boasts a unique 'high agility' user interface, accessed via two 24 inch 16:10 high definition LCD touch screens; a further centre located 6 inch LCD touch screen accesses the system control and automation. Combined with a far less menu dependent operating system than other digital consoles, the CDC Eight is exceptionally smart, nimble and intuitive in operation.

The CDC Eight features a high I/O count for a desk at this price point, offering 128 channels expandable to 256 inputs, and a standard 48 outputs. Two frame sizes offer 16 or 32 faders. Built upon the company's latest generation proprietary DSP mix platform, processing power, as the name implies, is delivered by 32/40-bit floating-point SHARC processors.



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Electronic Drum Kit & Amplifiers

Continuing our entry into the musical instrument market, we have launched a brand new professional electronic drum kit and complimentary drum amplifier range for the demanding professional drummer. With the feel and durability expected of a high quality kit, and drum module features to suit even the most experienced drummer. The EDA series drum amps feature up to a massive 200watts, perfect for your live performance.



Carlsbro Guitar Amplification

Carlsbro have been producing world class MI products since 1959. Looking forward into 2012 we now have an impressive new and improved range of market leading guitar amplifiers retaining that British tone and quality.



www.carlsbro.com



Horizon 2000 series

The Horizon 2000 series is the latest development by StuDiomaster in their history of world renowned powered mixers. Featuring a colossal 2000 watts of power, twin DSP effects, dynamics processors, built in 2-way active crossovers. Initially available in 12 and 18 input models.



Audiolmage flat panel NXT™ speaker series

Revolutionary flat response speaker cabinets in a unique lightweight flat panel. Using multiple 25mm exciters, a wider flatter dispersion pattern and higher efficiency are achievable. Weighing only 7kg and less than 100mm deep they are ideal for portable PA on speaker stands, or wall or ceiling mounted. The units can even be mounted in a frame with a picture attached to the front face to make yourself heard but not seen.



www.stuDiomaster.com



1 A-DESIGNS AUDIO JM-3001 A-Designs Audio recently introduced the JM-3001, which features a versatile pre-amp equalizer and instrument input housed in a single-rack-space frame. Hand-built in the United States, the new A-Designs device features three inputs: microphone, instrument and EQ/insert, which may be used together or independently. The unit offers two independent transformer balanced outputs. adesignsaudio.com

2 DBX S SERIES Harman's dbx has updated its S Series. Products in the updated line feature a platinum front panel and four-color packaging with informative application suggestions for each model. The dbx S series includes the following models: 231s dual 31-band graphic equalizer, 215s dual 15-band graphic equalizer, 131s single 31-band graphic equalizer (pictured) and 266xs compressor/gate, among others. harman.com

3 KORG MONOTRIBE Korg's new System Version 2 for the Monotribe Analogue Ribbon Station greatly augments the sequencer functions of Monotribe, in addition to other new features. The Korg System Version 2 update is available as a free download from Korg's website. Highlights of Monotribe Version 2 include a drum roll capability, and connected sequences let multiple Monotribe units play in rotation. korg.com

4 SOUNDCRAFT Si COMPACT Soundcraft has expanded its Si Compact range with the release of the Si Compact 32, which is capable of delivering 40 inputs to mix. The unit features 14 main busses — all with dynamics, delays and BSS graphic EQs — four matrix busses, four dedicated FX busses, four full-time Lexicon effects engines and a range of option cards to interface with other systems. soundcraft.com

5 YAMAHA 01V96i Yamaha's new 01V96i digital mixer offers one-cable connection to computers and is ideal for studio, live recording and installation setups. The mixer includes USB 2.0 connectivity, new multitrack recording features and improved sound quality. The 01V96i includes 110 dB of dynamic range and incorporates a full suite of the latest preinstalled Virtual Circuit Modeling and REV-X reverbs for a full spectrum of tonal colors. yamaha.com



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GEAR >

AUDIO & RECORDING

URBANEARS | EDITIONS

Quilted Comfort

Urbanears has introduced a Quilted Plattan model for its recently launched Editions range of headphones. The Quilted Plattan features a padded headband and comfortable ear cushions wrapped in all-over quilted stitching, just like the kind you'd find on a favorite jacket. MSRP: \$80.

{urbanears.com}



V-MODA | FADERS

Say What?

V-Moda has unveiled Faders tuned earplugs, the first of several protective offerings under Ear Armor. Constructed from top-grade metals and medical-grade silicone fittings, Faders protect users' hearing by reducing harmful noise by 12 dB evenly across the frequency spectrum, while still letting them enjoy clear music and speech in a club, concert or festival setting. MSRP: \$15. {v-moda.com}

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NUMARK | ELECTROWAVE

Making Waves

Numark recently released its Electrowave headphones. These isolating headphones are designed for comfort and extended use. The phones feature a 50-mm driver in each ear cup, providing full bass that lets users feel the music, as well as hear it. The phones come with a detachable 1/8-inch cable. MAP: \$149. {numark.com}



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GEAR >

AUDIO & RECORDING

NADY | NADY U-800

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The new Nady U-800 wireless system features a 120 dB dynamic range. The 800 channels ensure interference-free operation anywhere with open frequencies selectable either manually or with the convenient Autoscan. The ASC infrared link syncs the selected channel between the receiver and transmitter. Choice of transmitters includes hand-held mic or bodypack. **{nady.com}**



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MOJAVE AUDIO | MA-101SP

Mojave's Pair

Mojave Audio recently introduced the MA-101SP. It's a matched pair of Mojave's MA-101fet cardioid condenser microphones. The MA-101SP is an ideal choice for recording acoustic instruments, such as drum overheads; capturing room ambience; and general stereo recording. The microphone's warm FET circuitry and externally polarized capacitor mic element combine to deliver low noise and high-quality performance. MSRP: \$1,195. **{mojaveaudio.com}**





SONY | MDR-7520

Crystal Clear

Sony has released the MDR-7520 headphones and new all-digital wireless microphone system (pictured). The MDR-7520 headphones deliver accurate, uncolored sound reproduction with comfort, while the wireless microphone solution opens new opportunities for capturing performances under challenging conditions. sony.com

