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PAGE 38

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BY ALAN FRIEDMAN





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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY DAVID ZIVAN

QUALITY TIME

Don't wanna be taught to be no fool —

— J., D.D., AND J. RAMONE

probably shouldn't say this, but my favorite thing in this issue is The Lesson Room, a column by Pete Gamber. Our cover story, the 2013 Gear Guide, designed by our talented art director, Andy Williams, and overseen by crackerjack associate editor Katie Kailus, is utterly authoritative and lots of fun. A feature-length offering by Alan Friedman, a longtime

contributor and an industry shaman, could not be more welcome here; his gathering of insights from music retailers who happen to be CPAs (like himself) is expert advice of the highest order. But if you're looking for some by-golly wisdom, and a touch of inspiration, for my money you ought to start with page 36.

Gamber has written for the magazine for more than a decade — and probably contributed occasionally long before that. The former owner of Alta Loma Music in California, he started in school band in 1962 and opened his store in 1978. He's currently teaching 30 students a week, which is a pretty decent load in my book.

Now, Pete is a special case, to be sure. In a recent email, he told me he had spent the previous two Sundays attending student recitals, each six hours long. "Man, it was awesome," he wrote,

which is a phrase not often associated with anything that runs for six hours, and especially not with student recitals, no matter how gifted the youthful performers. You probably won't be surprised to hear that the guy has more than 1,000 friends on his Facebook page.

The core idea of his column this month achieves that pleasant balance between providing a small dose of surprise, while at the same time seeming like something we should have known all along. Teachers, he says, can learn a lot about teaching if they watch their students' perform. It's one thing to learn notes in a lesson room; it's another thing to stand in front of an audience, feel your heart race, and step up to a hot mic. Teachers should address those things too — performance, and all its vicissitudes.

I'm not so much startled by that core idea as I am by the larger truths it reveals. Live music, like life, has no replays. You have to stumble ahead, and share it, even if you hit a couple of clunkers along the way. In the end, making music — what I've seen Pete refer to as "the good stuff" — requires a moment, and that moment requires a maker and a hearer. What you are selling in your stores is not just gear. It's bigger than that. It's a communication system. And the quality of our lives depends on it. **MI**





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LETTERS

'Here's to 20 More'

On behalf of everyone at Innovative Percussion, I would like to thank *Music Inc.* for the feature on our 20th anniversary in the January 2013 issue. We could not be more grateful for the recognition of our continued growth.

We would also like to recognize the countless dealers and distributors, both domestically and internationally, that have been instrumental in our growth.

It's their support of the IP brand that directly affects our continued success.

Our loyal artist family is undoubtedly our most visible team of supporters. We have been fortunate enough to retain a very high percentage of our endorsers through the years. I think this

speaks volumes to our commitment to personal relationships.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to our employees. They truly are the backbone of the brand. From our full-time office and manufacturing teams in Nashville, Tenn., to our media and web team in Columbus, Ohio, to our artist relations team on the West Coast — this project could not be as successful without their hard work and dedication. Thank you for an incredible first 20 years ... and here's to 20 more.

Erik T. Johnson
President
Innovative Percussion

Strong Team Support

Thank you so much for the feature on Kraft Music in *Music*

Inc.'s December 2012 Excellence Issue. We are thrilled to have been chosen once again to be included with the other great retailers and vendors of the year.

Knowing that Kraft Music was nominated by our vendors is most gratifying. We are so grateful for the strong relationships and friendships that we have with our vendors. I have always viewed that relationship as a partnership, and it's great to know that the trust goes both ways. I have known many of these reps and leaders for decades, and they have been mentors, friends and superb partners.

I also would like to give a shout-out to my staff. This is a group of fine, talented people

who are helping to reinvent the wheel every day. We're a small company, so folks need to wear multiple hats, and they do it with a smile and enthusiasm. A lot is asked from each department, and they welcome, and meet, the challenge. As I told them recently in regards to the Excellence Award, it was Ben Kraft that was quoted in the article, but it is *our* award.

Ben Kraft
Kraft Music
Franklin, Wis.

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> **Musical Innovations**

Hosts flute maker
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Opens new location
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Goes interactive with Google
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RETAIL

FULL COMPASS SYSTEMS | BY FRANK ALKYER

FULL COMPASS SWINGS

While it might be difficult to believe that a Big 10 school like University of Wisconsin had gone without a proper jazz program for the better part of a decade, it's even more difficult to believe how its rebirth came about.

Enter Susan and Jonathan Lipp, owners of Full Compass Systems in Madison, Wis.

"I went to a University of Wisconsin women's basketball game," Susan Lipp said. "And it was a boring game. So, I started talking to this guy sitting next to me. I said, 'You know we've got a million young band members in this state. And all of these jazz players from colleges all over the United States. Why don't we have a jazz program in Madison?'"

"His name was John Peterson. He got a little excited about it and said, 'You're right. We need a jazz program.'"

It turned out that Peterson was a local philanthropist with a love for jazz. He donated \$1 million to the school to endow a jazz faculty position within the Department of Music, thus ensuring the development of a permanent jazz curriculum. The university matched that donation and hired Professor Johannes



The Madison Jazz Orchestra performs; Inset: Jonathan and Susan Lipp

Wallman as the first John and Carolyn Peterson Chair of Jazz Studies.

And that's how it came to pass that, on a beautiful fall Sunday in the rolling hills of greater Madison, the local jazz community gathered at Full Compass for "Jazz Junction," a celebration to honor the new program. Appreciative fans packed Full Compass' performance space, welcoming a healthy array of 13 acts from the area to perform. A large contingent of local educators were also invited to enjoy the festivities.

During the celebration, John Schaffer, a professor and chair emeritus of the School of Music, noted that the Lipps have been strong supporters of the arts at UW. "Susan has always been a huge fan of the School of Music and been on the board with Jonathan. She was on the phone instantly saying, 'This guy's going to call you, John. Make sure you don't screw this up.'"

The celebration was sponsored by Full Compass and The Greater Madison Jazz Consortium, and was one of about 10 charitable events Full Compass

hosts for free each year to help various not-for-profit organizations. The Lipps take a hands-on, community approach to helping good causes donating space, time and staff.

Unfortunately, the festivities were missing one important guest. Peterson died in September, at the age of 83, before the jazz program officially launched — though he was able to meet Wallmann in July. The celebration served as not only a launch of the new program, but also a tribute to Peterson's philanthropy and love of the arts. **MI**

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MUSICAL INNOVATIONS | CLINIC

FLUTE MAKER VISITS MUSICAL INNOVATIONS

Geoffrey Guo, CEO of Taiwan-based Guo Musical Instrument Corporation, and designer of the Guo Tocco flutes and New Voice flutes and piccolos, recently visited South Carolina, where he was hosted by Carolina Flutes, the custom flute division of Musical Innovations. Guo instruments are used by numerous high school bands, as well as The University of South Carolina Gamecock Marching Band.

"The New Voice piccolos are ideally suited for students who play both indoors and out," said Tracy Leenman, owner of Musical Innovations. "Our marching bands love that they come in different colors to match their uniforms."

Guo worked with students of Lorrie Turner, a local teacher and longtime Musical Innovations customer.

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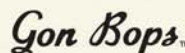


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"Our area in Louisiana has a rich tradition of food and music," said Bourque. "Some of our volunteers are world-champion chefs that have won the Jambalaya World Championships held in Gonzales. For everyone involved in the mobile disaster relief kitchen, providing a great meal and playing some great music can really brighten someone's day and give them hope if they've been hit by a natural disaster."

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GUITAR CENTER | APPOINTMENT

GUITAR CENTER NAMES INTERIM CEO

Marty Hanaka has been named the interim CEO of Guitar Center. A veteran top executive, Hanaka most recently served as CEO of Golfsmith

International. From 1998 to 2003, Hanaka was the CEO of The Sports Authority, where he served as Chairman of the Board from 1999 until 2004. He was

the President and Chief Operating Officer of Staples from 1994 to 1997 and served as a director from 1996 to 1997. According to a letter from GC's manage-

ment team, Hanaka's role will be to serve as a board member and interim CEO, assisting the organization in executing the 2013 business plan.

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MUSICIAN'S SUPERSTORE |
OPENING

Musician's Superstore Gets New Location

Now in its 39th year of business, longtime Colorado retailer Musician's Superstore opened a new location last November. The company had been operating in its previous shop for 16 years. "Sometimes locations peter out," said longtime employee Chris Johnson. "We had been looking at this for a while."



Amro's interior

AMRO MUSIC | TECHNOLOGY

Amro Music Offers a Closer Look

Memphis, Tenn.-based Amro Music is an early adopter in Google's Business Photos program. If customers search for the store online, the normal list of Google results appear, but along the right side of the screen there is also a "see inside" frame. Clicking on the frame provides an interactive tour inside the store.

"This project is [an] implementation of Street View technology, to help businesses as they build their online presence," read a statement from Google. "We hope to enable businesses to highlight the qualities that make their locations stand out."

Emily Simpson, events and marketing coordinator for Amro, told the local newspaper the effort would help them reach customers around the world. "People sometimes don't realize we have a pretty large store," she said. "This really opens up a lot of doors."

CJ Averwater, Amro's general manager, spearheaded the company's efforts. "We're very proud of our store and its merchandising. We have over 300 band and orchestra instruments on display and that is a very powerful image to someone [looking] in."

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Note from Dan Del Fiorentino

2,000 Oral History Interviews— and Counting!

What do Herbie Hancock, Henry Steinway, Chris Martin and Rose Shure have in common? Their amazing stories have been captured for all time as part of the NAMM Oral History Collection.

Over the past 12 years, archivist Tony Arambarri and I have had the honor of capturing history as we interviewed some of our industry's most passionate professionals—as well as the world's most accomplished musicians—for the NAMM Oral History Collection. This program was created to share the wisdom of those who have contributed to our industry, and allow them, in turn, to recognize the people who've made a difference in their lives, such as early music teachers and business mentors who were the first to fuel their musical passion.

The Oral History Program is a treasure trove of hard-learned lessons that not only helps to document important moments in music products history, but also serves as a valuable tool for NAMM Members by allowing them to learn from the successes and failures of their predecessors. These fascinating clips have been viewed at industry presentations, posted on retailer websites and shared during company training programs. They've even been used to pay homage to Oral History participants at their memorial services. Since the program began in 2001, we've lost more than 250 of the people we have interviewed; however, their words and stories live on, much to the benefit of the industry and their loved ones.

Each and every NAMM Oral History interview is a time capsule that provides unique insights into our industry's colorful past, as well as some pretty entertaining bits of trivia— from revealing that Les Paul used one of his mother's

spoons for his first pickup to finding out that Ted McCarty once asked a Gibson engineer to help him “buck the hum.” *Who knew?*

With the help of a great team, the NAMM Oral History Collection is now being digitized and protected for the future. Not to mention, it's continuing to grow by leaps and bounds. In 2012 alone, the NAMM Resource Center interviewed hundreds of people who helped to shape our industry, including Kay Koster, who's been a music dealer since the 1940s; Danny Henkin, the former owner of CG Conn; Bob Bull, the past president of Steinway; and French Horn designer Ethel Merker. What's more, sometime during the 2013 NAMM Show, we will capture our 2,000th interview, adding yet another remarkable story to our Oral History compilation for generations of NAMM Members to learn from and enjoy.

On a personal note, this experience has been a true blessing for me. Heck, I get to sit toe-to-toe with industry pioneers, leaders and other witnesses to history who have forever changed the world of music making. The result is a gold mine of best practices and good information that I believe can greatly benefit your business. We add clips to this collection weekly, so if you haven't stopped by in a while, I invite you to visit namm.org/library now to take advantage of this invaluable NAMM Member resource.

Dan Del Fiorentino
NAMM Music Historian



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SUPPLY

FLEA MARKET MUSIC | BY KATIE KAILUS

UKE CRAZY

Twenty years ago, Jim Beloff started Flea Market Music after purchasing a ukulele at the Pasadena Rose Bowl Flea Market and noticing the lack of instructional books for the instrument.

"When I first started out, the uke was a relic of the musical past," Beloff said. "In 1992, you couldn't find any books on them, or, at your local store, there was a ukulele divider card with nothing behind it."

So, Beloff — who runs the company with his wife, Liz — began transcribing music for the instrument himself, which led to the birth of the publishing company.

Today, as Flea Market Music celebrates its 20th anniversary, the ukulele is one of the hottest instruments on retailers' shelves. Despite having stiff competition from every direction, Flea Market maintains its position at the forefront of ukulele instruction with such titles as *Jumpin' Jim's Ukulele Tips 'N' Tunes*, *The Daily Ukulele* and *The Daily Ukulele: Leap Year Edition*.

Marcia Stearns, owner of Bookmark Music in Pacific Grove, Calif., has seen great success with Flea Market's titles.



"Right now, *The Daily Ukulele: Leap Year Edition* is very hot," Stearns said.

MAINTAINING INDIVIDUALITY

With the ukulele craze in full swing, many publishing companies have jumped on the bandwagon and released their own uke titles — including Hal Leonard, who distributes Flea Market Music. "They wouldn't be doing their job if they didn't put out their own titles," Beloff admits.

Consequently, Beloff makes sure his titles stand out amongst the crowd.

"One thing that makes us different is, because my wife is a graphic designer, we've done special design aspects with the books and we've added a little humor to our covers," Beloff said. "We also include vintage photos of people playing the ukulele, which [our players] really like."

Beloff also said he is very careful when making the song selections for his books. He

tries to hone in on tunes that will work well with a ukulele instead of choosing just any popular song.

"All songs can be played on a uke, but not all work on a uke," Beloff said. "Having done this a lot, I have a sixth sense to know what songs work particularly well. Also, I know what keys work well for the uke and which singing keys work for a mixed audience. When our customers buy a *Jumpin' Jim* book they know they are buying a book that is thought through and worried over."

KEEPING THE BUZZ

Beloff said he foresees the ukulele trend continuing for a while, if for no other reason than the strength of ukulele clubs, which Flea Market's website encourages by offering a player directory where the ukulele-passionate can find each other.

"It's a very social instrument," he said. "The clubs combine all these healthy things along with camaraderie. I can't think of another instrument that has a following like this. The level of intensity and passion the members have for these clubs will keep the fever going for quite some time." **MI**

NAMM | ADVOCACY

NAMM Seeks Members for Annual Fly-In

NAMM's year-round advocacy efforts for school-music education include an annual Advocacy Fly-In to Washington D.C., that NAMM members are encouraged to attend. This year's Fly-In is scheduled for March 18-21.

"Once you attend a NAMM Advocacy Fly-In, you become acutely aware that as music industry ambassadors, we clarify the role that school-music education plays in creative development," said Menzie Pittman, owner and director of music education for Contemporary Music Center, headquartered in Haymarket, Va. "If we don't advocate, we simply stand a higher chance of losing our programs altogether."

The annual Advocacy Fly-In, gives NAMM members the opportunity to advocate to Congress for policy and funding benefit-



NAMM's 2012 Fly-In group

ing music and arts education. The trip timed with the school budget season includes an issues briefing and training that will be held at the Kennedy Center. NAMM members will also hit the halls of the U.S. Capitol and Congressional office buildings to lobby their representatives

about the importance of music education and needed changes to assure access for music learning. During the trip, members are trained on developing state-level advocacy efforts for music and arts education.

"NAMM members engage with leading lawmakers and key

policy advisers to shape the future of music education," said Chalise Zolezzi, communications manager at Taylor Guitars. "From the morning briefings with elected officials to evening social hours, the agenda provides opportunities to make meaningful connections." **{namm.org}**

AMERICAN DJ | LEGAL

AMERICAN DJ GETS JUDGMENT IN 2010 TRADEMARK CASE

American DJ recently received a final judgment against defendants V2Go Technology Corp., and American Audio Laboratory in the amount of \$619,391.91 plus interest for infringement on the federally registered American Audio trademark. The judgment also included a permanent injunction against the defendants and all of their officers, directors, principals, servants and employees from infringing upon the American Audio trademark at any time in the future.

This lawsuit was filed in 2010 after V2Go Technology, American Audio Laboratory, Wal-Mart stores, DBL Distributing and Laser Karaoke began to manufacture, market and distribute audio equipment marked "American Audio." Wal-Mart, DBL and Laser Karaoke settled the respective claims made against them by American DJ. Each of these defendants recognized American DJ's rights to its American Audio trademark and agreed to discontinue any further use of the company's trademark.

Kenneth L. Sherman, lead counsel for American DJ, made the following statement: "This final judgment vindicates American DJ's claims in this matter, recognizing American DJ's rights to its famous 'American Audio' trademark and terminating the substantive phase of this matter." **{americandj.com}**

*Wal-Mart, DBL and
Laser Karaoke
settled claims made
against them*



Fender's new Custom Shop in Mexico City

FENDER | OPENING

FENDER OPENS NEW CUSTOM SHOP

Fender celebrated the grand opening of its first Custom Shop showroom in Latin America on Dec. 4 in Mexico City.

The showroom, independently owned and operated by local music store Ho-locasto Music, is located on the rooftop of the store's building and overlooks Mexico City.

"Opening a showroom in Mexico City is a step closer to our goal of having the finest instruments available to international consumers and artists," said Fender Custom Shop Director of Marketing Mike Eldred. "It joins four other Fender Custom Shop Showrooms in the world, including Germany, Italy, Tokyo and Korea."

Singer-songwriter Mijares, pop-punk band Allison, and members of rock bands Moderatto, Fobia and Caifanes made appearances at the grand opening. The Mexico City Custom Shop showroom is open by appointment only. fendercustomshop.com

'Opening a Custom Shop in Mexico City is a step closer to our goal.'

— Mike Eldred



D'ADDARIO | BRANDING

D'Addario Gets a New Look

After more than four decades, D'Addario has retired its oval logo and debuted a new design. The new logo, mark and look, which will make its international debut at this year's NAMM Show in Anaheim, Calif., has been created to communicate the company's legacy of innovation and dedication to its customers.

Jim D'Addario, CEO of D'Addario, spoke exclusively with *Music Inc.*'s Katie Kailus on the rebranding initiative and what the company's new brand identity means.



Jim D'Addario

KK: Why did you decide to rebrand now?