George L's

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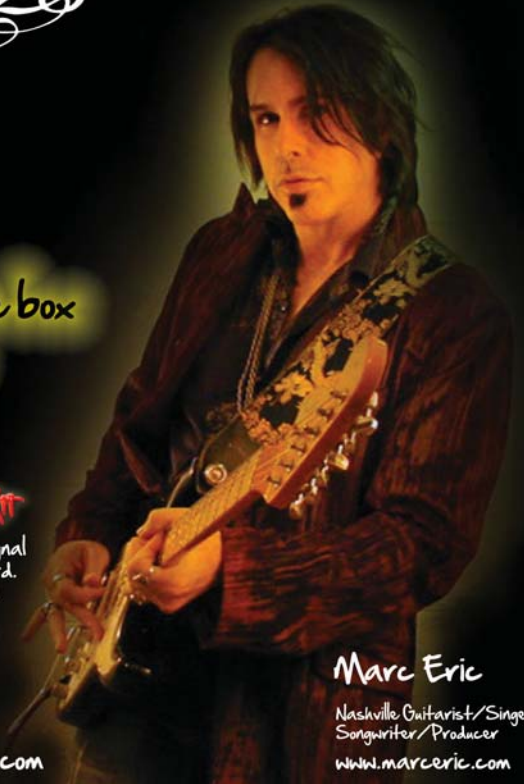
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www.marceric.com

ISOACOUSTICS | ISOL8R155

Floating Speakers

IsoAcoustics has launched the ISOL8R155, a line of speaker stands that let speakers "float" in free space. The stands address the three elements that optimize speaker performance: placement, isolation and focus. The patented isolation system decouples low-frequency vibrations from the supporting surfaces, while providing ideal midrange audio imaging as it encourages all movement to remain on-axis. isoacoustics.com



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LEXICON | MPX NATIVE REVERB PLUG-IN

Classic Reverb

Lexicon recently introduced the MPX Native Reverb plug-in. It offers seven different acclaimed Lexicon reverb types, including small plate, large plate, small hall, large hall, small chamber, large chamber and room, as well as more than 100 studio presets — all accessible via a single-screen interface. MAP: \$199.95. lexicon.com

RADIAL ENGINEERING | MC3

Top-performance Monitoring

Radial Engineering has debuted the MC3 studio monitor controller. A straight wire passive monitor switcher and headphone amp, it's designed to provide smaller production studios with a cost-effective yet high-performance monitor, sub and headphone management system.

radialeng.com





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ROCKTRON | R112 HIGH DEFINITION

High-def Cab

Rocktron has released the R112 High Definition speaker cabinet in a wedge design. The R112 is fitted with a Celestion Vintage 30 12-inch high-definition 16-ohm speaker. The cabinet incorporates a ported design for a focused low-end response, providing greater punch and definition. The arrayable trapezoid shape of the R112 eliminates midrange notching. MSRP: \$499. rocktron.com

EMINENCE SPEAKER | IMPERO

Eminence Empire

Eminence Speaker recently unveiled three advanced, high-power additions to its Professional series: the Impero 12A, 15A and 18A. Using high motor strength with balanced VAS and MMS, the Impero series plays extremely loud and low in compact vented designs. Advancements include a half-inch-thick by 7.5-inch-diameter machined top plate, one-piece machined T-yoke and 4-inch deep-wound fiberglass voice coil. eminence.com



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TASCAM | iM2

The iRecorder

Tascam has debuted a pocket-sized iM2 stereo mic for the iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch, which turns them into high-quality stereo recorders. A pair of condenser microphones plugs into the dock connector of the Apple devices. The microphones are adjustable over 180 degrees for optimal sound placement. **{tascam.com}**



AUDIX | TM1 PLUS

Make It a Combo

Audix recently rolled out its new TM1 Plus. The combination kit includes the TM1 measurement microphone, a threaded acoustic windscreen, a shock mount clip, a half-inch calibrator adapter and microphone calibration data on CD. MSRP: \$450. **{audixusa.com}**

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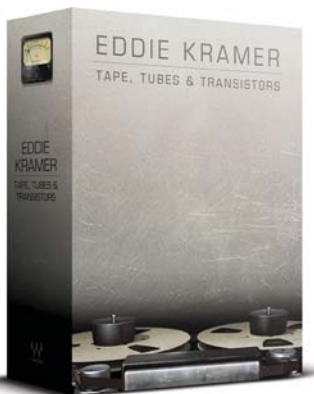
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WAVES AUDIO | TAPE, TUBES & TRANSISTORS

Kramer's Bundle

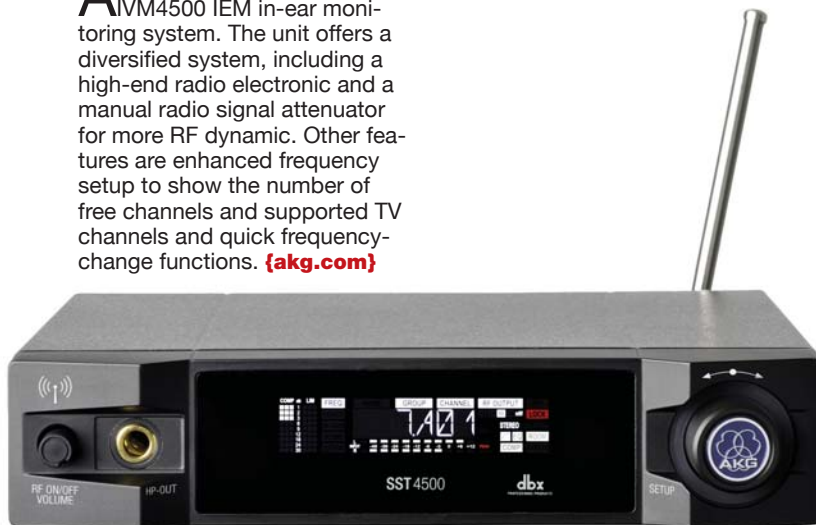
Waves Audio's new Tape, Tubes & Transistors is a bundle of plug-ins that recreates the audio chain of producer and engineer Eddie Kramer. The bundle features three meticulously modeled vintage plug-ins, including Kramer Master Tape, HLS Channel and PIE Compressor. All three recreate Kramer's golden audio chain, which he used to record such icons as Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin. **{waves.com}**



AKG | IVM4500

Highly Diversified

AKG has launched the AIVM4500 IEM in-ear monitoring system. The unit offers a diversified system, including a high-end radio electronic and a manual radio signal attenuator for more RF dynamic. Other features are enhanced frequency setup to show the number of free channels and supported TV channels and quick frequency-change functions. **{akg.com}**



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THE GEAR GUIDE

DJ & LIGHTING

GEMINI | CDJ-700

Take Control

Gemini's new CDJ-700 gives users versatility and control. Features include a fast-loading slot-in CD-ROM compatible with audio CDs, CD-Rs and MP3-CDs; a USB input for flash drive; and an SD card slot. The unit also boasts a full-color 3.5-inch TFT touchscreen with contrast adjustment and comprehensive waveform display. geminidj.com



AMERICAN AUDIO | ENCORE MIXERS

Encore, Encore!