JD: Over the last 20 years we've acquired a lot of companies. And each one of the individual brand managers was running their division, but we weren't getting the halo effect of the D'Addario brand and what it stands for. We had no master branding in place.

KK: How did you come across the new branding?

JD: We hired a company in Chicago to do a master brand study where they extensively interviewed all of our employees, artists, consumers, B2B consumers — about 40 or 50 people in all. We gathered information on what D'Addario is about and what our DNA is as a company, business and brand to determine what our brand purpose was. This culminated in a beautiful brand book that became an internal

piece designed to be a road map for everyone at the company to understand who we are. In this brand book, we identified six key DNA elements and a brand purpose. That purpose, we discovered, is inspiring performance, be it musical performance or our B2B team's performance or our customer service performance. That was interpreted into a brand voice, which we will then take to the public and make part of our marketing.

KK: What is the significance behind the new logo?

JD: Along the way we decided that the old logo was a little difficult to utilize and didn't relate the DNA of D'Addario. So we asked the agency to design a logo mark that our company would stand for, and they developed this new one that will be used for all company identification, products, affiliates and sub-brands. daddario.com

APPOINTMENTS

Harman Names Robbins New VP of Sales

Scott Robbins has been promoted to executive vice president of sales for Harman Professional.

Robbins assumes worldwide responsibility for sales operations, including management of Harman's regional sales programs, its target market sales programs and all technical service and support.

"I am very excited to take on this challenge and expanded responsibility," Robbins said. "Harman is a unique organization of great people, world-class brands and category-leading technologies, and I consider it an opportunity and an honor to lead the sales efforts and improve the support for customers across all our brands. Our customers test the thresholds of creative and engineering excellence every day, and I am determined to match their creativity and energy with similar commitment."

Robbins is a 12-year veteran of Harman having been with Crown International when it was acquired by Harman Professional in 2000. harman.com



Scott Robbins

Sennheiser has appointed Keith Kranepool to the position of vice president of sales and product marketing, consumer, replacing Bill Whearty, who has been tapped as the new vice president of sales and marketing, telecommunications.

Jimmie Dean has been named vice president of sales and marketing in the United States for **Porter and Davies**.

Danley Sound Labs recently hired pro-audio manufacturing veteran Jonathan "JP" Parker to the role of national sales manager.

Derek Duncan



SEYMOUR DUNCAN | APPOINTMENT

DUNCAN'S SON TAKES OVER CUSTOM SHOP REINS

Derek Duncan recently took the reins of Seymour Duncan's custom shop in Santa Barbara, Calif.

Duncan, the son of the company's founder, is now working directly with customers and performing artists, as well as assisting in the research and development of new products.

"I've learned the art of the pickup from the masters — my dad Seymour and MJ [Maricela Juarez]," Duncan said. "I've been learning, perfecting and mastering this work since I was old enough to, well, work. I'm proud of what I do and how I do it."

For nearly a decade, Duncan has

been a key player in the family business, working with and learning the entire process of designing and crafting pickups.

He started his career working on the production floor and quality control and then transferred to the engineering department before moving into his previous role as builder and machinist for the custom shop.

"I can do whatever the customer needs," Duncan said. "I know how to make things work. I know what needs [to be] done. Sketch it out. Grind it down. Wind it up — whatever it takes, we can do it." seymourduncan.com

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CERWIN-VEGA | EVENT

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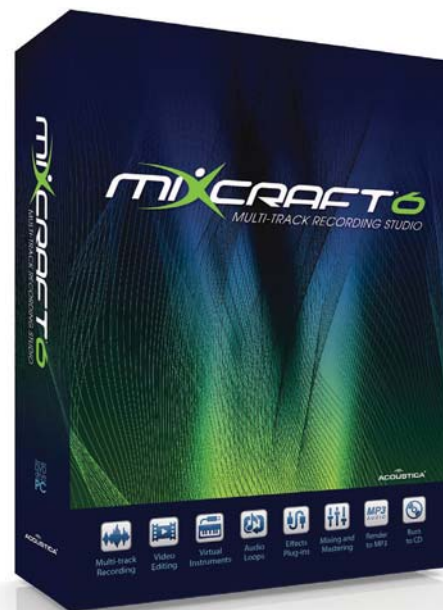
Cerwin-Vega recently launched its new P-Series professional P.A. system with events at the Gibson Showrooms in New York and Los Angeles last December.

This new product from the Gibson Pro Audio brand was put to the test by artists, such as DJ Premier, The Dirty Pearls, echosmith and DJ Serafin. Suited for any sound reinforcement application, the P-Series P1500X speakers were used both as monitor wedges and stacked with the P1800SX subwoofers for full amplification.

"The Cerwin-Vega P-Series event was a blast of all blasts," said DJ Premier, who performed at the New York event. "Shout out to Cerwin-Vega for always bringing legendary sound to all the speakers they make." **{gibson.com; cerwinvega.com}**



DJ Premier spins at New York's launch party



HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

Hal Leonard Partners With Acoustica

Hal Leonard was recently named an authorized distributor of Acoustica software products in the United States and Canada.

"Hal Leonard is increasingly becoming a one-stop shop for music retailers for the best names in hardware and software," said Anthony Conte, vice president of sales for Acoustica. "We're happy to be working with them to extend the reach of Acoustica products in North America."

Acoustica was founded in 1998 and is headquartered in Oakhurst, Calif. One of the company's signature products is Mixcraft 6, a professional and easy-to-use music production and multi-track recording workstation that enables musicians to record audio, arrange loops, compose with MIDI and virtual instruments, add effects, score and edit video, and mix and master tracks to create professional compositions.

Hal Leonard will distribute Mixcraft 6, Mixcraft Pro Studio 6, Pianissimo virtual grand piano, and CD/DVD Label Maker. **{halleonard.com}**

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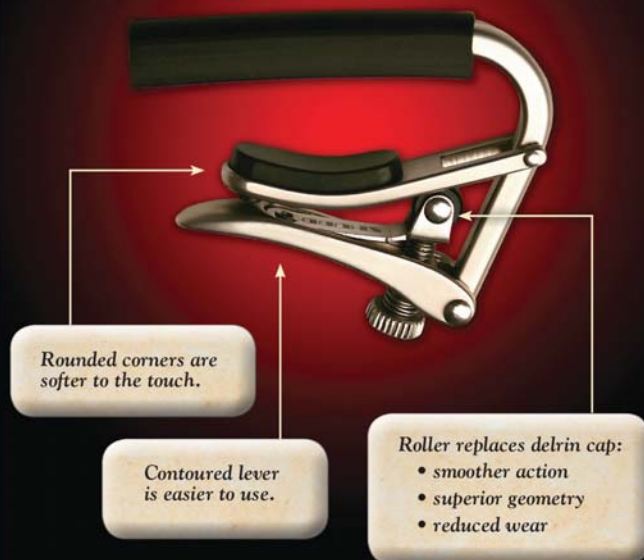
Egnater has teamed up with Boutique Amps Distribution and, with a more than \$1 million investment into a Los Angeles-based factory, has made the strategic move to transition assembly and manufacturing to the United States.

"I am excited to announce, through an alliance with Boutique Amps Distribution, we will be moving our manufacturing back to the United States," said Bruce Egnater, company founder. "Our passion has never wavered nor has our goal to deliver the best sounding, most well-built amps in the world. This is an exciting next step to achieving that goal." egnateramps.com

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CAD | PARTNERSHIP

CAD Expands Sales Network

CAD Audio has added three rep firms: Quest Marketing, dB Marketing and AMP Sales.

Quest Marketing is located in Miami and now represents CAD musical instrument sales in southeast Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida.

Headquartered in St. Louis, dB Marketing represents CAD Audio's MI sales in Michigan, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa.

Phoenix-based AMP Sales now covers CAD Audio MI sales for Southern California and southern Nevada.

"We are very excited to announce these additions to our U.S. sales force," said Jeff Beck, CAD Audio's national sales manager.



"They are three of the best rep firms in the country and bring decades of industry experience to the CAD Audio team. We look forward to a strong 2013." cadaudio.com

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IDEAS

Inside **IDEAS** > My Turn Page 32 > Lessons Learned Page 34 > The Lesson Room Page 36

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

JUST SAY 'YES'

You are handed a sombrero. Someone from the audience yells, “Undertaker!” Another belts out, “Five-year-old’s birthday!” Your fellow thespian pretends to fold tortillas and starts singing “Happy Birthday” in Spanish, and the next line is yours. React. Create. Propel the story.

If you’ve ever enjoyed watching a professional improvisational comedy troupe like Chicago’s Second City perform or TV’s “Whose Line Is It Anyway?,” you’ve seen this in action. Audience members are invited to suggest characters and scenarios, and using random stage props (and no script) the actors spin knee-slapping hilarity over the next several minutes. The entire narrative is built upon reaction. Each step of the way, every block of creative input is an affirmation of the previous line — what’s known in the biz as “Yes, and ...”

YES you are folding tortillas, AND my response is to build off your action: “I’m sorry, we’re out of salsa — I’ll check the hearse.” You continue to shape the story line by bouncing off my reply with some comeback that will



keep things going. Hopefully it will be compelling, too.

KEEP IT GOING

An important consideration is the “Yes” part. The plot fails if at any time the next actor fails to acknowledge the previous element. Even if he misinterprets (the actor thinks the first is washing hands, not folding tortillas), the first actor has to change the story to fit the second response. It’s always a positive, always a trigger to the next reaction. To respond negatively derails and kills the performance. To criticize or complain? Unthinkable.

We ought to operate our business the same way. Continually barraged by changes good and bad in retail, true survivors harbor a “Yes, and...” mentality.

Price competition from online search sites has intensified the struggle to achieve healthy margins even on small goods. Yes, and if we also know what the competition is charging, we can adapt with goods that fetch better margin. We can embrace the same technology to make our inventory more fluid.

BE THE EXPERT

Consumer blogs and social media have replaced the retailer as the first line bearer of new product information and testimonials. Yes, and we can use the same assets to keep on top (or ahead) of what our customers want and need to know about the things we sell. If you’re also spending time reading the magazines, user group forums, Facebook, Twitter and trade magazine resources, you can know not only what customers should get, but the competitive products they should not get.

Online, virtual showrooms have made our brick-and-mortar

stores much more of a postscript than in the past. Yes, and a pre-educated customer is much easier to sell to: more prescription on the sales floor, less “pitch.” Our showrooms have to offer the tactile and auditory environments that remain superior to the Internet shopping experience.

The deeper pockets of big budget chain stores and the economies of scale in mass media and advertising have given them more exposure and a nexus edge. Yes, and we can appreciate they are spreading the word to a broader market, enabling us to exploit the weaknesses of dispassionate bureaucratic efficiency with stealth campaigns, titillating personalized service and focused offerings.

Jazz musicians follow “Yes, and ...” by nature. You won’t see a good sax player stop a solo mid phrase because the piano player played a G7#9 chord instead of a Db7. He will adapt, move on and nurture for the next soloist. Our business approach should be similar. **MI**

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

MY TURN | BY GRANT BILLINGS

Make it Personal

It has never been easier to put a message in front of customers. And it has never been more difficult to get them to notice it. That is why, in the era of the smartphone, making the best use of every interaction is more important than ever. That can be the difference between creating a raving fan and losing the sale.

GET PERSONAL



Recently, Discover Card sent me two snail mailings that arrived on the same day. One was a typical business-sized envelope with my name dutifully printed in a clean, crisp 12-point Arial font. The other was holiday-card sized and addressed in a somewhat realistic (although way too neat) cursive. Both messages were the same: If I would go to a certain website and register I would earn bonus points when I used my card over the holidays.

Unfortunately, their message fell flat because, although they hedged their bets by sending two very different pieces, I just found myself wondering why they sent me two letters to tell me to sign up for a program that I had joined weeks ago. They missed the opportunity to strengthen their message by using information that they already had about me.

In contrast, I receive 10 emails a week from Amazon.com, and I read nearly every one of them. Why? Because they use the data they collect about me to anticipate my needs (he was browsing smartphone covers this week; he might need a charger) and they send emails that, although I know they are made using an elaborate algorithm, feel relevant and personal.

If we make smart use of the tools we have today to make our messages more personal, we will get better response and strengthen our relationships with our customers.

GET SPECIFIC

Back in the day, the only cost-effective way to send out flyers or newsletters was to print a lot of the exact same thing and send them to everybody on your list. Even in the early days of email, many business owners were more excited about saving

money than about creating attractive marketing materials or finally being able to customize messages. Today, targeted email campaigns can be done without huge investments or complicated computer programming.

Affordable tools like Constant Contact let you assign customers to multiple lists that you define. We already know that past customers who have purchased guitars are probably very interested in strings, picks, straps and more guitars, but guessing at their interest in drumsticks can be unproductive or even insulting. Investing time in dividing your email list now will pay off faster than you can imagine.

BE ON TARGET

Today's best email strategies send multiple targeted emails to smaller lists — the groups that you defined. Since more and more email is being read on mobile devices, each email you send needs to be short and focused on only one product category. The most effective subject lines will use less than 40 characters — and keep in mind that many mobile devices only display around 15. Your subject lines should speak directly to the reason people signed up to get emails from you in the first place. Is your typical customer more likely to open an email with the subject line “Save Up To 25 % On Cool Stuff” or one of these: “Guitar

If we make our messages more personal, we can get significantly better response

Cases - Up To 25 % Off,” “Rack
Cases - Up to 25 % Off,” “Drum
Cases - Up to 25 % Off?”

You can also experiment with different subject lines and find out what interests your customers by checking the open rates of the email you send. You can quickly find out if more emails get opened when you include the name of your business or when you start with a particular brand name. Maybe home studio buffs respond more to “ends on Saturday,” while your best print music customers open more messages titled, “Save, save, save!”

One thing that hasn't changed is that people love it when you remember their name. Messages will be even more powerful if they make use of the "First Name" field. Using one large

color image is more captivating than lots of thumbnail images, especially when your customers read them on a smartphone.

FOLLOW UP — AGAIN.

Beyond your mass mailings, email is also a powerful tool when used on an individual basis and reinforced with a phone call.

As more and more people abandon landlines, many business owners and salespeople are leaving money on the table by abandoning outbound calls. One that adds a personal touch. Although most of us lack the resources to call every customer every time we send out an email blast, that is one simple step to get closer to the sale — and closer to the customer — even if your business doesn't use a formal customer management

system.

Hopefully, someone in your organization is sending customers an email after they visit your store. Maybe it's to thank them for coming in again, to follow up with more information, or to confirm a service appointment. The opportunity to add icing to the relationship cake is sitting right there in each employee's sent mail folder, which you'll think of from now on as their daily call list.

First thing every morning, each employee should look through his or her sent mail from the day before. That simple folder that most people ignore is an instant reminder of interactions you had just yesterday. It's a catalog of the commitments that were made and an instant, easy list of people that can be

called just to say, "I wanted to make sure you got the information you requested."

These calls remind customers that you kept a promise, making the email you sent the day before stand out from the hundred or so others they received and positioning your business as one that adds a personal touch.

We all feel bombarded with demands for our attention these days. By focusing our efforts on sending information that customers find relevant, crafting messages to be visually pleasing, and following up with a personal phone call, your message can be the one that breaks through the noise and gets your customer coming back for more. **MI**

Grant Billings is owner of Billings Piano Gallery in Madison, Wisconsin.

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Play the Whole Game

I'm originally from Philadelphia. If you follow sports at all, you're probably sending condolences my way as you read this. The Eagles are famous for failing to finish a game, or for playing a great fourth quarter after they've dug an impossibly deep early hole. The Phillies regularly string together winning streaks, only to ruin their run with a miserable collapse. So this lesson is in my blood: In both sports and business, you can't take a break. You can't ease up. You can't take your eye off the ball.



Let's face reality. It's easier to just "go with the flow" and let business happen to you. But it's not effective. I need you to be really brutally honest with yourself. Stop reading right now and write down what your plan is to stimulate business during the current week, month or quarter. "Sell a lot of stuff" is not an acceptable answer. If you're now looking at a blank piece of paper, you're very much like the vast majority of dealers around the country. Without a plan that you control, you're like a team going on the field without a play called.

In the second quarter of last year and part of the third, I heard the common refrain: "We're not buying anything now while we wait to see what happens in the election." That's like a wide receiver saying, "I'm not going to catch any balls that are thrown my way because I'm afraid someone might hit me!" Putting business on hold while waiting for results that are outside your own control is crazy. I guess about half those people will now put their businesses on hold for the next four years! The right solution would have been to figure that people were getting weary with all the politics and run a "come play guitar to get away from politics" event. Whatever your game plan may be, it cannot be sitting around with your playbook unopened, hoping to survive.

In a broader sense, I've seen this line of thinking regarding the recession we seem to be emerging from. As we start to see the light of day, some dealers are scratching their heads wondering how some select companies have actually grown during this period. Here's the sad answer: While you sat on your hands and followed your "woe is me" business plan, a few really bright deal-

ers decided to not participate in the recession, got very aggressive in their marketing and promotions, bought really smart, and took the business that you left on the table. I'm not discounting the hard times we've been through, but I'm here to tell you that business did not come to a halt. It was there for those motivated to go after it.