American Audio has introduced the Encore 1000 and the Encore 2000 dual CD/MP3 player/mixer units.

Each of these all-in-one combos includes everything DJs need to play and mix MP3s, CDs and CD-Rs. Both units contain two playback decks for

audio or MP3 CDs, along with a built-in two-channel professional audio mixer. MSRP: Encore 1000, \$499.95; Encore 2000, \$699.95. americanaudio.us



NUMARK | N4

Four's Company

Numark recently launched the N4, a four-channel DJ controller with built-in mixer. Featuring four decks of software control plus a built-in mixer that can be used with or without a computer, the N4 is designed for DJs who want powerful capability in a lightweight, portable package. The controller boasts large, touch-sensitive platters; four decks of software control with loop and effects controls; a built-in USB audio interface; and a comprehensive mixer section with EQ and gain. numark.com



CHAUVET | DRAPE & DRAPE SYSTEM

Speed of Sound

Chauvet's new MotionDrape LED and MotionFacade LED include sound-activated, automatic programs and can be operated using eight channels of DMX or in stand-alone mode. The MotionDrape LED is an animated 9.8- by 6.5-foot drape powered by 176 tricolored SMD LEDs. The MotionFacade LED is an animated, 6.5- by 3.3-foot front board drape system powered by 66 high-output, tricolored SMD LEDs. chauvetlighting.com

AKAI PROFESSIONAL | LAPTOP STAND

Stand Up

Akai has debuted the Laptop Stand, a rugged, portable laptop platform for production and performance. Featuring a lightweight design, the stand is also fully collapsible, disassembling and packing into the included transport case in seconds. MSRP: \$99.98. akaipro.com





AMERICAN DJ | CWWW9, CWWW18

White Hot

American DJ recently launched the Flat Par CWWW9 (pictured) and Flat Par CWWW18 LED par cans. These high-output professional pars let users create white tones, ranging from a warm tungsten glow to the whitest shade of pale. The units also produce any shade of white imaginable. MSRP: CWWW9, \$279.95; CWWW18, \$379.95.

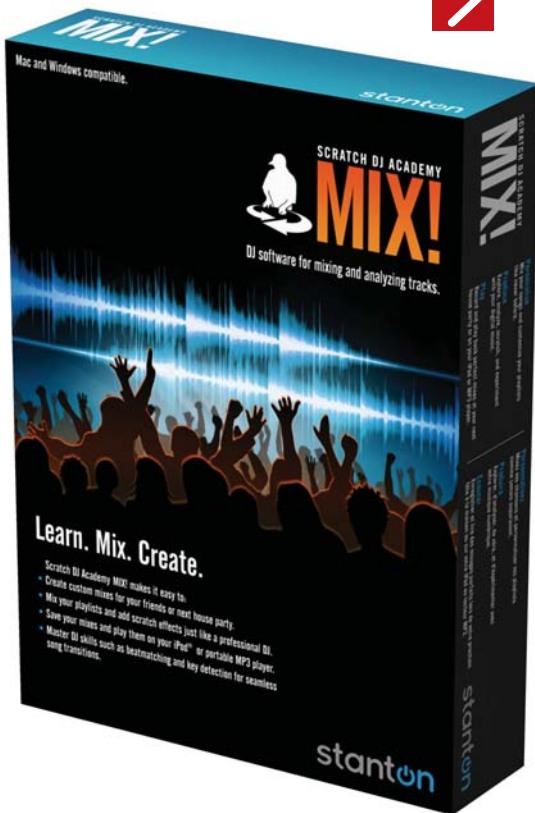
{americandj.com}



STANTON DJ | SCRATCH DJ
ACADEMY MIX!

Mix It Up

Stanton has unveiled version 1.2 of its Scratch DJ Academy Mix! software. Mix!'s audio playback engine has been redesigned and optimized to provide accurate synchronization and smooth audio transitions. Users can now drag mixes, add songs and save work without interrupting playback. Version 1.2 also adds automation of the most common DJ mixer controls. {stantondj.com}



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THE GEAR GUIDE

DRUMS & PERCUSSION



DIXON | ARTISAN ROSE GUM

Gum N' Roses

Dixon Drums has launched the Artisan Rose Gum snare drum. The company consulted respected drum craftsman Chris Brady on the design, and he selected the Australian hardwood for this model. The snare drum is offered in 6- by 13-inch, 5.5- by 14-inch and 6.5- by 14-inch sizes and features die-cast hoops, a Dunnett throw-off and Evans drumheads. playdixon.com

GEAR >

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

EVANS | CONTROL SCREEN

Advanced Screening

Evans recently introduced its new Control Screens. Designed for marching snare drums, the Evans Control Screen offers an effective way to reduce overall volume without sacrificing tone, articulation or feel. Fitting neatly underneath the drumhead, the Evans Control Screen is simple to install and remove as needed. It's available in 13- and 14-inch sizes. MSRP: \$19. evansdrumheads.com



BOOMWHACKERS | BOOMOPHONE

The Whack Pack

Boomwhackers has debuted the Boomophone XTS Whack Pack. These instruments expand the versatility of the BWDG 8 Note Diatonic Set, letting it be played like a xylophone. The XTS Whack Pack comes with the XyloTote tube holder, a songbook, a pair of mallets and a set of Octavator caps, which lower the pitch of a Boomwhacker tube by a full octave.

boomwhackers.com



PROTECTION RACKET | RACKETEX FINISH

Pearly Whites

Protection Racket has released its cases in a brilliant white, tough Racketex finish. The cases feature a soft, fleecy lining and contrasting zips and fasteners, capable of surviving choppy journeys. The white color is now available in addition to the regular black, Aero Brown, Funky Green and steel gray. protectionracket.com



GIBRALTAR | SOFTY THRONE

Big Softy

Gibraltar's new Softy drum throne boasts side panels outfitted with an exclusive Delmar drum wrap covering, available in Black Diamond and White Tiger Striped Pearl colors. The throne incorporates a 5-inch-thick cushion on its 13-inch round seat with an outer layer of plush Cordura fabric to create a soft, comfortable sitting surface. MSRP: \$250. gibraltarhardware.com



CYMPAD | CHROMATICS

Cympad Gets Colorful

Cympad recently launched Chromatics cymbal pads in orange and blue. Joining Cympad's original black models, the pads offer drummers more color choices. Chromatics are made from an advanced premium-grade cellular foam to provide superior cymbal sound and performance in a variety of drumming styles and situations. cympad.com