When calling on dealers, I use some pretty good CRM software, and I track every conversation. It's eye-opening to go back and look at a couple of years' worth. Where the majority of interactions were variations on the theme of "the sky is falling," the negativity often became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The greatest stars in sports excel because they refuse to fail, they refuse to let anything hold them back, and they won't settle until they win. In your business, there's no shortage of factors to blame for hard times. But the last time I checked, payroll continues, rents are due, utility bills keep coming in ... 12 months per year. You need to plan to win. Schedule an event, sponsor a clinic, find a great deal to draw customers to your store. Just do something other than complain. You may be surprised by how often you score when you keep your head in the game. **MI**

Gerson Rosenbloom is the former president of Medley Music and a past NAMM chairman. Email him at: gersonmusicinc@gmail.com

Write down your plan to stimulate business during the current week, month or quarter



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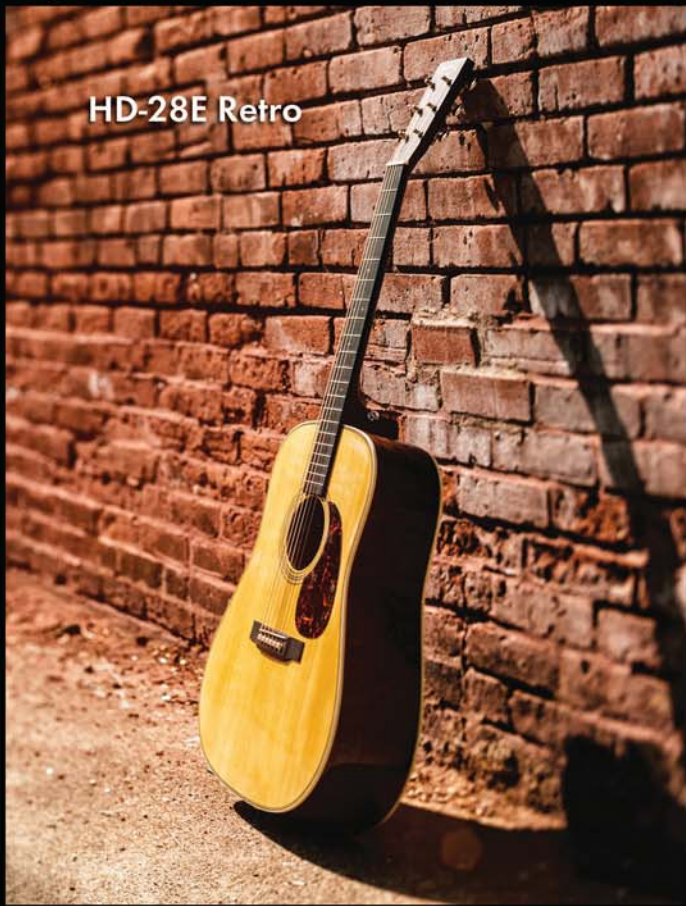
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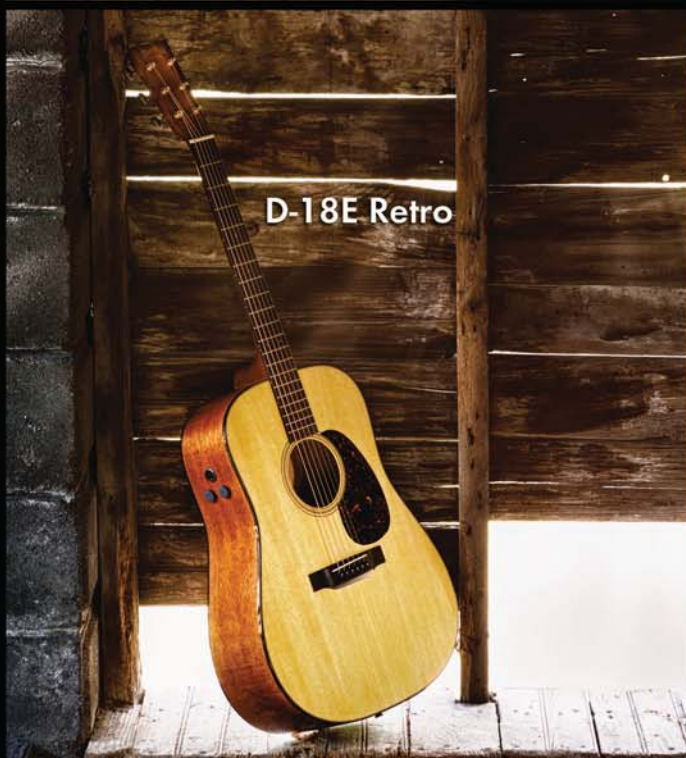
HD-28E Retro



OM-28E Retro



D-18E Retro



THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Shows ... for Teachers!

I've talked many times about the benefits of student showcases, especially how they energize your store's lesson program, both in terms of retention and in marketing to potential new students. What I forget to mention, sometimes, is how much student showcases can also benefit your teachers.

I was involved with two events that got me thinking about this topic. The first was a student showcase where a guitar teacher said to me, "Wow! I'll never do that again! I'm going to redo the way I teach that!" The other was a high school jazz band concert I attended. I was sitting next to an amazing jazz saxophone teacher and his student played what we were pretty sure was an amazing solo. We couldn't be certain, because the student didn't use the microphone. The teacher said to me, "I better start showing my students how to use a mic!"



These comments really got me thinking. How many times have I been to a school concert where the student musician was playing into the music stand, the singer was holding the microphone 20 feet from their mouth, or the guitar student hadn't tuned their guitar? How did this happen? No one taught them how to perform. They were taught how to play music, but not how to perform. So how did I learn that these skills, too, need to be taught?

Playing lots and lots of gigs!

That's where I learned all the things they didn't teach me in music school. By performing and making mistakes (lots of them!) I learned what works and what doesn't when you perform. I learned from others I was performing with.

Having my students perform!

At every showcase, the students and I both learned what worked and what didn't. I saw clearly what went well and what didn't. I also was able to observe what other teachers did with their students — both the brilliant ideas they had *and* the flops they had!

I know I sound like the old guy that I am, but it seems to me that there aren't the same number of playing opportunities available today as there were to me and my peers when we were younger.

And as a result, today most of your teachers haven't done lots of gigs. That's another reason why your teachers need to place their students into performance situations. Student showcases are the vehicle for that.

The myriad of skills showcased and required in a performance situation can't be developed by slugging things out week after week, month after month in your isolated lesson room.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

One of the greatest things a teacher can learn about at a student showcase is how to teach students that being nervous is OK. How do you use that to perform? You definitely can't teach that in your lesson studio. What techniques do other teachers use to address this?

At a showcase, teachers discover if the way they teach music actually works. It sounds silly, but until you get on stage with your student and try to perform a song, you don't know if you did a good job teaching it. You may have made it through at your lessons, stopping and starting, and never realized whether you could play it from beginning to end.

Teachers learn how to problem solve — and how to teach problem solving. When things are going on in real time you have to have a solution. At the last showcase, my student's backup track CD didn't work. I always

Skills showcased in performance can't be developed by slugging things out in an isolated lesson room

have my own with me. Why? Because it has happened before. If the drummer in your group is sick, how are you going to play the Green Day song? What if the singer doesn't show up? What if your student shows up with a nylon-string guitar to play an AC/DC song with a band?

These situations make you a better problem solver and teacher. They are lessons for your teachers! There is no book on this; it is hands-on learning. The teacher now has an expanded depth to what they teach their students.

PRACTICE MAKES ... SOMETHING

I always teach my students my No. 1 Rule: The Performance Will Not Go as Planned! Practicing is not the same as performing. We talk about what happens if the drummer plays faster. What if the CD player blows up? What if the music stand falls over? What if the band you're jamming with misses the ending of the song? Teachers can't teach these types of skills if they haven't provided performances for their students.

I have learned so many skills by doing showcases. I've learned how to make my students less nervous. I've learned to pick songs that let my students be successful. I've learned to start my students performing at beginning levels. I've learned to teach my students to use a microphone. I've learned to teach my students to enjoy what they do!

I've learned how to add all these wonderful skills into what I teach so we can become performers — and share music with others, outside of the lessons room, which may be the most important thing of all. **MI**

Pete Gamber is an educational sales representative for Music & Arts in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., and the former owner of Alta Loma Music. He welcomes questions and comments at pgamber@musicarts.com.



DON'T BE AFRAID TO FINANCIALLY REINVENT YOURSELF

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MOST IMPORTANTLY, FOCUS ON YOUR P

UNDERSTAND THE "LIFETIME VALUE" OF YOUR CUSTOMERS

IF INVENTORY WASN'T TURNING, IT WAS TIME TO PUR

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL IS THE ONE TASK YOU SHOULD NEVER GIVE UP ENTIRE

ATTENTION TO DETAIL HAS ALLOWED ME TO MAKE SMART BUSINESS DECISIONS

EXPLOIT YOUR STRENGTHS AND PROVIDE VALUE-ADDED SERVICES TO YOUR CUSTOMERS

HIRE A FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL

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CATEGORY" BASIS

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CPAS TALK

BY ALAN FRIEDMAN

LESSONS IN INVENTORY MANAGEMENT,
FINANCIAL CONTROLS, AND SMART
DECISION-MAKING FROM RETAILERS
WITH FINANCIAL TRAINING

SINCE 1998, I've written about every accounting, tax and financial topic related to music product retailing that I could think of. My contributions total more than 60 articles in the pages of *Music Inc.* — and considering the fact that any one of those topics, in the wrong hands, had the potential to cure insomnia, I tried to make each piece both informative and fun to read, sprinkled with my own special brand of demented humor.

But — and I won't be offended if you haven't noticed — the frequency of my articles has dwindled in recent years. In truth, I ran out of new topics to write about. I've been so desperate for a fresh idea of late that I considered writing an article on two taboo subjects, sex and illegal retailing. It was to be titled "50 Shades of Grey Market Products."

Like I said, I was desperate. But the turning of the calendar offers a new beginning, and a fresh start. I didn't give up. And eventually I thought, 'What better place to look for an interesting subject than in someone else's

head?' Rather than simply write another article as a voice of financial authority, I could capture the words of those whom I regard as some of the brightest financial minds in the industry. I'd check in with some seasoned retailers, businesspeople who truly understand the critical financial aspects of running a music retailing business. I wanted their wisdom to be supported by many years of valuable financial experience, both in and out of music retailing, and cloaked in an esteemed financial designation ... like that of a CPA.

The conversation below is the result. The three successful music retailers you'll hear from were CPAs earlier in their careers. They run different types of operations from one another, and their sales volume, store size and store count vary widely — meaning that, no matter who you are, there's probably something valuable here for you.

Most people would agree accountants aren't known for their vibrant personalities, even if they're also music retailers. Question: "What's the definition of an accountant?"

Answer: "A guy who wanted to be a mortician, but didn't have the personality." ... or ... "A guy who shows up at the scene of a battle and shoots the wounded." Trust me, there's no shortage of accountant jokes.

But the three music retailing CPAs highlighted here are anything but number-crunching desk jockeys with little to say. They're all really smart people, who take financial risks but do their homework before doing so; they're not afraid of making changes to their businesses, but do so with thought and planning; and they rely every day on the financial training and experience they gained in their earlier work lives. And they all have a keen sense of humor, too.

Above all, they're passionate about music retailing, never take their eye off the financial ball of achieving success and, like so many music retailers, they were all sweet enough to share their hard-earned pearls of wisdom. Here's an introduction:

Lori Supinie is the president of Senseney Music, a single-store full-line dealer in Wichita, Kan.

She has five years of public accounting experience, worked 13 years as comptroller/CFO for Senseney Music, and in 2008, bought the business from the prior owner.

Mark Gordon is the president of Gordon-LaSalle Music & Affiliates, a combo multi-store regional dealer based in Southbridge, Mass. Mark has one year in public accounting, four years in private accounting, and has owned his music stores for the past 31 years.

Allan Greenberg is the executive vice president of opera-

ten find common threads that underscore their success and the financial lessons they've learned along the way.

QUESTION #1 – How has your experience and training as a CPA helped you run your music store(s)?

Supinie: My experience as a CPA has helped me immensely with what I consider the most important aspect of running any business — knowing the exact financial condition and position of the company at any

Lastly, my public accounting experience has given me invaluable insight into the world of banking, financing and corporate taxation. This has translated into a significant amount of expense savings on both internal and external accounting resources.

Gordon: The biggest benefit of my earlier years in both public and private accounting is that it gave me the confidence that I could achieve financial success by being self-employed.

When I opened my first store in 1981, I already had my degree, as well as five years of professional accounting experience. This made the financial day-to-day operations, which included inventory management, payroll and tax reporting, and cash flow management, that much easier to handle. Accounting has always been regarded as an

Supinie



Gordon



Greenberg



tions at Music & Arts, a national school music dealer (and division of Guitar Center) headquartered in Frederick, Md. He has 10 years of public accounting experience and 12 years as CFO of Music & Arts (when it was independently owned), plus another eight years as executive vice president of operations of Music & Arts under Guitar Center's public and private ownership.

What you're about to get from this article, in other words, is more than 100 years of financial experience.

To elicit their valuable wisdom, all I had to do was come up with three thought-provoking questions. Dear readers, take note of their answers! While many of their remarks were insightfully unique, you'll of-

point in time. That experience and training prepared me on how to generate and interpret financial statements, and knowing what critical financial data and reports need to be generated to financially manage one's business. The best part is I don't have to delegate those tasks to anyone, nor do I have to rely on anyone else to ultimately keep me informed about the financial goings on at my store.

Using my knowledge of general ledger systems and experience in setting them up from scratch, I'm able to accurately account for our store's operations and transactions using (Tri-Technical Systems's) AIMsi Accounting Software. I'm also able to do all of this utilizing just one bookkeeper and our store manager to accomplish all internal accounting tasks.

exact science (with the apparent exception of taxes!) with exacting manners of handling and recording all business transactions. While all accounting systems require a fair amount of attention to detail, that attention to detail has allowed me to make smart business decisions, generate profits which have, in turn, let me continue to invest in my business, and expand my business in a controlled and well-planned manner.

Greenberg: During my public accounting years I was able to spend a fair amount of time with clients engaged in wholesale distribution. This resulted in my gaining knowledge and experience in inventory management — so much so that I used to write articles on inventory management for our firm's

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newsletters. Those years also taught me the importance of understanding all of the key components of a balance sheet (like cash, inventory, receivable and payables) and how to unemotionally make business decisions to manage those key financial components. If inventory wasn't turning, it was time to purge it. It also provided me with income statement disciplines, such as budgeting and managing

"Inventory Analysis Report." It gives us sales, cost of goods sold, gross profit, inventory turn and GMROI (Gross Margin Return on Investment) data by many different inventory types all the way down to the SKU. Frankly, we're able to manage our inventory pretty effectively by running that report on a "product category" basis. It's a wonderful report and, once you understand the financial data it provides, you can effectively manage

but we did build and expand on our online presence. Currently, more than 90 percent of our on-hand inventory is vintage, used and collectible products, and much of this inventory is purchased and sold through our store's website, sellyourmusicalinstruments.com. Our website lets us use our existing stores as processing centers, which lets us consolidate overhead costs, such as order processing, shipping and repairs.

and expect to generate enough cash flow to cover overhead expenses. You can't strip vital cash out of your company as owner's compensation and perquisites when you're losing money and your banker has shut you off. You've got to run your store in a fiscally responsible manner at all times.

QUESTION #3 – What one piece of financial advice would you give our readers and music store owners that stems from the lessons you learned as both a CPA and operator of a music retailing business?

Supinie: The one piece of advice I would give to all music store owners is that while it's important to delegate duties to capable store staff, financial management and control is the one task you should never entirely give up to others.

In my earlier years, I was so immersed in the financial details of the store's operations that I couldn't see the big picture. I couldn't see the financial trees through the forest, so to speak. So, yes, it's good for store owners to delegate some or most of the time-consuming detailed work, such as recording sales data, entering rental contracts, handling the daily cash deposits, paying vendor bills and reconciling bank accounts, to name a few.

But all of those tasks should be supervised or reviewed in some way by store management and owners. Incompatible duties should be segregated where possible, cash and inventory discrepancies should be investigated and resolved to the owner's satisfaction, and financial statements and reports should be generated, analyzed and acted upon by management on a regular, timely

TRY TO NOT THINK SOLELY ABOUT MAKING A SALE

expenses. Lastly, it gave me the opportunity to work alongside some very smart people, like our lawyer Bob Ott who mentored me on business acquisition and valuation. That experience has proved invaluable in my role today with Music & Arts.

QUESTION #2 – What do you consider the biggest financial challenge facing today's music retailers?

Supinie: Without a doubt, I believe inventory management and control is the biggest challenge facing all music retailers. It's the largest asset and biggest investment on most retailers' balance sheets. The trick is learning how to make that inventory asset work for you and generate a proper return on your inventory investment.

To assist us, we use a great report generated by our AIMsi Accounting Software called the

your entire store's inventory to maximize profit and cash flow, and minimize degradation to cash flow from unprofitable, slow turning or obsolete goods.

Gordon: There was a time in our store's past when I was operating nine retail locations. At that time, I found the most challenging financial task was financially tailoring each store to its specific local marketplace. We were finding our attempts to attain a respectable gross profit level from selling new gear were becoming more and more difficult. After analyzing financial statements on a store-by-store basis, we decided to sell six of our retail locations and change our product mix to include used inventory.

The used gear brought in much higher levels of gross profit dollars, which let us financially survive. We never deviated from this change in product direction,

sufficient to cover overhead. With competitive retailers like Amazon, Costco and Target in the music product retailing game, it feels like a race to zero gross profit. With the import of cheaper priced goods, you've got to sell two to three times more just to make the same gross profit dollars.

Plus consumers are in charge. They walk in retail stores armed with QR code readers on their iPhones to compare prices. Unfortunately, much of the independent music store community has become just another distribution channel, with little customer loyalty.

So, how do you combat all of this? By understanding what is financially going on in your store and making some smart, unemotional and probably much-needed business decisions. You've got to find a niche, exploit your strengths and provide value-added services to your customers. Remember, cash is king. You can't sell or rent product on credit and not get paid in a timely manner. You can't sell at an 8 percent gross profit margin

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basis. Major purchasing decisions need to be made, inventory levels often need to be raised or lowered, employee compensation needs to be reviewed and adjusted, and expenses need to be controlled — all having an effect on cash management. These are the types of business decisions that rest squarely on the owner's shoulders. In short, financial management and control can be delegated, but never abdicated.

Gordon: I have a couple of pieces of financial advice to all music store owners.

First, don't be afraid to financially reinvent yourself. If a music store is financially struggling or in the midst of a financial crisis, the store owner must be willing to change everything completely around — even if they're uncomfortable with change.

Also, be sure to select a computer system that will assist you in controlling your day-to-day operations. We've been using The Tyler System for over 20 years and have found it to be great for managing inventory and other key retailing operations.

Lastly and probably most importantly, focus on your passion. Like many music store owners, I started off playing guitar and studying music performance but became disillusioned with the financial realities of a career as a working musician. So I decided to open up music stores instead. Since I opened my stores, my passion has become achieving financial success by investing in both myself and my company. The most recent example of this is my decision to focus on growing our Internet presence. So, be passionate in whatever you do.

about making a sale. Instead, try to find out who they are, why they've chosen to visit your store and what their musical needs are. Are they looking to buy a guitar? Are they in need of renting a band instrument? Are they looking for lessons? Once you ascertain the answers to these questions, you'll begin to make smarter financial decisions. You'll begin to figure out who your customer is, which will help you figure out what to stock. Are they merely looking for a guitar for their nephew (equating to a possible low margin "one time" sale), or are they a parent wanting to rent a clarinet for their daughter, which may lead to reeds, method books, lessons, repairs and a step-up instrument sale over many years?

Answers to these questions will help you figure out what and how much to stock, the financial resources you'll need to support lessons and repair departments, and a more accurate expectation of sales and margins. Ultimately, the goal is to financially build your business on a model that captures custom-

ers with the greatest chance of lifetime value and serves them accordingly.

Let's summarize the top five pieces of advice in the CPA's remarks: 1.) Managing your inventory by analyzing product turns, margins and GMROI is at the top of the financial list of important things to do. 2.) Managing every other major balance sheet account is as important as tracking revenues and expenses because it leads

to improved cash flow. 3.) Find a niche that differentiates you from your competitors, but don't be afraid to overhaul your business model into something completely different if the old model no longer works. 4.) Know who your most valuable customers are, determine what they want and need, and financially build your store around those answers. 5.) Educate yourself on as many financial business matters as you can, and fill in the gaps by hiring competent financial professionals.

As I now have the opportunity to sit back and reflect on these remarks, I am grinning from ear-to-ear. Why? Because I feel vindicated for the spoonful of financial medicine our firm has been shoving down the throats of many retailers for the past 28 years. While our training and experience gives us the confidence we're delivering the right advice, it's really nice to hear that same advice from three really smart CPAs who are in the day-to-day trenches of running a music retailing business.

Yes, most accountants do seem a bit weird at first, but it's nothing more than their ability to speak a foreign language of debits and credits. And while the combination of a CPA running a music store may seem a little odd, it's no more odd and arguably just as valuable as a Senator who plays bass or a baseball player who's mastered the guitar.

I guess it's human nature to be wary of any financial advice, even if it comes from a CPA — unless, of course, that CPA can re-pad a clarinet, re-tube a 100-watt head, and play any Led Zepelin tune on the accordion in 5/4 time. Since our three CPAs can do these things, heed their expert advice and reap the financial rewards. **MI**

YOU CAN'T STRIP VITAL CASH OUT OF YOUR COMPANY

Next, every store owner should have some basic understanding of accounting or hire a financial professional to teach them those basic but needed skills. There are several great courses online and at local colleges to assist you in learning basic accounting skills. However, having been a financial counselor to our firm's clients many years ago, the best bang for your buck is to retain the services of a reputable CPA. The benefits will outweigh the cost by a long shot.

Greenberg: I have two pieces of financial advice. First, it's impossible to know everything about the fiscal management of your business. So make sure to hire knowledgeable and experienced financial advisors on your team. Second, make sure you understand the "lifetime value" of your customers. In simpler terms, try to figure out how long you expect your customers to remain customers of your store. When a customer walks into your store, try to not think solely

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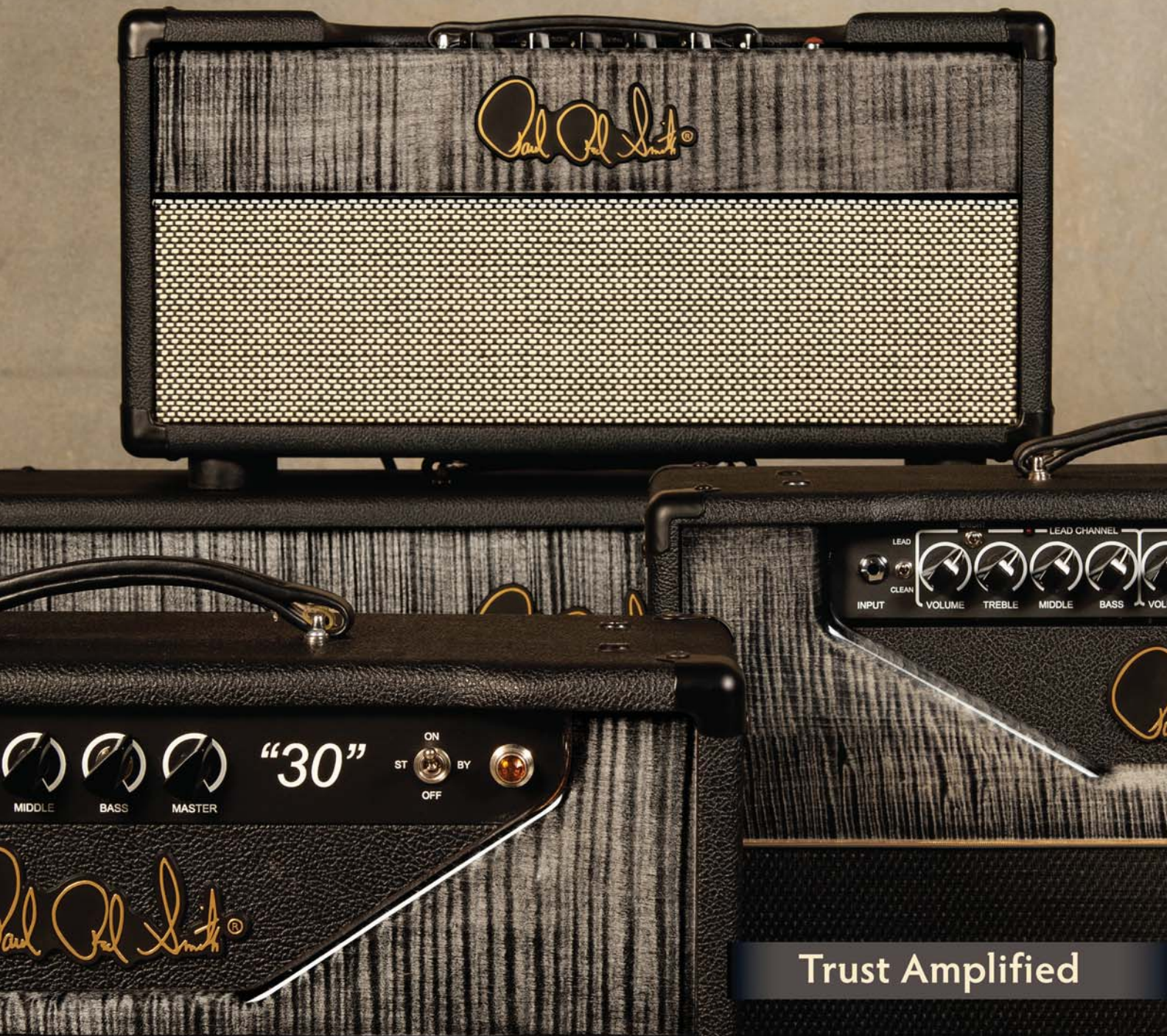
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A musician with short brown hair, wearing a blue and white striped t-shirt and black pants, is captured in a dynamic pose while playing a light blue electric guitar. He is leaning forward, with his head down and eyes focused on the instrument. The background is a vibrant mix of green and blue stage lights, creating a high-energy atmosphere. In the lower right, a large black Shure logo is prominently displayed. The overall image conveys a sense of professional performance and cutting-edge audio technology.

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GEAR GUIDE

YOUR FIRST LOOK AT 2013'S HOTTEST PRODUCTS

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Pioneer gets colorful with new headphones

CUSTOM SHOPPING

Any store manager can tell you guitar players love to be unique. Here's the latest in customization.

MARTIN 1T IZ COMMEMORATIVE CUSTOM ARTIST TENOR UKE

Martin has introduced the Martin 1T IZ Commemorative Custom Artist tenor ukulele. Inspired by Martin 1T tenor ukes from the 1940s and '50s, the 1T IZ features East Indian rosewood, providing the backdrop for the uke's inlay, which is an "IZ" in Hawaiian Koa wood and a hibiscus flower in pink awabi pearl. MSRP: \$1,999. martinguitar.com

RECORDING KING CUSTOM SHOP AVALON BANJO

Recording King recently unveiled its USA Custom Shop, which produces one-of-a-kind collector's banjos handmade in the United States. The Recording King USA Banjo Custom Shop combines all of the elements of classic Pre-War style banjos. The Avalon maple is the current Custom Shop model featuring a curly maple neck with a radiused ebony fingerboard, deco block inlays and hand-inlaid pearlwork on the headstock. It's assembled with classic American-made, 24K-gold-plated, top-tension hardware. recordingking.com

FENDER CUSTOM COLLECTION

Fender's Custom Shop 2013 Custom Collection includes two basses and eight guitars, one of which is the 1956 Relic Stratocaster (pictured). The Relic Strat features a lightweight ash body in Aged Placid Blue, Melon Candy or Candy Tangerine with nitrocellulose lacquer finish. The model also boasts a one-piece maple neck with a 10/56 large "V" back shape and 21 frets, Custom Shop Fat '50s pickups, gold anodized pickguard and gold hardware. fender.com





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ROLAND | GR-D, GR-S

Pedal to the Metal

Roland's GR-D V-Guitar Distortion and GR-S V-Guitar Space pedals are two new stompboxes designed for use with the GC-1 GK-Ready Stratocaster and other GK-compatible guitars with a 13-pin output. Housed in the Twin Pedal format and equipped with connections for integration, the V-Guitar pedals deliver a wide range of sounds. rolandus.com



LÂG GUITARS | ARKANE, IMPERATOR

Lâg Adds Two

Lâg recently added two new models, the Arkane and Imperator. The Lâg Arkane double cutaway (pictured) and Lâg Imperator single cutaway are available in color combinations ranging from solid to burst finishes with quilted and flame tops. These guitars also offer hardware combinations of black and nickel. The Arkane offers stoptail and Floyd Rose options, while the Imperator offers a Tune-O-Matic stoptail bridge. usa.lagguitars.com

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FROM THE SALES FLOOR

Paul Tobias

Tobias Music, Downers Grove, Ill.



"HERE AT OUR STORE, we have noticed a big trend toward the unique and custom guitars. We deal with a lot of high-end models.

Whether it's Taylor Guitars with its Build To Order format, or Martin and Santa Cruz's Custom Shops, we try to stock plenty of guitars that are slightly off center from the standard lineup.

By adding a sunburst, upgrading the tuners, or choosing a slightly different wood combination, we have found that the customers are very much attracted to these instruments. We don't go crazy with all the options available. Adding more options can obviously raise the price on these guitars. The higher you go with the price point, you can start to narrow your potential customer base. With a subtle change in the guitar options, you can still keep them close in price to the more standard offerings. But now, the customer feels like they can get an almost custom, very unique guitar with only a slight bump in price. A slight change in appearance gives you the wow factor. We never kept records on this, but 2012 had to be our best year for sunburst guitars at our store. Let's face it: Guitar players have always been attracted to unique.

I also feel that by keeping slightly different offerings in the store, customers start to think of us as a more unique guitar shop. We are surrounded by big box stores. We're not trying to be better than the competition; we're trying to be different.

We will continue to stock our slightly different models of the Taylor, Martin, and Santa Cruz guitars for 2013. I'm even trying to figure out how we can get sunburst Tobias Music T-shirts for 2013."

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KOHALA | TIKI SERIES

Island Flavor

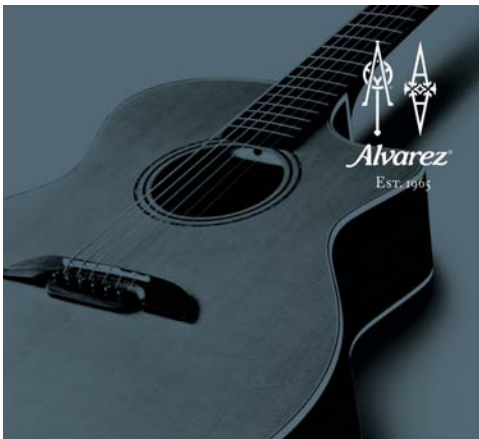
Kohala recently launched a new line of colored ukuleles featuring an optional built-in chromatic tuner and a Tiki bridge design. The Tiki series boasts linden wood construction, vintage-style geared tuning machines, rosewood fingerboard and bridge, right and left-handed side fretboard positioning markers and Aquila Nylgut strings. They are available in pink, purple, red and yellow. kohalaukes.com



SHUBB | C-SERIES

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Shubb Capos' C-series of nickel-plated capos have now been upgraded to include design features formerly available only on its deluxe, stainless steel models. Upgrades include a roller design, contoured lever and rounded edges. shubb.com



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GEAR
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CORT | SFX SERIES

Cort's New Trio

Cort Guitars recently announced its new SFX series. The series boasts three models made from exotic woods that feature built-in electronics and a slim body construction designed for playing comfort while standing or sitting. MSRP: \$350–\$419.50. cortguitars.com

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EASTMAN GUITARS | E10D

True Tradition

Eastman Guitars' latest addition to its Traditional series, the E10D, features a solid Adirondack spruce top. The guitar boasts added warmth from solid mahogany back and sides matched with hand-carved scalloped x-bracing. The body is matched with a mahogany neck, ebony fingerboard inlaid with mother-of-pearl dots and an ebony bridge. The E10D is fitted with chrome vintage open-gear Gotoh tuners, bone nut and saddle. MSRP: \$1,250. eastmanguitars.com





You're looking at an authorized reissue of a D'Angelico Excel archtop, an iconic guitar built by lutherie legend John D'Angelico. Now your customers can experience D'Angelico reborn in our handcrafted reissues of classic D'Angelico archtops, semi-hollows and solid bodies. They're among the fastest

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GEAR GUIDE >

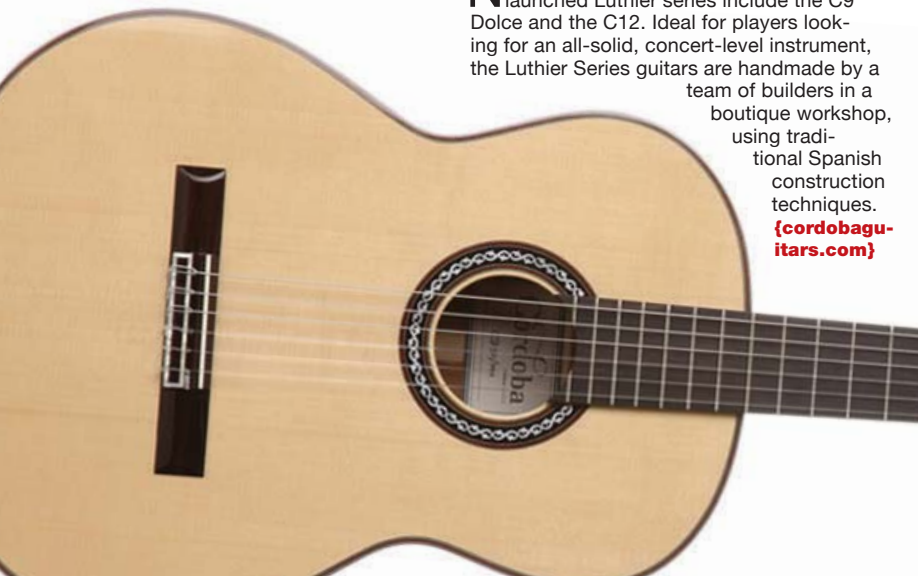
GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

CORDOBA | LUTHIER SERIES

Sleek Additions

New additions to Cordoba Guitars' recently launched Luthier series include the C9 Dolce and the C12. Ideal for players looking for an all-solid, concert-level instrument, the Luthier Series guitars are handmade by a team of builders in a boutique workshop, using traditional Spanish construction techniques.