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VIC FIRTH



Vic Firth
Backbeat

Vic Firth
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VIC FIRTH

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VIC FIRTH | GREGG
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Bissonette Beat

Vic Firth has released the Gregg Bissonette "Backbeat" Signature stick. It features a hickory 5B shaft with a front-end loaded neck and tip for a full sound on the bell of a ride. Slip-resistant Vic Grip provides superior hold for a confident backbeat and big drum sounds. MSRP: \$20.50. vicfirth.com



el negro

pro-mark 424

el negro

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PRO-MARK | HORACIO 'EL NEGRO'
HERNANDEZ SIGNATURE

Signature Style

Pro-Mark has debuted the Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez Signature drumstick. It's 16 inches long and a half-inch in diameter. The wood tip is small and versatile, ideal for jazz and fusion. It also works well for pop and R&B drummers. MSRP: \$15.15. promark.com



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DRUMS & PERCUSSION

GRETSCH DRUMS | RENEGADE

Renegade Drummer

Gretsch Drums recently unveiled the Renegade entry-level drum series. It includes double-braced hardware, stylized Gretsch Renegade pedal boards, a comfortable throne, and 13-inch hi-hats and 18-inch crash/ride brass cymbals. All shells are seven-ply poplar with 45-degree bearing edges. Other features include ball-style tom holders, adjustable bass drum spurs and metal BD hoops.

{gretschdrums.com}



PEACE DRUMS | DNA SERIES

In Your DNA

Peace Drums' new DNA series combines 800 series heavy-duty hardware with nine-ply lacquered North American maple drums. The package also includes rims-mount toms, low-mass lugs, die-cast claws and brass vents, among other standout features. The series is offered with chrome or black hardware and custom sizes and finishes. {peace-drums.com}

SAKAE DRUMS | PD-4

Compact Kit

Sakae Drums has released the PD-4 compact drum kit. It's designed to maintain the same power and sound of regular-sized kits but with more portability. The kit includes a 16- by 16-inch bass drum, 11- by 13-inch floor tom, 7- by 10-inch tom, 5.5- by 12-inch snare drum, bass drum raiser and hardware. It's available in orange, sonic blue and black. {sakaedrums.com}





ZILDJIAN | K CONSTANTINOPLES

New Additions

Zildjian has added two new rides to its K Constantinople line. Developed in conjunction with jazz drummer Adam Nussbaum, the 22-inch K Constantinople Renaissance ride (pictured) works well in small- to medium-size settings. The 20-inch K Constantinople Bounce ride features traditional K Constantinople hammering and eight cluster hammer marks on top. zildjian.com

TRX CYMBALS | NRG SERIES

Handcrafted Masterpieces

TRX Cymbals recently released the NRG series, a new class of handcrafted cymbals developed to meet the needs of hard-core and metal drummers. Featuring extreme weights, tapers and profiles, along with special lathing and hammering that enable them to better project their upper frequencies, NRG cymbals boast an extra-bright, extra-powerful sound. trxcymbals.com



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THE GEAR GUIDE

PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

YAMAHA | ARIUS YDP-C71PE

Universal Keyboard

Yamaha's new Arius YDP-C71PE console digital piano is geared toward everyone from adult intermediate players to advanced hobbyists. The keyboard's sound and graded hammer action make it ideal as a practice tool, while also able to handle heavier use at institutions. Features include a polished ebony finish, damper pedal with a half-damper effect and two-track song recorder for capturing musical ideas.

{yamaha.com}





KORG | SV-1

Vibrant Keyboards

Korg has updated its SV-1 stage vintage piano with two new color variations. Each option is available for both 88- and 73-key models. The SV-1 Black has a black body that's matched to black endcaps. Creating a retro vibe is the SV-1 Reverse Key Limited Edition, which boasts a red body and gray endcaps. MSRP: SV-1BK88 and SV-1R88, \$3,000; SV-1BK73 and SV-1R73, \$2,700. korg.com



PIANODISC | IQ FLASH

Piano IQ

The new PianoDisc IQ Flash features key MP3 files from USB, SD or MMC flash memory. The unit lets users record their own performances with the optional performance packages. The IQ Flash also boasts integrated balance control for the right mix of piano and accompaniment, while repeat and shuffle functions let players choose how to listen to their music. pianodisc.com



ACORN INSTRUMENTS | MASTERKEY

The Key Master

Acorn Instruments recently added the Masterkey 61 to its Masterkey line of USB keyboard controllers. The Masterkey 61 offers five octaves of full-size, synth-action keys intended for more elaborate two-handed playing styles. The Masterkey 61 offers seven fully MIDI-assignable controls, including two rubberized expression wheels used for pitch bend and modulation, four control knobs, and a mixer-style fader. MSRP: \$149.99. acorn-instruments.com

Dual Sustain Single Pedal

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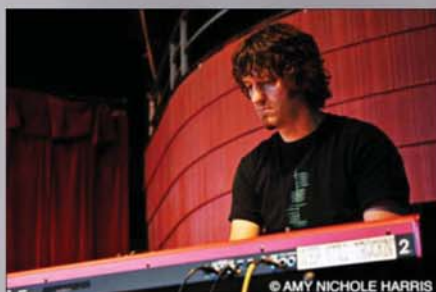
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PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

LOWREY | VIRTUAL ORCHESTRA

Virtually Sleek

Lowrey recently debuted Virtual Orchestra, a new digital product line. The instrument marks a sleek, new look and approach for keyboard instruments. The Virtual Orchestra series is characterized by a streamlined look and new Performer technology. lowrey.com



NEKTAR TECHNOLOGY | PANORAMA P4

Panorama Pandemonium

Nektar Technology has announced the Panorama P4, the first dedicated keyboard controller for Propellerhead Reason. Panorama P4 uses a communication protocol that has been custom-designed for Reason 6, putting every control at the musician's fingertips. Panorama also features traditional MIDI controller capabilities, including a MIDI output. nektartech.com

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LINE 6 | MOBILE KEYS

Keys on the Move

Line 6 has released its Mobile Keys premium keyboard controller for iPad, iPhone, Mac and PC. Mobile Keys 25 and Mobile Keys 49 are a pair of new, light-weight portable keyboards designed to control iOS music apps and perform double duty as USB MIDI controllers for Mac and Windows computers. Both models have full-size keys and solid keyboard action. line6.com