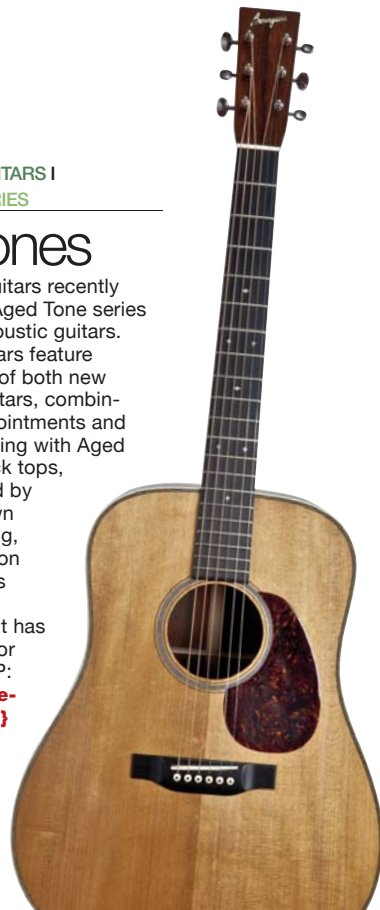
{cordobaguitars.com}



BOURGEOIS GUITARS | AGED TONE SERIES

Top Tones

Bourgeois Guitars recently added the Aged Tone series to its line of acoustic guitars. Aged Tone guitars feature characteristics of both new and vintage guitars, combining classic appointments and Bourgeois' voicing with Aged Tone Adirondack tops, which are cured by a process known as thermo curing, wood torrefaction or roasting. This process makes wood look like it has been air dried for decades. MSRP: \$5,995. {pantheon-guitars.com}



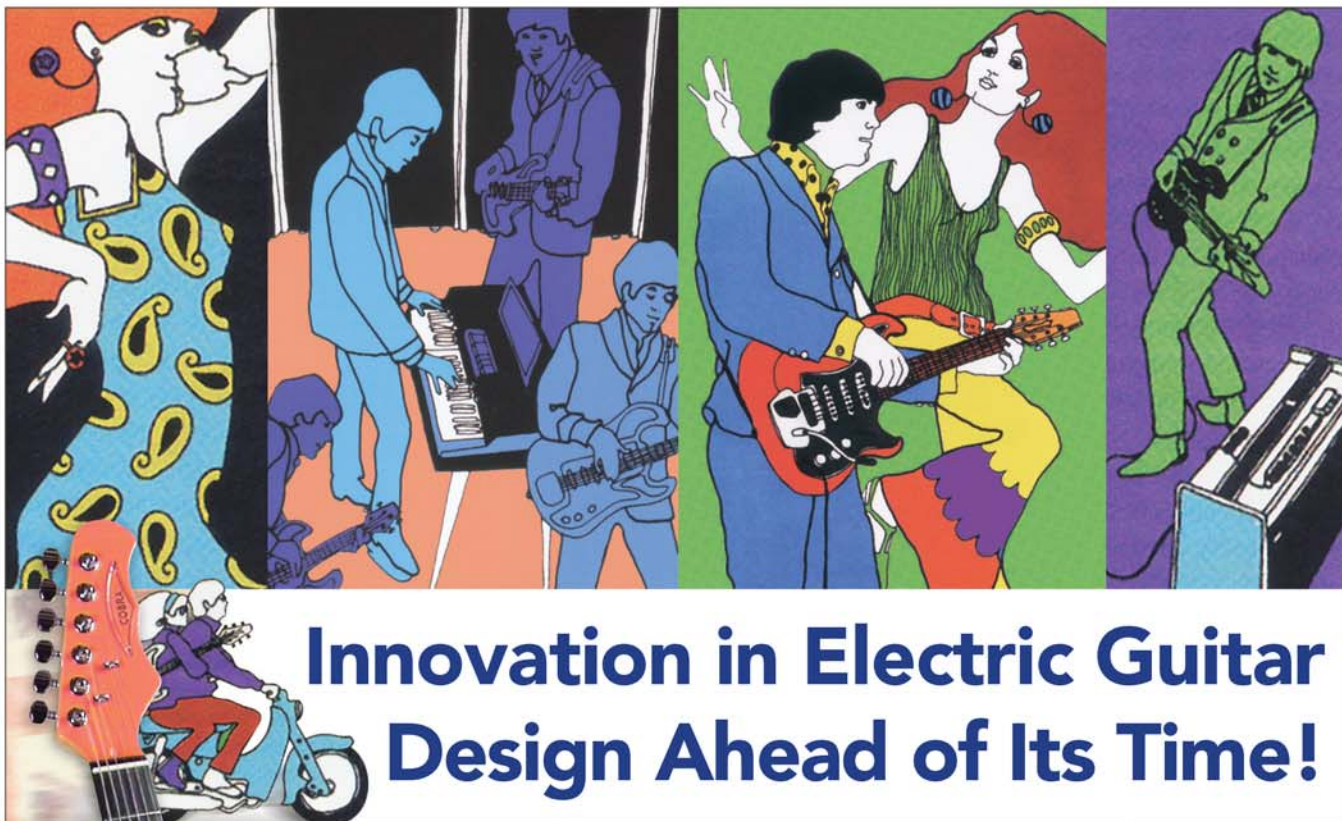
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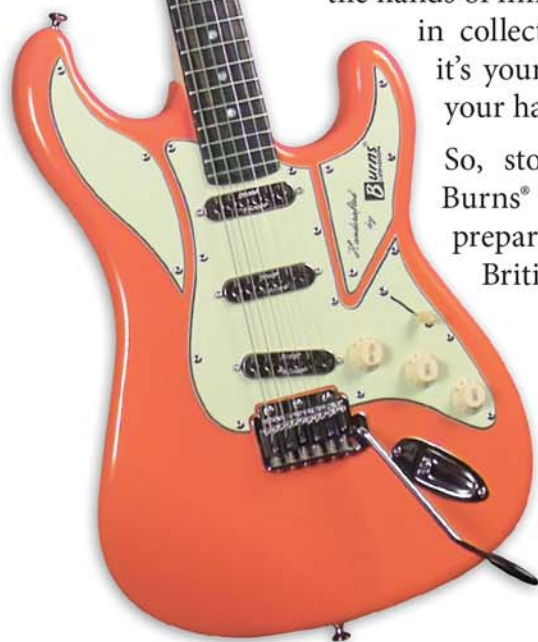
Innovation in Electric Guitar Design Ahead of Its Time!

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GEAR GUIDE >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

FARGEN | IMAGINE SERIES

Lennon Limiteds

Fargen Amps has debuted the limited edition Imagine series amplifier. Built with custom white components throughout, the amp is finished in a gloss white lacquer, with elements of John Lennon's artwork throughout. Fargen will release additional designs in its John Lennon Artist series and two guitar effect pedals. fargenamps.com



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HAYDEN | MOFO

Hayden's New MoFos

Hayden has updated its Mofo range. The Mofo 30 has undergone an overhaul that begins with a new custom designed heavy-duty housing with integrated side handle. The Mini Mofo's 15-watt all-tube head is dramatically reduced in size with a new, simplified preamp. The all new Lil' Mofo 2-watt, all-tube head is ideal for home and studio use. haydenamps.com



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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

BLACK ICE | MODULE

Smooth as Ice

The easy to install Black Ice module turns a standard electric guitar tone control into a battery-free, on-board overdrive. An update of the model previously sold exclusively through Stewart MacDonald's Guitar Shop Supply, Black Ice can now be configured for a touch of grit, a more aggressive grind, or a raw distortion that borders on 1960s flavored fuzz. About the size of a sugar cube, the Black Ice module is easy to fit and easy to install in a guitar's control cavity. MAP: \$19.95. blackiceoverdrive.com



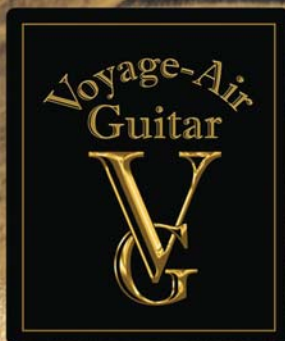
GOBY LABS | THINGY SERIES

Guitar Thingies

Goby Labs has introduced the Thingy series, which consists of the Guitar-hook Thingy and the Stand-top Thingy for iPad. Both accessories represent portable and simple solutions to common everyday challenges musicians encounter while gigging. The Stand-top Thingy features a compact stand adaptor, and provides the ability to attach the iPad directly to any microphone stand. The Guitar-hook Thingy enables one to attach a guitar hook to most tripod microphone stands. MSRP: Both are \$23.95. gobylabs.com



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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

LEVY'S LEATHERS | LEATHER STRAPS

Levy's Latest

Levy's Leathers new super-soft guitar straps are constructed of three layers of garment leather. Each is finished with contrasting double stitching. Pictured is model M17SS in black and red. The units are available in six other colors. levysleathers.com



MORGAN MONROE | BANJO STRAPS

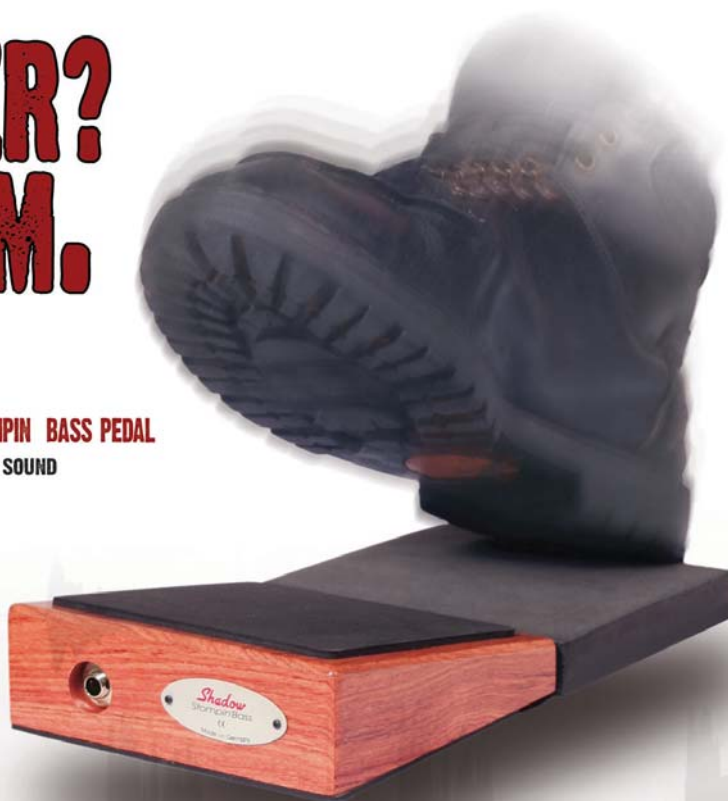
New Release

Morgan Monroe has debuted the Quick Release Strap in three models and two colors. The straps come in cotton or tanned leather fabrics and boast polypropylene quick release strap locks. The straps are available in brown or black. MSRP: \$24.95-\$44.95. morganmonroe.com

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

DAISY ROCK | SOPHOMORE SERIES

Slump-Free Sophomores

Daisy Rock Guitars has introduced its Sophomore series. The Sophomore guitars are full 25.5-inch scale instruments designed especially for girls and featuring a lightweight design. They include a matte finish ash body and glossy mahogany top producing a rich tone. The models' slightly smaller-sized body fits girls just right, making them comfortable to play. MSRP: \$279. alfred.com



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GEAR GUIDE >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



FLOYD ROSE | FRX TREMOLO

Terrific Tremolo

Floyd Rose has rolled out a new surface-mounting FRX Tremolo System for Les Paul, SG and Flying V-style guitars. The FRX is a direct swap for the Tune-O-Matic and stopbar-type bridge system, using the existing mounting stud holes and requiring no routing. The locking nut is a truss rod cover and nut hybrid, which swaps with the original nut and cover. floydrose.com



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T-Rex | MØLLER 2

Danish Danger

T-Rex has released the Møller 2 pedal, which delivers the same classic analog overdrive as its predecessor. Named after Danish guitarist Knud Møller, for whom the original pedal was designed, the fully analog Møller 2 features a more durable voice toggle switch and easier-to-read control knob graphics. t-rex-effects.com

ASHDOWN | NEW ACOUSTIC RANGE

Acoustically Gifted

Ashdown Engineering has debuted a new Ashdown acoustic range. The range is comprised of the AA-100, 100-watt Acoustic Combo; the AA-40-Cube, 40-watt Acoustic Combo; the AA-Power-Cube 40, 40-watt powered extension cube; and the AA preamp pedal.

All amps feature high-end Latvian birch-ply cabinets, handmade with dove-tail joints and finished with a natural gloss lacquer.

{ashdown-music.com}



SAGA | REGAL RD-40VS

Royal Ax

Saga's has improved the next generation of the Regal RD-40VS. The body outline is a Saga original and the back, sides and neck are made of select mahogany with a top of close-grained spruce. The traditional mahogany square-neck shape has been refined to have the ideal width for comfortable slide playing. The fingerboard is constructed of select rosewood and uses traditional frets made of polished nickel-silver.

{sagamusic.com}



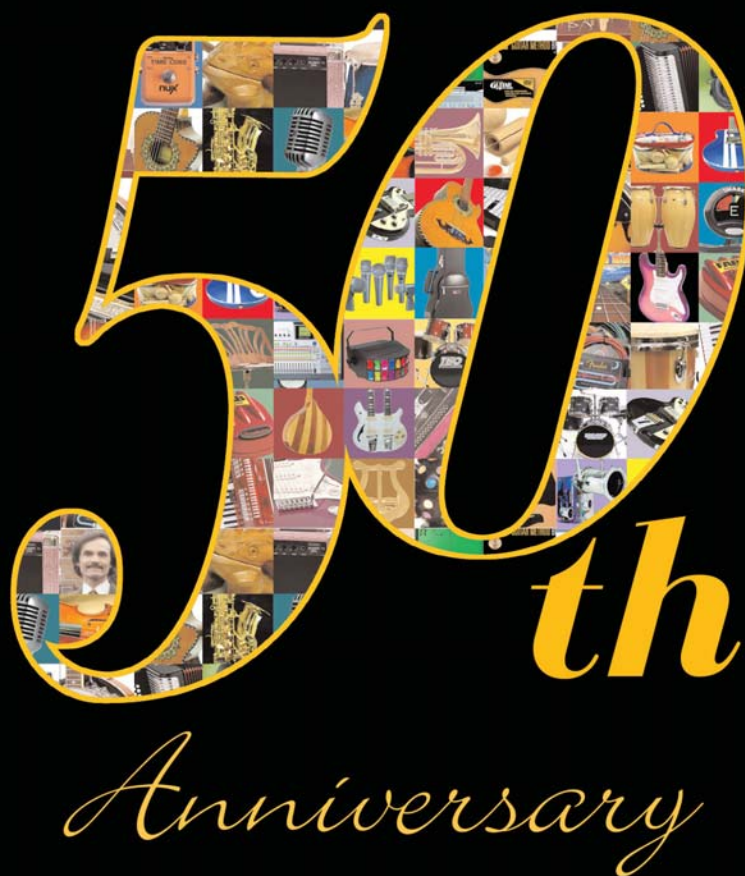
MOD KITS | THE VERB DELUXE

MOD's Action Kit

The new Verb Deluxe kit from MOD Kits is built around the Belton Digi-Log Mini Module. Features include both dwell and mix controls, letting the dry signal be blended with the processed signal from just a hint of reverb to deep, cavernous echoes. The dwell control adds extra flexibility, providing a full palette of reverb sound. {modkitsdiy.com}



1963 - 2013



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GEAR GUIDE

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

AGUILAR | AG 4P/J-HC

Well-Balanced Set

Aguilar's new AG 4P/J-HC hum-canceling pickup set brings together matched Precision- and Jazz-style pickups. The new set provides a flexible array of tones, whether used alone or in combination. MAP: \$185. aguilaramp.com



STRING SWING | STYLZ

Personal Style

String Swing recently debuted Stylz, which features seven new customized guitar hangers, while combining the strength and durability of the company's CC01K. Players can show off their patriotic side with the latest Freedom design shown here. stringswing.com



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FISHMAN | TRIPLE PLAY WIRELESS
GUITAR CONTROLLER

Fishman Adds Software

Fishman has launched its Triple Play Wireless Guitar Controller with a comprehensive suite of full-version software from PreSonus, Native Instruments, Notion Music and IK Multimedia. Triple Play is designed to make composing, performing and recording easy. Its slim form factor lets guitarists access a palette of instruments and sounds wirelessly. fishman.com



SHADOW ELECTRONICS | RING TUNER

Stay in Tune

The Shadow Humbucking Ring Tuner from Shadow Electronics lets users transform any humbucker electric guitar into an instrument with accurate onboard tuning. The tuner sits

inconspicuously inside a humbucker frame, providing easy access to a precise tuner and never affecting or reducing the instrument's sound. Its multicolored LEDs are easy to read, even in bright surroundings.

shadow-electronics.com



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BREEDLOVE | PREMIER
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Best of Breedlove

Breedlove recently introduced the Premier series of mandolins. The instruments are composed of the highest grade of Sitka Spruce for the top and Western Big Leaf Maple for the back, sides, and neck. Black binding on the body, top, back and neck accentuate the curves of the instrument. The radiused ebony fingerboard is adorned with a detailed Mosaic pin inlay and oversize frets. The series features six new models. MAP: Starting at \$2,299. breedlovemusic.com



HAGSTROM GUITARS | VIKING P

Harmonious Viking

Hagstrom's new Viking P is primarily based on the Hagstrom Viking with its semi-hollow maple-ply body, maple-set neck and the Hagstrom Trapeze tailpiece. Hagstrom's R&D focused on specially matching custom-made Custom P-50 pickups that compliment the Viking's clear and natural accent, resulting in a rich and harmonious tone without any discoloration of the Viking's tonal spectrum. hagstromguitars.com



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GEAR GUIDE

AUDIO & RECORDING



EVERYTHING NEW IS OLD

A number of pro-audio manufacturers are reaching back — for a sound, for a look, for a feel from long ago.

WAVES AUDIO REDD CONSOLE PLUG-INS

Waves Audio recently teamed with London's Abbey Road Studios to introduce the new REDD Console plug-ins. The Beatles and countless others recorded at the studios, using the REDD consoles built by its in-house Record Engineering Development Department (REDD). Waves recreated the unique color, character and tonal complexity of the original desks: the REDD.17 still belonging to Abbey Road Studios, and the REDD.37 console now owned by Lenny Kravitz. The result is REDD, an impressive pair of plug-ins that deliver the enhanced dimension, richness and depth of these console classics. MSRP: \$349. waves.com

A-DESIGNS AUDIO VENTURA

A-Designs Audio has re-released its JM-3001 Mic Pre-amp/EQ/D.I. under the new name, Ventura, nodding to the classic Quad Eight console from the 1970s after which the unit's three-band parametric EQ is inspired. The Ventura features a cream-colored faceplate with black nomenclature for improved visibility in low light, and is hand built in the United States. The single-rack-space piece features a transformer coupled mic pre, instrument input, and three-band parametric equalizer. MAP: \$2,095. adesignsaudio.com

UNIVERSAL AUDIO TELETRONIX LA-2A

CLASSIC LEVELER PLUG-IN Universal Audio's Teletronix LA-2A Classic Leveler Collection provides emulations of three distinct Teletronix hardware units, right down to their transformers, amplifiers, and aged luminescent panels. With the new LA-2A Classic Leveler Plug-In Collection, Universal Audio modeled the entire electronic path of three highly coveted hardware units — Silver, Gray, and the original LA-2 model — providing the most authentic plug-in emulations available of this iconic compressor. MSRP: \$299. uaudio.com



YAMAHA | STAGEPAS

Portable Power

Yamaha has debuted the latest models in its STAGEPAS portable P.A. system lineup, the STAGEPAS 400i and 600i. Successors of the STAGEPAS 300 and 500 systems, the new models combine high-efficiency amplifiers, newly designed speakers and high performance DSP. Complementing the boost in performance, the addition of iPod and iPhone connectivity, SPX digital reverbs, an on-board feedback suppressor and more versatile EQ has improved functionality and ease of use.