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THE GEAR GUIDE



BAND & ORCHESTRA

DACARBO | TRUMPETS

Carbon Horn

DaCarbo recently introduced a carbon-fiber trumpet. The instrument is easy to play and allows for powerful articulation, while producing a warm, rounded tone across its entire range. Plus, the tone doesn't fade away in the upper registers. DaCarbo trumpets can play one whole tone higher without extra effort on the player's part, helping trumpeters maintain endurance during concerts. dacarbo.ch





RS BERKELEY | DEXTER GORDON
MOUTHPIECE

Dexter's Very Own

RS Berkeley and Drake Mouthpieces have added the Dexter Gordon mouthpiece to the Legends series. The mouthpiece is an exact reproduction of Gordon's original gold-plated model. Each unit is finished in deep, rich 24-karat gold plating. As part of the process, pieces have subtle inclusions that contribute to the individuality of each model. rsberkeley.com

LÉGÈRE REEDS | SIGNATURE SERIES

Remarkable Reeds

Légère Reeds has introduced a new Signature Series model for the soprano saxophone. Designed to the most exacting specifications, the reeds deliver depth and warmth and are ideal for elite players. The Signature series reeds are available in quarter strengths. legere.com



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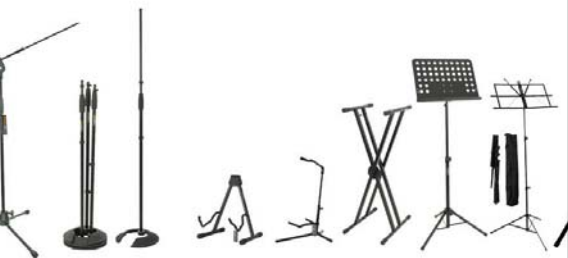
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K610 heavy tension $\int \frac{3}{4}$ scale length Bass Set stranded steel core

D'ADDARIO | DOUBLE BASS SET

Rich Sounds

D'Addario has unveiled the Kaplan Orchestral Double Bass Set. The bass strings use a stranded steel core. The bass G string is titanium-wound, the A and D strings are nickel-wound, and the E and C-Ext-E strings are stranded steel core/tungsten-wound. This set produces a full, clear tone that offers a rich and beautiful sound. MSRP: \$405. daddariobowed.com



TROPICAL MUSIC | PROLOK

Locked In

Tropical Music's new Prolok Stand line features a full range of models, including music stands, keyboard stands, guitar stands, and lighting and speaker stands. All Prolok stands are packaged in heavy-duty, informational boxes. prolok-usa.com



SCHILKE | S22C-HD

Heavy-duty Design

Schilke has released the Heavy Design S22C-HD C trumpet, which offers a classic American orchestral sound with articulation clarity and maximum projection. The S22C-HD includes a 0.463-inch large bore, redesigned mouthpipe taper and receiver, square-shaped tuning slide bow, and heavy-gauge one-piece "seamed" yellow brass bell. HD models ship with a hard case and Symphony series M3 mouthpiece. The instrument is available in silver-plate, lacquer, raw brass or gold-plate finishes. schilkemusic.com

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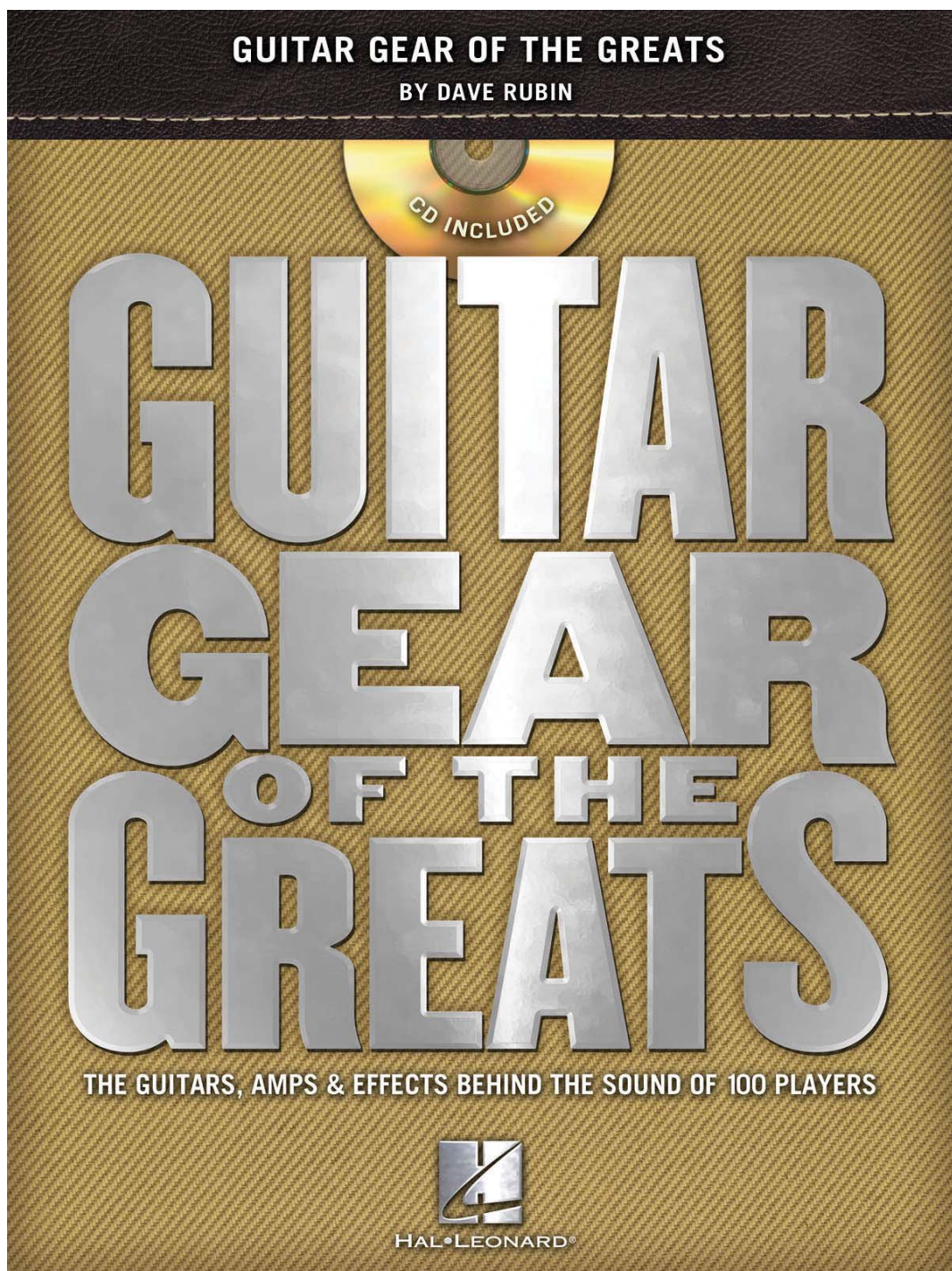