{yamaha.com}



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ROYER LABS SF-2

Royer Labs has released the SF-2 Active Ribbon Microphone. Designed as a premium instrument for use in classical performance applications or to capture acoustic instruments, the SF-2 is a phantom-powered version of the company's original SF-1. The SF-2 has an output level of -38 dB, putting its sensitivity on par with that of phantom-powered condenser microphones, and enabling the microphone to be used with a wide variety of mic pre-amps. MSRP: \$2,495. royerlabs.com



HARMAN C1000S

Harman's AKG recently updated its C1000S multi-purpose condenser microphone. The high-performance small-diaphragm microphone is ideally suited for recording and live sound applications for drum overheads, pianos and acoustic instruments. The condenser has a sturdy metal chassis and specialized mic clip to keep the units securely attached to stands. The C1000 offers two gain settings, three frequency settings and two polar patterns: cardioid and hypercardioid. akg.com



AUDIO-TECHNICA 50 SERIES

Audio-Technica has launched its flagship 50 series of elite studio microphones with the AT5040 Cardioid Condenser Microphone. The hand-built AT5040 side-address condenser offers high-fidelity performance, with great realism and depth, presence and purity of sound. The AT5040 employs four ultra-thin rectangular diaphragms that function together providing a combined surface area unachievable in a standard round diaphragm. MSRP: \$2,999. audio-technica.com



DPA D:FACTO II

DPA Microphones's new d:facto II Vocal Microphone offers a natural sound with high separation and extreme SPL handling. With a true studio sound for the live stage, this latest addition to the d:facto line is designed for use with the new wired DPA handle. The d:facto II provides singers and engineers with the added benefit of a state-of-the-art adapter system, which allows for seamless integration with many popular professional wireless systems. dpamicrophones.com



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GEAR GUIDE >

AUDIO & RECORDING

ALLEN & HEATH | ME MIXERS

Getting Personal

Allen & Heath recently launched the ME Personal Mixing System. The new personal monitoring solution is universally compatible with Allen & Heath and other pro digital mixers.

Central to the ME system is the small, easy to use and fully-customizable ME-1 personal mixer, powered and connected via CAT5 and capable of managing up to 42 sources.

The accompanying ME-U hub enables star connection of multiple ME-1 mixers and interconnection to other professional digital mixers via MADI, Dante or Ether-Sound. americanmusicsound.com



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AURALEX | KICKBACK

Be Quiet

Auralex Acoustics recently added the Studiofoam T panels to its Studiofoam line. Available in a 2- by 2-foot or 2- by 4-foot formats, it can be mixed with other Auralex Studiofoam profiles, allowing for a variety of designs. auralex.com

LINE 6 | STAGESOURCE L2M, L2T

On the Line

Line 6 released the new StageSource L2m and L2t loudspeakers, expanding the StageSource family. Both L2-series speakers feature six DSP-based smart speaker modes, which enable musicians to optimize the loudspeakers' output for a variety of performance scenarios or for use with a multi-effects guitar processor. line6.com



FROM THE SALES FLOOR

Anthony Thompson

Alto Music, Middletown, N.Y.



WE SELL TO A LOT OF STUDIOS, post-production houses and home studios. What you see is that they need to buy in order to remain current and cutting edge, and to make money. So when the economy tanks the home guys and hobbyists will be buying less, but the pro guys are still buying — at least if they have the clientele. In general, the studios that are doing well are constantly chasing what's current.

In the past year, audio interfaces of all sizes sold well — from one or two channel USB interfaces all the way up to professional-level gear. We sold a lot of 500 series mic pres. Those were the highest selling types of items. In those kinds of modules, the cost is lower and you can add in different flavors of gear. There's versatility at a good price point, and it's a hot format right now.

In the past five years or more, we've seen a lot of large-scale studios either scaling back or closing entirely, and, in the future, I think you're going to see a lot more professional work being done out of the home project studio. As the technology gets more affordable and the quality you get for the price continues to rise, it's more and more possible.

Our store has a cutting-edge studio and control room, with tons of outboard gear from a wide array of manufacturers, all based around an Avid Pro Tools system. Studio guys can bring in their own recording sessions, and try out the gear in a setting that's not like Wal-Mart. It's an environment a studio guy is used to. We can do mic shootouts, and we have nice lighting. You're not trying out a \$5,000 compressor next to a guy screaming on a \$100 guitar. He's in a comfortable domain. With a customer of that type you want to discuss the ideas and needs in a not-so-chaotic environment. And it's easier to sell.

GEAR GUIDE >

AUDIO & RECORDING

CAD AUDIO | GXL SYSTEMS

Double Duty

CAD Audio's new GXL-V VHF and GXL-U UHF dual wireless systems are designed for easy, flexible use while providing a high performance solution in a dual system configuration. The GXL-V VHF receiver features two channels of VHF wireless engineered into one chassis. The GXL-U UHF receiver features two channels of UHF wireless, also engineered into one chassis. Both products include RF and AF indicator lights and volume controls, and are offered with a choice of handheld or bodypack transmitters. All bodypack systems are supplied with guitar cable and condenser headworn mic at no additional charge. MSRP: GXL-V, \$139; GXL-U, \$229. cadaudio.com



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GATOR CASES | XG-TOUR

Tough Skin

Gator Cases has released a custom-fitted G-TOUR road case that not only protects the Presonus StudioLive 24.4.2 board during transport, but is outfitted with Gator's 360 Arm mounting system to create an all-in-one workstation. The G-TOURPRE242-DH-ARM case features a thick, heavy-duty plywood construction and a tough laminated PVC exterior. Specialized EVA foam padding lines the interior to safely secure and protect the board. The integrated 360 arm system features a tray for mounting either a laptop or tablet device. gatorcases.com

CROWN AUDIO | VRACK

Rack It Up

Crown Audio recently added to its VRACK complete amplifier management solutions with the introduction of its VRACK 4x3500HD. The new version incorporates three of Crown's flagship I-Tech 4x3500HD DriveCore™ series four-channel power amplifiers in a single road-ready plug-and-play rack, providing a versatile, turn-key multi-channel amplifier solution for tour, rental and installed sound applications. crownaudio.com



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GEAR GUIDE >

AUDIO & RECORDING

KEF | LS50

Small & Powerful

Kef's new LS50 mini-monitor speaker brings a level of playback usually found in bigger speakers to the desktop. Kef's latest flagship Blade loudspeaker provides a high-quality studio experience, even in the smallest of spaces. The LS50's KEF Uni-Q driver array is capable of mastering an exceptional range of dynamic highs and lows over a large listening area. **{kef.com}**



MUSE | RECEPTOR QUATTRO

Four Good

The new Receptor Quattro from Muse features a quad-core processing engine, a larger drive, more RAM for enhanced performance, and support for eight analog inputs and outputs. The software features include a 64-bit operating system with a 32-bit bridge feature that lets users run 32-bit and 64-bit plug-ins simultaneously, as well as expanded support for Muse Research's Live Mode, a new caching technology for performing live with virtual instruments and effects. **{museresearch.com}**




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RADIAL | GOLD DIGGER

Dig In

Radial Engineering recently launched the Gold Digger, a device that enables the studio engineer to quickly compare and select the best sounding microphone to suit the character of a particular voice. The Gold Digger features four radio-style switches to ensure only one microphone will be activated at a time. A 48V phantom power is generated and managed inside the unit to ensure switching between mics will be quiet and pop-free. MSRP: \$400. **{radialeng.com}**



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ALLEN & HEATH



Allen & Heath are pleased to announce a new revolution in digital mixing, the ME-1. Several new additions to the popular GLD series will also be on display.

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KURZWEIL



For decades, Kurzweil Music Systems has been known as an innovative leader in the music tech industry, developing world-class musical instruments.

Vestax



Vestax manufactures the finest and most innovative DJ gear on the planet such as the popular new VCI-380 MIDI DJ Controller.

Fostex



The new HP-A8C is Fostex's flagship 32bit DAC / Headphone Amplifier model and features finely designed Analog and Digital circuitries as well as the epoch-making DSD audio playback function.

XONE



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studiologic



The Sledge, an analog modeling synthesizer modeled after the classic Minimoog layout featuring 3 oscillators, 2 LFOs plus many additional envelopes and effects processors.

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GEAR GUIDE


AUDIO & RECORDING



AMERICAN AUDIO | ELX SERIES

Classy Amps

American Audio has introduced the ELX series of class A/B amplifiers. Consisting of three models — ELX2000, ELX3000 and ELX4000 — the amp line ranges from 180–800 watts to cover a broad spectrum of user needs. These class A/B amps feature front panel volume knobs and LED meters; XLR-1/4-inch inputs; and Speakon and binding post outputs. Fan-cooled, the ELX amps take up two rack spaces. americanaudio.us



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GEAR GUIDE >

AUDIO & RECORDING

BEYERDYNAMIC | DT 770 PRO

Professional 'Phones

Beyerdynamic's new limited edition version of its DT 770 PRO headphone features the same professional sound quality of the company's 80-ohm and 250-ohm versions, but refined to 32 ohms. This model is fully compatible with smartphones, MP3 players, tablets, laptops and PC soundcards, while maintaining its studio readiness. The new DT770 PRO LE 32 ohms also ships with a 5.2-foot straight cable featuring a 3.5mm mini stereo jack and a 6.35mm adapter. MSRP: \$249. **{ameri-canmusicandsound.com}**



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STAFFORD | MOUNTING COLLARS

Get Attached

Stafford Manufacturing has launched a line of low-cost plastic hinged collars that create all types of opportunities for attaching items to tube and pipe such as power strips. The collars feature an integral hinge, clamping screw and one flat section with a hole that lets it be attached to a power strip or other item, and then mounted to a tube or pipe. Providing virtually unlimited attachment flexibility, these collars can also be used to mount tubular instruments to a flat surface for instant accessibility. MSRP: \$9.95. staffordmfg.com

FOSTEX | PMO.3

Monitor Power

Fostex recently rolled out its first 2-way powered studio monitor system, the PMO.3. Offered in gray, white and classic black, the PMO.3 is a professional-quality speaker system that combines a dedicated 3-inch LF fiberglass cone woofer and HF silk dome tweeter drivers together with a built-in class D amplifier. MSRP: \$129.99. fostexinternational.com



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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 let your customer 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 their purchase decision easy.


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AVID | VENUE

Stay Flex

Avid's VENUE Stage 48 is now compatible with the VENUE mix rack. Current VENUE Mix Rack owners can easily add I/O flexibility to their systems through the Stage 48 Ethernet AVB remote box via the Avid Ethernet Snake Card option. These new integration capabilities give current VENUE Mix Rack system customers the option to significantly reduce cable clutter and expense while maintaining audio quality as they distribute their system I/O more effectively throughout the performance venue. avid.com

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YAMAHA | MT220, MT120

Listen Up

Yamaha's new MT220 and MT120 deliver high-resolution sound reproduction with maximum clarity over the full frequency range due to the use of copper-clad aluminum wire voice coils. The shape is large enough to completely cover the ears, yet provide a comfortable fit for extended sessions. The three-dimensional arms pivot, letting users adjust the slope of the cups. The MT220 features an aluminum hairline finish and ergonomic memory foam ear cushions with an ultra-soft covering. yamaha.com



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GEAR GUIDE >

AUDIO & RECORDING

NADY | PSS-300

Compact Sound

Nady's new PSS-300 is ideal for church and school use, as well as live music and DJ applications. The PSS-300 includes two full-range 8-inch speakers and an eight-channel 300W class D stereo powered mixer. Features include a recessed speaker mount for easy transport, an 8-inch woofer and 1-inch titanium, high-frequency driver. nady.com



DAS AUDIO | ACTION 8

Action Packed

D.A.S. Audio's Action series, a full line of active and passive systems, now boasts the new Action 8 compact and highly-versatile unit, as well as the related Action 8A self-powered version. Both models are two-way systems that use an 8-inch transducer that handles mid- and low-frequency reproduction. When it comes to frequency response the new Action 8 and Action 8A offers precise reproduction between 60Hz and 20 kHz. The new self-powered Action 8A two-way system boasts a lightweight class-D amplifier that uses a switch mode power supply. dasaudio.com



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GEAR GUIDE >

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

TAMA IRON COBRA Tama has expanded its Iron Cobra family with the addition of the HP600D and HP600DTW bass drum pedals. The updated models boast a changeable duo cam that lets players switch between rolling- and power-glide settings. By switching the sprocket, players can adjust the action of the pedal to suit their style of performance. The Iron Cobra also comes equipped with a Speedo-Ring, streamlining the pedal's rocker motion by incorporating a smooth ball bearing. The pedal sticks to the original design by utilizing the same double-chain drive on the HP900 series models. tama.com

DRUM WORKSHOP THIN-SHELL SNARES

Drum Workshop recently expanded its line of DW Collector's Series thin-shell snare drums. The drums feature a thin 1-mm rolled shell, which offers more resonant tone with more overtones than thicker shells. The thin aluminum shells are finished with a matte grey powder coat and also have rolled bearing edges and snare beds. The Custom Shop drum boasts a MAG throw-off system with a three-position butt-plate, True Tone snare wires, True Pitch stainless-steel tension rods and 3-mm steel True Hoops. MSRP: \$661.99–\$692.99. dwdrums.com

PEARL HORACIO HERNANDEZ COW-

BELL Pearl has launched its line of Horacio Hernandez Signature Series Cowbells. The authentic Latin timbre is ideal for drum lines, front ensembles, percussion ensembles and drum sets. The Signature bells feature flat and curved playing surfaces that produce the same tone, but offer the option of striking the bell directly facing in or on the side, timbale-style. Each bell is finished in plated copper. MSRP: \$53–\$72. pearldrum.com

GRETSCH DRUMS 130TH KITS Gretsch Drums is celebrating its 130th anniversary with a limited run of commemorative American-made drum sets and snares. Each model sports signature Gretsch appointments, a numbered 130th-anniversary interior shell label and a certificate of authenticity. The 130th anniversary drum kits will be available in four configurations across the USA Custom line and one configuration within the Brooklyn line. Three 130th anniversary snare drums are also available, including 5- and 7-by-14-inch aluminum snares with black finish and black nickel hardware. gretschdrums.com

TIN PAN ALLEY

This year, manufacturers have detected precious metals and metallic finishes as must-haves for 2013 rigs.





SKB | 1SKB-D3217

Conga Line

SKB recently introduced the 1SKB-D3217 Universal Conga Case, accommodating quinto, conga or tumbadora conga drums that are 28–32 inches in height.

The Universal Conga Case is roto-molded of linear, low-density polyethylene with molded-in exterior bumpers and inverted bumpers to hold the conga in place. To take the stress out of heavy lifting, two metal sure-grip handles with 90-degree stops are included. The interior features foam padding in the base, offering maximum gear protection.

MSRP: \$229.99.
{skbcases.com}



PROTECTION RACKET | CONGA CASES

Snug as a Bug

Protection Racket has redesigned a line of conga cases in 10-inch requinto, 11-inch quinto, 11.75-inch conga, 12.5-inch tumba and 14-inch super tumba sizes. The

cushioned conga cases protect percussion instruments from dents and scratches, and the padding makes for a snug fit.

They also feature heavy-duty, easy-to-use nylon rucksack straps. The ergonomic carrying handle and two sided handles provide several options for carrying. The conga cases are made from highly durable Racketex, Propadd and Propile materials. MSRP: Requinto, \$131.99; Super Tumba, \$149.99.

{protectionracket.co.uk}



GIBRALTAR | G-CLASS BASS DRUM PEDAL

Class Act

Gibraltar's new G-Class single bass drum pedal is the latest addition to its Turning Point hardware line. The G-Class pedal sports a sculpted single-pillar frame. Its two cam drive adjustment points, variable-weight beater, and independent adjustments for footboard height and beater angle make kit personalization easier for specific styles of playing. Gibraltar has also updated the pedal's mounting system and attached an onboard tool kit to the cast-metal base-plate for changes on the fly. It comes with a portable case. MSRP: \$349. {gibraltarhardware.com}



GEAR GUIDE

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

AHEAD | MARCHING DRUMSTICKS

Marching Ahead

Ahead Drumsticks has debuted three new models of marching drumsticks. The sticks integrate an advanced aluminum core, a polyurethane shaft and increased durability. With their consistency in weight, size, balance and tone, the comfortable and shock-absorptive sticks are well-suited to any drum corps or drum line. They are available with white handles and shaft but can also be special ordered in a wide variety of custom colors for schools, teams or groups. bigbangdist.com





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ZILDJIAN | STARR STICKS

Super Starr

Zildjian recently collaborated with drummer Ringo Starr to create the Ringo Starr Artist series drumstick. The versatile stick is great for multiple styles of play and offers 5A-style dimensions, an elongated oval tip and the company's DIP coating in purple. The stick is also imprinted with Starr's signature along with his trademark star. zildjian.com

CYMPAD | CHROMATIC CYMBAL WASHERS

Chromatic Scale

Cympad has expanded its line of Chromatic Cymbal Washers with the addition of red and purple models. The durable, colorful 40-by-15-mm cymbal washers are made from an advanced, cellular-foam material. Like Cympad's Optimizer series washers, they provide an easy, affordable method of improving the sound and performance of all cymbals. The washers are offered in a wide selection of models and sizes for all cymbal types and brands. They are also available in blue and orange. MSRP: \$12.95. cympad.com



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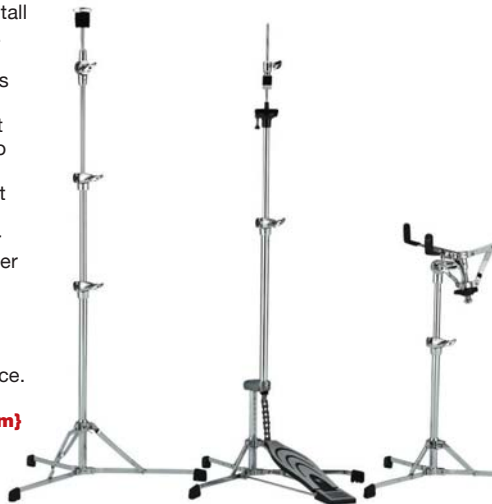
DRUMS & PERCUSSION

SAKAE | FLAT-BASE HARDWARE

Flat Fleet

Sakae has released a series of flat-base hardware that is suited to drummers who are looking to travel light. The series includes a straight cymbal stand, hi-hat stand, snare drum stand and tall tom stand. The line of hardware is extremely lightweight and able to be stored in compact places. The center cymbal-tilter holds the cymbal in place for efficient performance.

{sakae-drums.com}




RBH DRUMS | MONARCH

Classic Twist

RBH Drums has upgraded its vintage-inspired Monarch drum kits with some modern appointments, including improvements on its mahogany-poplar-mahogany shell configurations and handcrafted, retro-reminiscent construction. The new kits also produce a darker, warmer, punchier, thicker and tighter drum sound. They are low in pitch with naturally controlled resonance, which is relevant to a wide range of classical- and contemporary-drumming situations. {rbhdrums.com}


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SABIAN | JOJO MAYER HOOP CRASHERS

Hoop Dreams

Sabian has debuted the Hoop Crasher, a dual-ring effects device designed by drummer Jojo Mayer that offers a versatile palette of sounds. Manufactured from a set of premium B20 bronze hi-hats, the top floatation ring is punched with 32 holes for lightness. The heavier bottom ring is created with an X-Celerator Air-Wave lip, eliminating airlock and minimizing contact area with the snare. It's attached by a pair of cotter pins that can be played freely for more floatation and lift. Drummers can also adjust the tension clamps to customize their level of sustain. (sabian.com)

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INNOVATIVE PERCUSSION | DSB-2 LEATHER STICKBAG

Pocketed Protector

Innovative Percussion has released the DSB-2 Synthetic Leather Stickbag. The protective travel case comes equipped with six interior pockets that can accommodate several pairs of drumsticks, brushes and other accessories. An inside zippered pocket also safely stores drum keys, small tools, cymbal felts and other miscellaneous items. Charts and set lists can be stored in a rear exterior pocket, while the front exterior pocket provides a larger storage space with padding to help protect metronomes, headphones, tablets and other electronic devices. innovativepercussion.com



SONOR | PROTEAN SNARE

Change Machine

Sonor has released the Gavin Harrison Protean Signature snare drum. The snare comes in 14- and 12-inch sizes and is crafted from six-ply, hand-selected birch. Along with top S-hoops, the open triple-flanged steel hoop on the bottom of the drum lets players exchange multiple snare wires quickly with Sonor's signature Dual Glide snare strainer. The selection of dampening rings can achieve any overtone. Other features include hybrid bearing edges and heavy-duty Phonic lugs. The drum sports a Silky Black finish offset by white-shell hardware underlays. sonordrum.com

FROM THE SALES FLOOR

Daniel Grabski

Dale's Drum Shop, Harrisburg, Pa.



ELECTRONIC DRUM SALES have gone up because of current trends in music. Dubstep and those type of styles are becoming more popular, and people are trying to incorporate those styles into their live show, especially with sampling pads. It's also much easier — and more convenient — to buy an electronic drum set [for home recording] than to buy a bunch of microphones and learn the art of properly miking a kit. In our shop, anything from Yamaha or Roland always comes out strong.

I have a designated electronics room where each pad is hooked up to a mixer with a number of different channels. If someone wants to A and B a certain drum set or pad, I can hook them up live using the system that we have in the room. With the flip of a switch, we can compare kits on the fly.

I've noticed that cajons are extremely popular and that they are replacing the current djembe and bongo market. I find djembes to still be strong in drum circles, but as far as acoustic acts go, as an alternative form of percussion, cajons are still major leaders in the marketplace right now.

There's also a new practice pad that I just tried out called the Kieffa that's pretty unique. It's expensive, but for a corps guy or serious player, that could be a benefit. It's an inch deep with air holes and snare sounds, and the feel and overall appearance is pretty cool, too. It's also made in America, which is now a huge selling point. I have another area in the shop that's made for practice pads and education purposes. I'll have my other competitors out, but I have the Kieffa pad on a stand with sticks and a sign that says, "Check it out."

PLAYING OUT

Piano and keyboard makers have introduced new models suitable for the serious player.



CASIO PRIVIA PRO PX-5S Casio has introduced the Privia Pro PX-5S, the first electronic piano in the Privia Pro series, a sub-category aimed for professional stage musicians. The PX-5S features an advanced MIDI controller and a large assortment of fully programmable sounds, including Hex Layer tones. Housed in a 24-pound package, it also includes four assignable knobs, six assignable sliders, two pedal inputs, pitch and modulation wheels. MSRP: \$1,299. {casiomusicgear.com}

KURZWEIL SP5-8 DIGITAL STAGE PIANO With a newly designed, 88-note graded hammer-weighted action and over 800 preset sounds, the SP5-8 offers the high-end sound palette of a professional workstation combined with the easy workflow and simplicity of a stage piano. The SP5-8 includes a varied assortment of piano presets, as well as the renowned Kurzweil string sections, plus orchestral, brass, winds, mallets, percussion, drums, guitar and bass presets. {kurzweil.com}

HAMMOND ORGAN USA SK SERIES Hammond has added the Sk1-73 and Sk1-88 keyboards to its Sk series of stage/performance instruments. The 73- and 88-note keyboards are in response to the many piano players buying their first Hammond, surprised that such a rich set of piano voices emanates from an instrument with drawbars. The Hammond-style "waterfall" keyboards accommodate proper organ playing, but are semi-weighted to facilitate comfortable piano play. {hammondorgano.com}



ALESIS | VORTEX

Alesis Creates Keytar Vortex

Alesis has kicked back the time machine with the Vortex keytar. The Vortex eliminates the barrier between keyboard players and the audience by giving them the freedom to move around the stage and take the lead. The instrument provides touch-sensitive keys and velocity-sensitive pads on a pearlescent white body, and radical pitch and modulation controls on its neck. The Vortex comes ready for performance, auto-mapped for popular software synths and DAWs. Plus, users can create their own mappings for MIDI software. {alesis.com}



ROLAND | BK-3

Get Back

Roland has added the BK-3 Backing Keyboard to its lineup of BK-series instruments. The BK-3 delivers exceptional sound quality and a large selection of music styles from around the world, providing full-ensemble backing at the touch of a button. With its affordable price, ease of use, and premium features, the BK-3 is ideal for a wide range of users, from hobbyists and home players to one-man bands and pro-entertainers. Completely self contained, the BK-3 features a 61-note keyboard, a global array of intelligent music and rhythm accompaniments, and a built-in stereo sound system. {rolandus.com}

FROM THE SALES FLOOR

Ben Klinger
Sherman Clay, Seattle



THE MODEL FOR A SUCCESSFUL dealership, even 10 years ago, was a superstore. Customers required it. Now smaller is better, and customers seem to be comfortable with that, and sales are not impeded.

We had a great holiday season, and we ended the year well. But we had to incentivize our customers in ways we had not historically done. We sold a mix of new and “newish used” Steinways. We held a lot of interesting events, too — concerts, festivals and piano movies. But the average attendance of events has dropped. Now we must really engage with the people in front of us. Instead of casting the net far and wide, it’s one customer at a time, requiring great focus and attentiveness.

Digital keyboards are not a big part of what we do — we’re forced to match the Internet in that arena — but after the holidays, we were actually sold out of digitals. We don’t perceive the digital customer to be the same as the acoustic piano customer necessarily. For generations the piano was the dominant entrance point for any musical instrument. In 1929, Baldwin came out with the statistic that 40.4 percent of American homes had a piano in them. Now it’s 5 percent! The piano business has become a specialized business, when for generations it wasn’t.

We once thought we’d reach people easily through YouTube and Facebook. But in retrospect, we learned that the process of selling requires intensified focus. Success lies in personnel — the ability to connect with customers, understanding their vision or creating one for them if need be, then leading them humbly, but confidently, toward that vision. It’s not simply a matter of greeting, qualifying and closing. You have to relate to them professionally but openly, and they have to trust you.

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GEAR GUIDE

PIANOS & KEYBOARDS



NORD | ELECTRO 4 SW73

Double Header

The new Nord Electro 4 SW73 has twice the memory capacity of its predecessor, Nord Electro 3 Seventy Three, accommodating more sounds from the Nord Piano and sample libraries. The organ section has been upgraded to the latest Tone Wheel engine from the dual manual organ Nord C2D, including a new 122 rotary speaker simulation and drive. The Nord Electro 4 features the B3 tone wheel organ engine from the flagship organ Nord C2D and includes a redesigned key click simulation. The percussion model has been improved to offer increased control over the percussion levels when playing near-legato. nordkeyboards.com

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YAMAHA | CX SERIES

Grand Style

Yamaha has unveiled the new CX series of acoustic grand pianos. Replacing the company's professional-quality C series pianos worldwide, the CX series includes six models, ranging from the diminutive C1X to the C7X semi-concert grand. These instruments embody many features of the CFX Concert Grand Piano. The C3X and higher models in the series are equipped with soundboards based on the soundboard technology of the CFX. To project a richer resonance, the dimensions and the design of the back posts have also been changed. yamaha.com



KORG USA | MS-20 MINI

Small and Powerful

Korg's MS-20 monophonic synthesizer, first introduced in 1978, has now been reborn in hardware, as the new MS-20 mini. The same engineers who developed the original MS-20 have reproduced it in a body that's been shrunk to 86 percent of the original size. The MS-20 Mini offers two oscillators with ring modulation and envelope generators with delay and hold. The VCA (Voltage Controlled Amp) maintains the original basic design, but it's been modified to produce less noise. korg.com

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GEAR GUIDE >

BAND & ORCHESTRA

GONZALEZ CLASSIC JAZZ GD REEDS

Gonzalez Reeds has launched the Classic line for all wind instruments, the Jazz line for alto and tenor saxophone, and the GD line for Bb clarinet. The Classic reeds are suitable for the student, advancing player and professional alike and come in 1/2 sizes. A thin tip, balanced with a thicker design toward the heel, offers a pure sound suitable for classical and traditional playing. The Jazz reeds — also called Local 627 for the famed musician's union that was home to Charlie Parker — have a thicker tip and very flexible palette that lets them be dynamic and versatile. GD reeds have a thicker tip and a longer pallet that results in a deeper, richer sound with pronounced body in the attack. conn-selmer.com

RICO RESERVE Bb CLARINET MOUTHPIECE

The Reserve mouthpiece is inspired by mouthpieces of the 1920s and is crafted using modern methods. Milled from hard rubber, as opposed to being molded from blanks like most modern mouthpieces, the Reserve mouthpiece provides a much higher level of consistency. The unique material and design deliver a focused and projected tone, which remains warm, consistent and even throughout the range of the instrument. This balanced design makes response and other components of playing. MSRP: \$180. ricoreeds.com

E.ROUSSEAU RC ALTO SAXOPHONE

MOUThPIECES Dr. Eugene Rousseau, famed performing artist and master teacher of saxophone, has introduced the new E.Rousseau RC alto saxophone mouthpieces, which deliver a centered, darker tone, a wide dynamic range and terrific response, including a distinctively improved lower register. The mouthpiece's design features slightly reshaped sidewalls and baffle, and is now available for alto saxophone in three facings: RC3 (medium closed), RC4 (medium) and RC5 (medium open). In addition to the RC line, E.Rousseau's Classic R Series is designed to meet the needs of the serious classical performer, while the E.Rousseau Jazz models are designed to cover the entire spectrum of jazz, pop and rock performance. conn-selmer.com

Every player knows a good mouthpiece is essential for a great tone. Check out some of these hot, new setups.



WORD OF MOUTH



BUFFET GROUP | ORFEO

Newly Bored

Buffet Group USA has debuted the Orfeo professional oboe, which represents an all-new bore design and tone hole placement that gives the instrument a warm, focused sound with an outstanding response throughout all registers. The instrument features a Green Line body, silver-plated keywork, new thumb rest design, cork and GT pads throughout and a new case design. buffet-crampon.com



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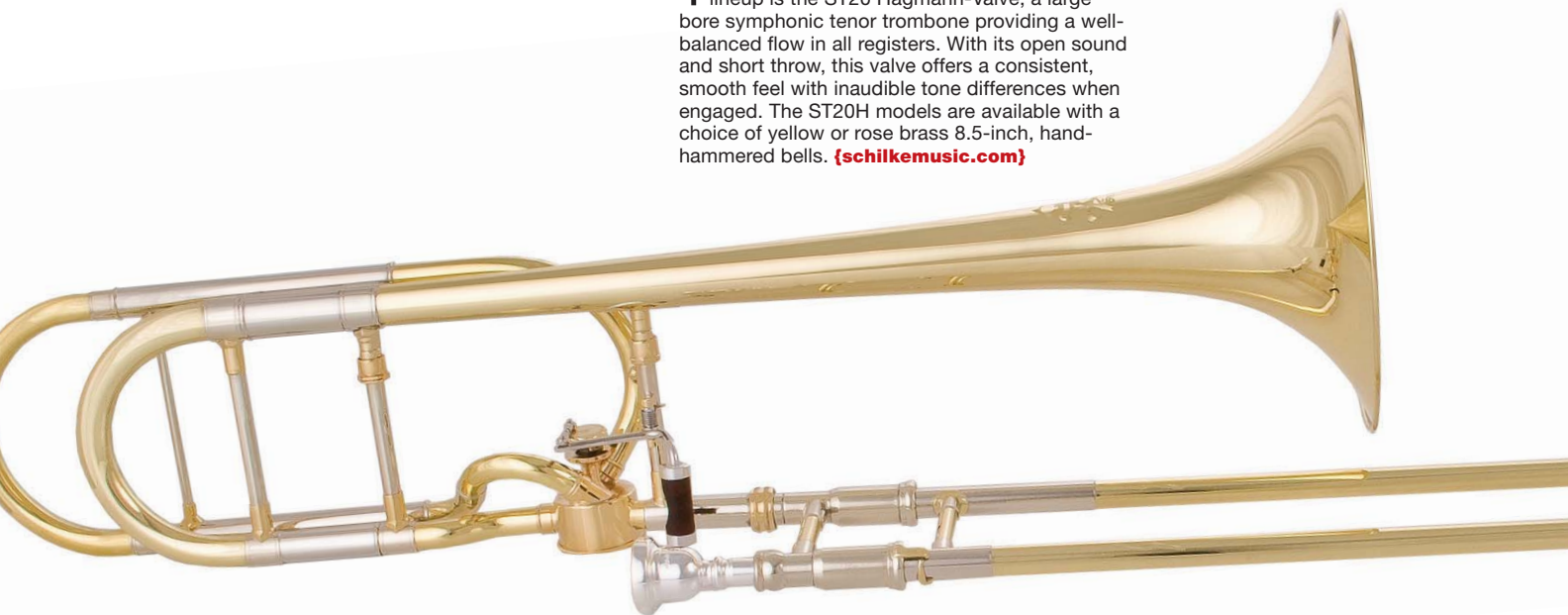
GEAR GUIDE >

BAND & ORCHESTRA

SCHILKE | ST20

Balanced Flow

The newest addition to the Schilke trombone lineup is the ST20 Haggmann-Valve, a large bore symphonic tenor trombone providing a well-balanced flow in all registers. With its open sound and short throw, this valve offers a consistent, smooth feel with inaudible tone differences when engaged. The ST20H models are available with a choice of yellow or rose brass 8.5-inch, hand-hammered bells. schilkemusic.com



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ANTHEM I A-5000

French Value

Anthem Musical Instruments is now shipping its new and improved A-5000 double French horn. The instrument features thicker braces, a .470-inch bore, Kruspe design, a 12.5-inch, laser-fused, hand-hammered bell, yellow brass body and bell, string linkage, tapered rotors, adjustable finger hook, nickel silver outer slides, and engraved valve caps. It comes standard in an SKB case. antheminstruments.com

FROM THE SALES FLOOR

Peter Sides

Robert M. Sides Family Music Center, Williamsport, Pa.

"WE'RE FORTUNATE IN OUR AREA

as far as student rentals go — we don't get a lot of brand specificity from the teachers. If the instrument works, the kids sound good and they don't have to send it into the repair shop, that's what makes them happy. Granted, most of that is coming from major manufacturers. Rentals this past year were up just a tick from the year before, but that's five straight years of our best rental seasons ever.

As far as step-up instruments go, it's still primarily sax, flute and trumpet. I can't keep the Cannonball Raven saxophones in stock. They are a black matte-finished saxophone, and black nickel-plated saxophones and black lacquered saxophones have always had a certain appeal to people. I think because it's a matte finish it doesn't show the skin oil and the fingerprints. Silver-plated saxophones were done in at our store a couple of years ago because, from our standpoint, if we didn't sell them in six months they really looked bad on our wall — they tarnished up quicker than any flute I've ever seen.

As for trumpets, I would say the Yamaha Xeno series and the Eastman 500 series and the 800 series had good sell-through, as well as the Yamaha Xeno trombone.