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HAL LEONARD | 'GUITAR GEAR OF THE GREATS'

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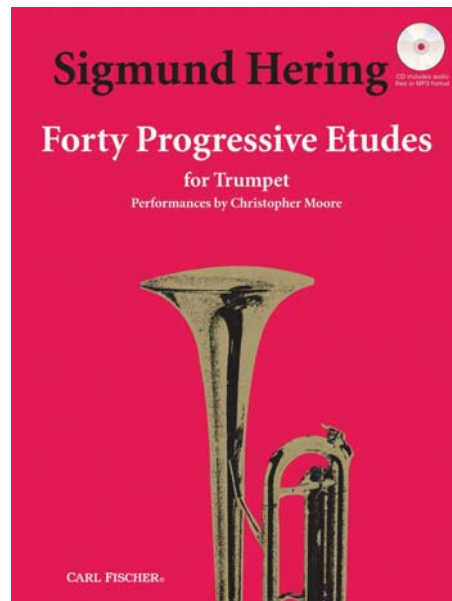
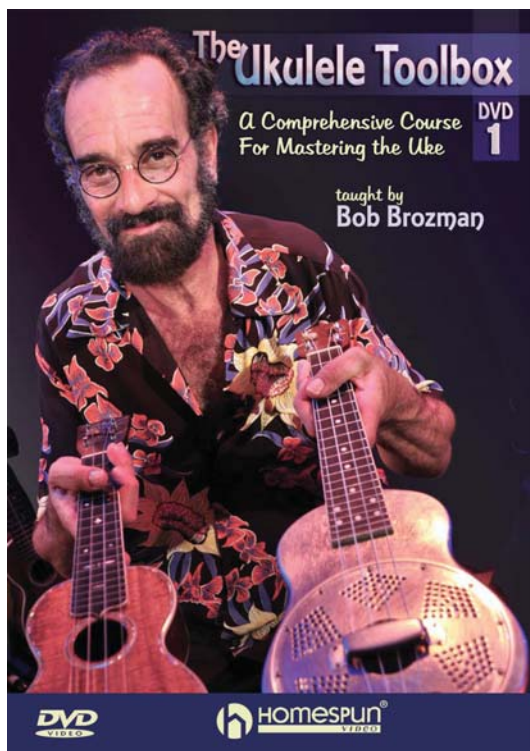
Hal Leonard recently debuted *Guitar Gear Of The Greats: The Guitars, Amps & Effects Behind The Sound Of 100 Players*. Written by music historian and instructor Dave Rubin, this book and CD pack surveys the gear, tones, licks and lives of 100 top guitarists, teaching a quintessential lick that encapsulates the sound of each player. The release includes rare photos, bios, tablature and an audio CD featuring every lick in the book. MSRP: \$19.99. halleonard.com



HOMESPUN | 'THE UKULELE TOOLBOX'

Uke's Toolbox

Homespun has released *The Ukulele Toolbox*, a two-DVD instructional set by Bob Brozman. The world-traveling roots music virtuoso starts at the beginner level but moves through a variety of styles and techniques, taking the learning player into intermediate and advanced territory. homespuntapes.com



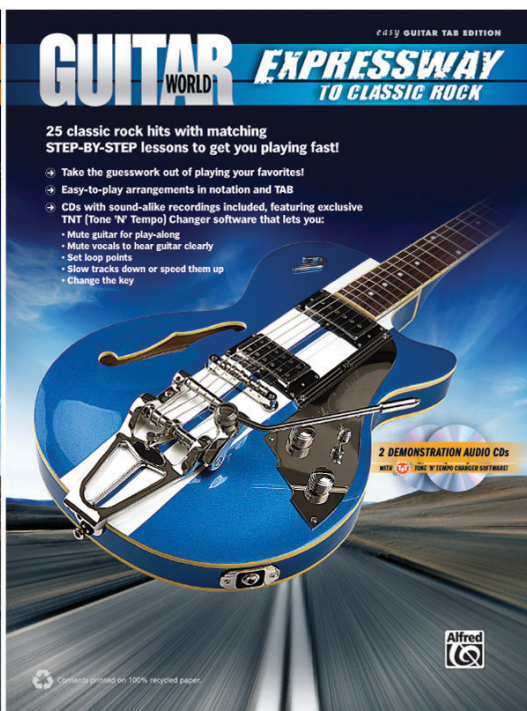
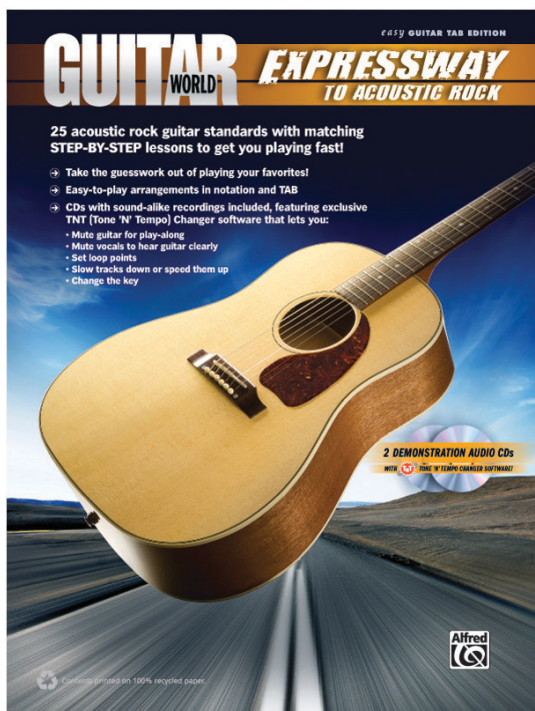
CARL FISCHER | '40 PROGRESSIVE ETUDES'

Top 40

Carl Fischer recently unveiled Sigmund Hering's *40 Progressive Etudes*. The method contains 40 etudes that are perfect for the trumpet. Ideal for intermediate students, the etudes are organized in a progressive manner, challenging students as they improve. MSRP: \$17.95. carlfischer.com

ALFRED | 'GUITAR WORLD' SONGBOOKS

Strummin' in the Fast Lane



Alfred has introduced the new *Guitar World* instructional songbooks with the release of *Expressway To Acoustic Rock* and *Classic Rock* editions, each featuring 25 of the most important and signature guitar-driven songs matched with step-by-step lessons. This new series offers easy-to-use tab arrangements and is designed to place intermediate and novice players on the fast track to mastering many of the greatest guitar songs. Each song is accompanied by a detailed lesson that focuses on critical guitar parts by *Guitar World* Editor Jimmy Brown. The two included CDs contain full-length soundalike demonstration and play-along recordings. alfred.com

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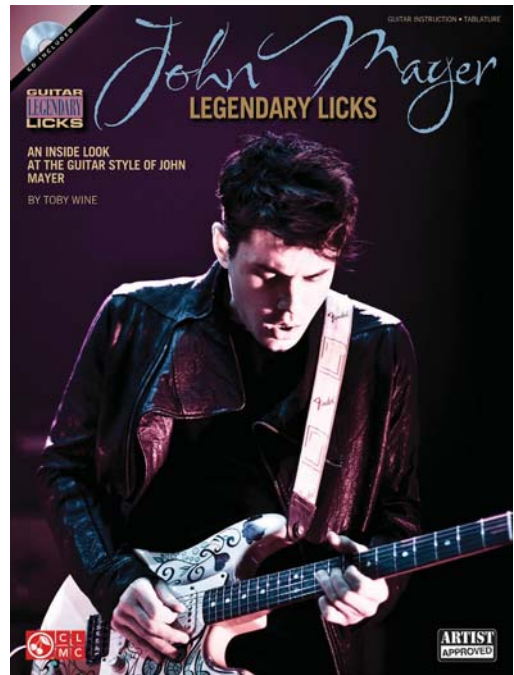
Lick Library has debuted *Learn To Play Killswitch Engage*, a collection of tracks to help musicians learn the best riffs and solos from one of the founding metalcore bands. Metal guitarist Andy James shares his knowledge in this easy-to-follow guitar tuition double-DVD set. licklibrary.com



CHERRY LANE | 'JOHN MAYER LEGENDARY LICKS'

Good Playing is on the Way

Cherry Lane recently released *John Mayer Legendary Licks*, which examines Mayer's signature guitar parts and solos. Author Toby Wine presents the parts in bite-size pieces for easy comprehension. This book-and-CD pack teaches Mayer's approach to soloing, rhythm parts and songwriting by exploring songs, such as "Back To You," "Good Love Is On The Way," "Gravity" and "Neon." MSRP: \$22.99. halleonard.com



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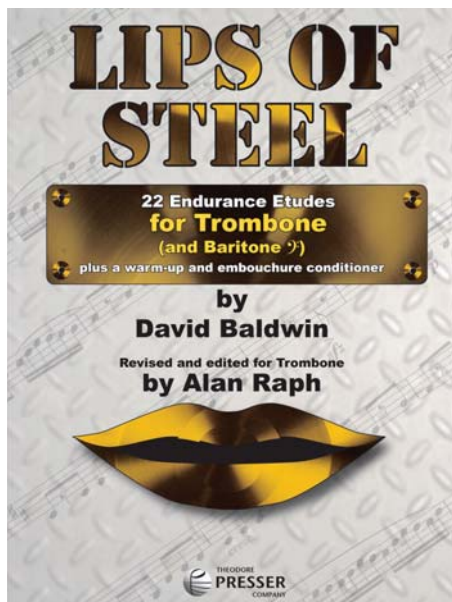


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THEODORE PRESSER | 'LIPS OF STEEL'

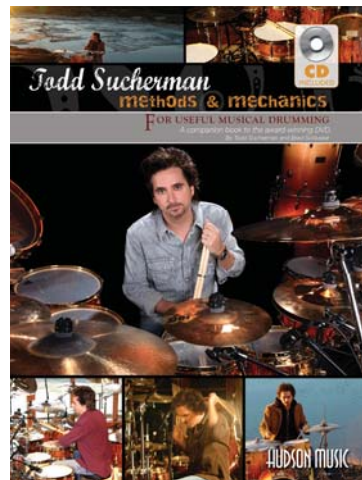
Read My Lips

Theodore Presser has released *Lips Of Steel* for trombone. The book addresses endurance and strength in brass playing, and pedagogue Alan Raph has adapted trumpet virtuoso David Baldwin's *Lips Of Steel* method for the trombone. Now, trombone players can experience satisfaction when reaching the end of a piece with strength, resilience and breath remaining for that last note. MSRP: \$19.95. presser.com

HUDSON MUSIC | 'THE METHODS AND MECHANICS COMPANION BOOK'

Top Knowledge

Hudson Music's new release, *The Methods And Mechanics Companion Book* by drummer Todd Sucherman, is based on his first DVD release of the same name. The DVD contains note-for-note transcriptions of his performances on eight songs and five drum solos. The songs represent Sucherman's playing with Styx, Jerry Goodman and Taylor Mills. All eight songs and four play-along tracks are contained on the included CD. MSRP: \$19.99. hudsonmusic.com



AIM GIFTS | PIANO JEWELRY

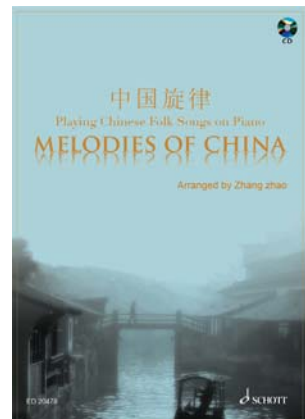
All That Glitters

Aim Gifts has debuted its new line of "Bling" piano jewelry. The crystal designs provide a look that sparkles and glitters with movement. Pictured are the four- and seven-row bracelets. Keychains and lanyards are also available. aimgifts.com

SCHOTT | 'MELODIES OF CHINA'

Sounds of China

Schott Music has debuted *Melodies Of China*, folk music from Chinese provinces and ethnic groups for solo piano. The songs have been arranged by Zhang Zhao, an expert Chinese arranger. An accompanying CD helps users familiarize themselves with the characteristics of Chinese music. MSRP: \$17.95. schott-music.com



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Raynham, Mass.

The hit of 2011, hands down, has been the Snark tuner. We started selling it halfway through last year, and it really took off, being an extremely accurate tuner. Prior to the Snark's release, tuners would kind of waver a little bit. The colors of it are very easy to see. All its features can be easily demonstrated quickly.

Another strong seller was the Fishman Loudbox Mini acoustic amplifier. You get a lot of power for the money, and it's very clean and not big. These days, people are tending to go to smaller products than they used to. We just told people about it at our open mic night because we have a lot of acoustic customers here.

They'd see it and ask about it, or we'd just mention it from the stage as we hosted the open mic. It was a perfect fit for us because a lot of these guys were going to go out and just play in a smaller [venue]. We would also pitch it to people who wanted a mini P.A. system.



Bernie Fryman

Audiolines
Chicago

Our biggest product had to be the Denon MC-6000. It works out of the box yet requires a little bit of hand-holding from the dealer, which is good for us. It calls for enough hand-holding that a person who is decently versed in computerization can install it themselves. We'll also install the software ourselves free of charge.

You have to have a good, a better and a best, and we have that comparison — featuring the Denon mixer — on the front page of our remarketed website under "Recommended DJ Controllers." The Denon MC-6000, overall, has been very reliable. At our new location, it's on display with speakers and a monitor, and we show music videos with it whenever anyone comes in. It's situated in the middle of our large light and audio showroom, and we also have one rig when you walk into our actual offices.

We also sell a lot of Gator and Odyssey bags. You can fit everything, from your laptop to your controller, in just one of them.



Bradley Boynton

Rhythm Traders
Portland, Ore.

What was your **hit product** last year?

Cajons still have a lot of traction for us. We have to order them from suppliers by the pallet now. It's due to a few factors, price point being chief among them. There's so much between \$99 and \$199, which makes them more affordable than most congas or djembes.

Cajons are an approachable instrument for beginners and blend with nearly any genre of music. Add to that the fact that manufacturers are now coming out with aftermarket accessories, such as snares, castanets, pads, cases, instructional DVDs and pickups, making cajons even more versatile and appealing to the customer.

Plus, we now have lots of potential add-ons that we didn't have before to keep the customer coming back.

The LP Finger Shots have been hot all year. They're small, unique and inexpensive. But they aren't just for drummers. Kids especially like them, and the applications are endless. We keep a little POP display by the cash register, and have a buy-two-and-save sign. It's surprising how many times I look to find the box empty. They sell themselves.

Bebop kits have been a consistent seller for us, especially the Yamaha Stage Custom Birch bop kit, which is a three-piece set. The Sonor Bop kit is

also very popular, and it MAPs out at \$399. These sets are great for beginners and band students for the price, but they are also great for pros as a backup kit to leave at the rehearsal space.

Three- and four-piece kits have been a good tool for us to be able to offer something affordable. Prices have come down, and there are definitely a lot of cool finishes in both classic wraps and natural lacquers.

Gretsch, Mapex and Tama drums have also been very strong. What that means is that it's easy for us to fully outfit our customers for under \$1,000 out the door.

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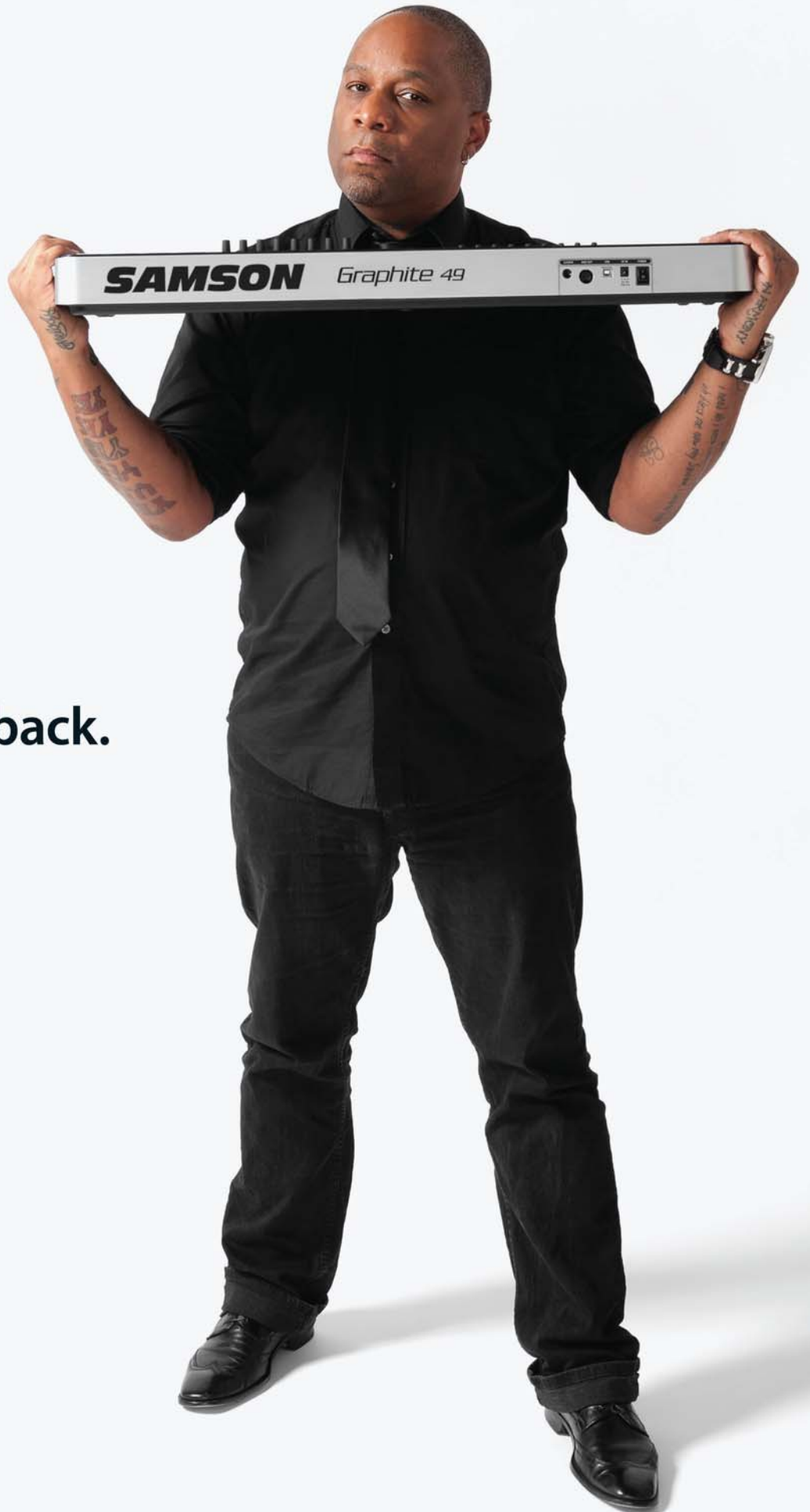
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