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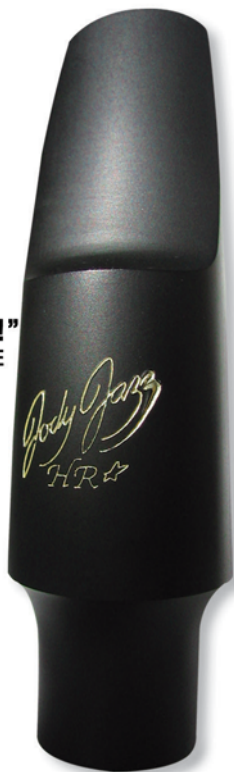
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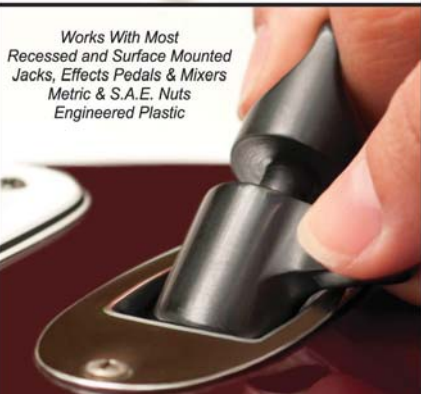
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GEAR GUIDE >

BAND & ORCHESTRA



YAMAHA | V3 VIOLIN OUTFITS

Affordable Outfits

Yamaha recently debuted the V3 violin outfits. Designed for beginning students, the new series features three models — the V3SKA12, V3SKA34 and V3SKA44 — in one-half, three-quarter and full sizes, respectively. The V3 violin outfits feature ebony pegs, D'Addario Prelude strings, metal tailpiece with four fine-tuners, wood bow with ebony frog and sturdy ABS plastic case. Shop-adjusted to MENC specifications, the V3 violin outfits also boast Yamaha's five-year limited warranty. MSRP: \$699. yamaha.com



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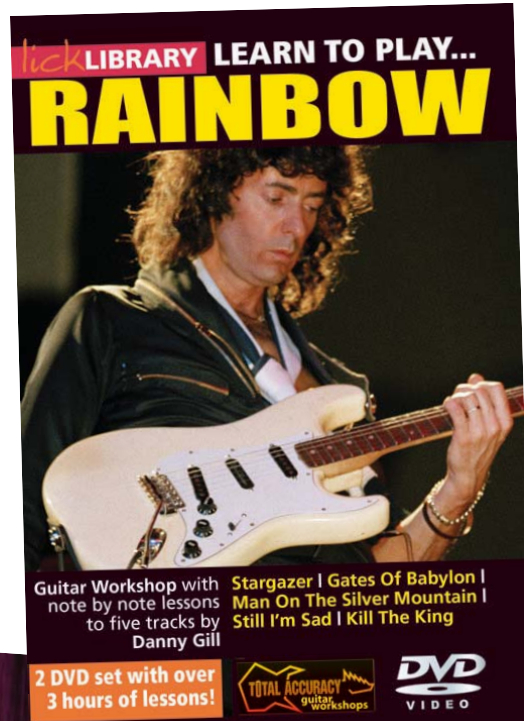
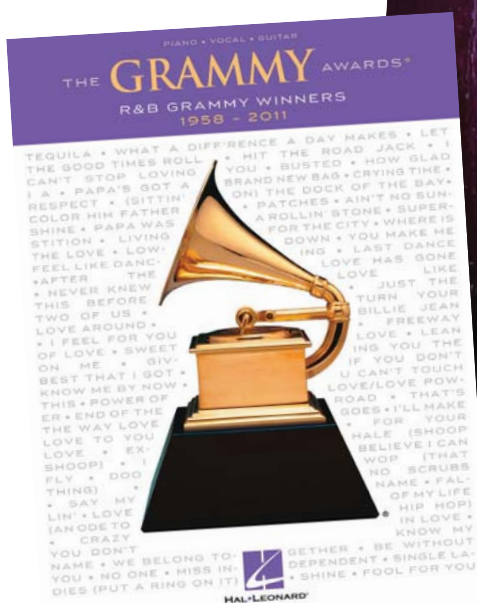
POP MUSIC

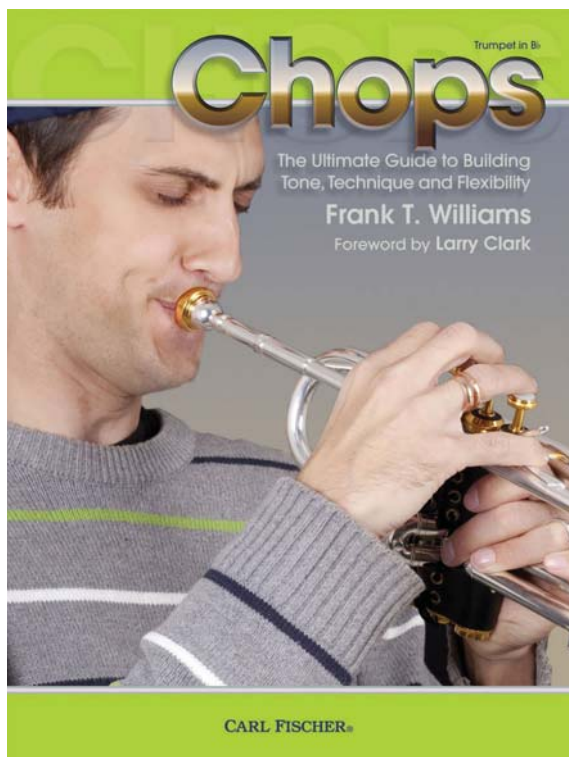
Who doesn't want to play like The Black Keys or Taylor Swift? These days, pop rules print.

CHERRY LANE 'BEST OF THE BLACK KEYS' Cherry Lane recently debuted the *Best of the Black Keys*. This new PVG collection compiles 18 songs from the duo's first 10 years. Titles include "Everlasting Light," "Girl Is On My Mind," "Gold On The Ceiling," "Lonely Boy" and "Tighten Up." MSRP: \$19.99. halleonard.com

LICK LIBRARY 'LEARN TO PLAY RAINBOW' Lick Library's new *Learn to Play Rainbow* features songs and solos by the legendary Ritchie Blackmore. This double DVD set looks at five classic tracks from the early Rainbow/Ronnie James Dio years and covers a whole range of guitar techniques with more than three hours of lessons. licklibrary.com

HAL LEONARD GRAMMY COLLECTION Hal Leonard has released a slew of new Grammy collections. The new piano, vocal and guitar E-Z Play collections assemble the Song of the Year and the Record of the Year by decade. New compilations also give musicians a year's worth of award-winning tunes in specific genres, such as country, R&B (pictured), pop and gospel. The books contain lyrics, melody and chord symbols, while the CDs feature demos for listening and separate backing tracks for singing along. halleonard.com





CARL FISCHER | 'CHOPS'

Top Chops

Carl Fischer's new *Chops: The Ultimate Guide to Building Tone, Technique and Flexibility* is available for both trumpet and trombone. Written by Frank T. Williams, a brass pedagogue, these exercises help brass players improve their tone and technique. carlfischer.com

ALFRED | 'ULTIMATE MOVIE INSTRUMENTAL SOLOS'

O Solo Mio

Alfred has expanded its *Pop Instrumental Solos* series with *Ultimate Pop & Rock Instrumental Solos* and *Ultimate Movie Instrumental Solos* for wind and string instruments. Developed to provide an engaging learning experience, all instrument books are appropriate for the level 2 or 3 player, as well as a fully orchestrated accompaniment MP3 CD. The included CD has a live instrumental performance and play-along track for each song. MSRP: \$18.99. alfred.com



FROM THE SALES FLOOR

Marcia Stearns

Bookmark Music, Pacific Grove, Calif.

OUR UKULELE BOOK

SALES are still going strong on all fronts, including popular, folk and baroque music for the uke. You name it — it's all selling. Alfred's *Teach Yourself To Play Ukulele Kit (with ukulele)* is also a strong seller, and not just for the holidays.

As far as piano methods go, our staple products that are strongest are Alfred's *Basic Piano Library* and Faber's *Piano Adventures*.

Looking ahead: We're excited about "Gangnam Style" book for concert band, which should be released any day now by Hal Leonard. And Alfred is already sending music sheets for piano from "The Hobbit."



FABER MUSIC | 'PLAY IN A DAY'

Play in 24 Hours

Faber Music has launched the DVD version of Bert Weedon's best-selling tutorial guides, *Play in a Day*. Previously only available in VHS format, the DVD showcases Weedon's expert tuition to help beginning guitarists learn basic skills and gain the confidence to continue on to more advanced guitar playing. Each selection ends with the viewer playing along to one of 15 tunes in varying styles and rhythms. MSRP: \$13.50. fabermusic.com

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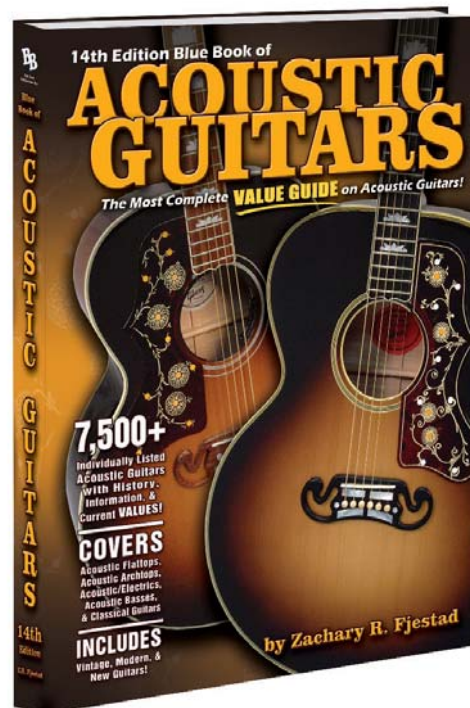
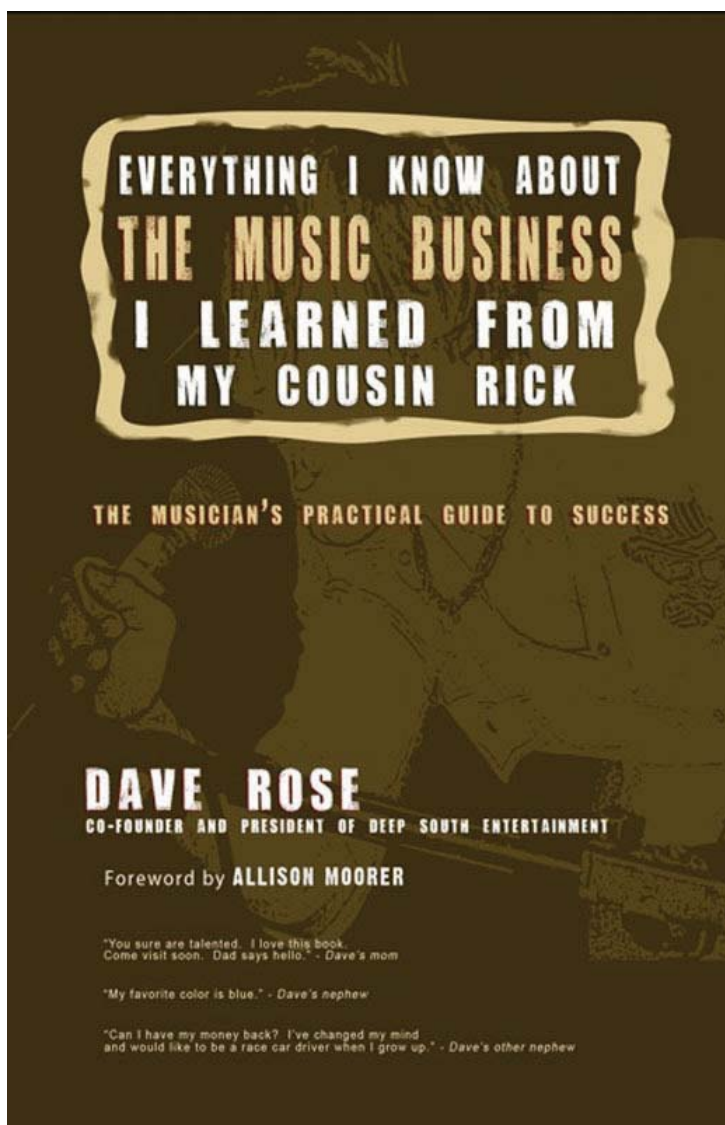
GEAR GUIDE >

PRINT, MULTIMEDIA & GIFTS

DAVE ROSE | 'EVERYTHING I KNOW ...'

Cousin Rick's Advice

Music industry veteran Dave Rose has released his first book geared toward musicians. The book, *Everything I Know About The Music Business I Learned from My Cousin Rick*; *The Musician's Practical Guide to Success*, helps musicians navigate the complicated path to success in the industry. Rose's lifelong experience in all facets of the music business offers unique insight into the obstacles, complexities and triumphs that are crucial to a musician's ability to thrive. mycousinrick.com



BLUE BOOK | ACOUSTIC, ELECTRIC BOOKS

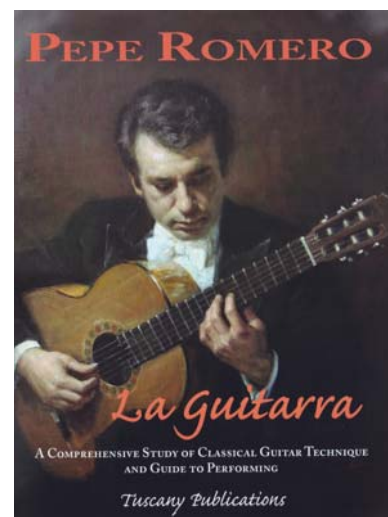
Blue Light Special

The new 14th editions of the *Blue Book of Acoustic Guitars* and *Blue Book of Electric Guitars* provide detailed information and current real-world values on guitars and basses. With a combined 2,200 pages and thousands of guitars listed, these books are the industry leaders for guitar values and information. The books cover both vintage and modern guitars; acoustic flat-tops and archtops; hollowbody and solidbody electrics; and basses. bluebookinc.com

TUSCANY PUBLICATIONS | 'PEPE ROMERO'S GUITAR STYLE AND TECHNIQUE'

Revised & Expanded

Tuscany Publications has debuted a revised and expanded edition of *Pepe Romero's Guitar Style and Technique*, which had previously been out of print. New features include sections on tremolo, flamenco, concert performance, additional finger gymnastics and a Romero photo album. It contains all of the music from the earlier version as well as several new pieces. presser.com



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Take the LED

The future is bright for the MI industry as it releases more effect lights featuring “green” LED bulbs.

AMERICAN DJ MEGA TRI64 American DJ has introduced the Mega TRI64 Profile light, a full-size, low-profile Par 64 wash fixture that's ideal for uplighting, wall-washing and truss-toning. The Mega TRI 64 Profile comes equipped with 12- by 3-watt, tri-color LEDs. By using American DJ's Tri-color LED technology, the light combines three different colors into each light source for smoother, advanced color-mixing, as well as the elimination of shadows from single-color LEDs. MSRP: \$349.95. americandj.com

BLIZZARD LIGHTING BLADE RGBW LED Blizzard Lighting's new Blade RGBW LED moving-head beam fixture has a 1.1-degree beam angle and quick movement that makes color mixing smoother and brighter. It also boasts 36 5-watt CREE LEDs with full RGBW luminous intensity of 41,000 Lux at 2 meters. Its 8-degree diffuser lense can also turn the unit into a wash coverage fixture. MSRP: \$899.99. blizzardlighting.com

CHAUVET DJSLIM-PAR Chauvet recently added two quad-color LED PAR lights to its collection of DJ SlimPAR wash lights. Fitted with 4-watt, quad-color LEDs, the SlimPAR Quad-6 IRC and SlimPAR Quad-12 IRC lights produce a broad spectrum of pastels with natural-looking temperatures and enhanced color saturation. Each light features four or eight channels and a built-in digital display. chauvet-lighting.com



FROM THE **SALES FLOOR**

Craig Merrick

Astro Audio Visual Lighting, Glendale, Calif.



THE HOTTEST PRODUCTS OF 2012

would have to have been the Pioneer DDJ SX, Numark NS7, V-Moda Headphones, American DJ Micro Series Lasers, Mackie's Thump Series Speakers and Stokyo's Serato Vinyl.

The Pioneer DDJ SX controller comes with Serato DJ software, which replaces Serato's Itch and adds new features like built-in effects from Izotope. Numark's NS7 is the one controller with mobilized platters that offers the closest and most realistic feel towards having actual turntables. It still incorporates buttons to access your loop rolls, cue points and more. It comes with Itch and has been one of the most unique controllers out there. V-Moda Headphones (Crossfade LP2) are some of the most popular headphones among DJs, offering easy customization to make a DJ's headphones more unique. They offer comfortable over-ear placement, are noise isolating and come with a carrying case. With six styles, Micro series lasers are all under \$200, handheld for easy mobility and also come with a small remote to control the laser, whether locking it on a certain color, turning it on or off, or activating auto sound.

The Mackie Thump 15 is also a great punchy speaker and one of our top sellers.

A big trend is incorporating producing among DJing, like letting DJs remix their set live with Akai products and software like Ableton. Another huge trend is being able to customize your turntables or headphones to help you stand out.



NUMARK | NS7II

Updated Control

Numark's new NS7 II, is an enhanced and updated version of the NS7 DJ controller. The updated version features four channels, 16 backlit RGB velocity-sensitive Akai Professional MPC pads, expanded effects controls — including a full array of capacitive touch-activated knobs and filters — and integration for Serato DJ. numark.com

PIONEER | HDJ-500 DJ

Green with Envy

Pioneer has added two new colors to its line of HDJ-500 DJ headphones: vibrant green (HDJ-500-G) and a brilliant violet (HDJ-500-V). The line currently features black, red and white models. By combining 40-mm diameter drivers, a thick 19-micrometer diaphragm and a copper-clad aluminum wire voice coil, the HDJ-500-G and HDJ-500-V headphones reproduce low-frequency audio ranges, assisting in mixing and beat-matching. MSRP: \$125. pioneerdj.com



GEAR GUIDE

DJ & LIGHT

GATOR | G-TOUR-DDJ-SX ARM

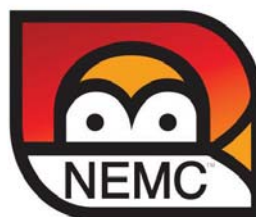
Tour Ready

Gator Cases has released a custom-fitted road case to its G-TOUR DJ line. The new G-TOUR-DDJ-SX ARM provides protection and full use of the controller without having to remove it from the case. This case also includes Gator's 360 arm-mounting system to create the perfect mobile workstation. Thick EVA padding lines the interior to securely hold the DDJ-SX and a removable front panel allows full access to the front controls. gatorcases.com



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Mike Guntren

Ray's Midbell Music
Sioux City, Iowa

We have a number of different structures and strategies. Since we just finished the holidays, something I found that works really well is having small spiffs in addition to regular commission on certain products. Our company is very digital, but when I do spiffs, I do it old school. I like my salespeople to hand me a piece of paper saying they sold an item, and I give them a spiff of \$25 or \$50 depending on what it is. It's a nice little extra for them. We like to push certain brands of instruments. Cannonball saxophones would be an example.

We've also taken part in the "Step Up to Yamaha" program, where Yamaha will actually issue the spiff themselves, along with an additional customer rebate. We all wear many hats here, but I try to give my salespeople as many snippets as I can and work with them all the time. I remind them that the customer is first, or I'll forward them emails that they can read. We also use the Yamaha and Cannonball websites for some of the sales training that we do.

>>>

Tristann Rieck

Brass Bell Music
Milwaukee

We don't work on commission, so we just set up a rewards program. We do mini-games that occur over the course of 90 days. What we are trying to work on is increasing our employees' salesmanship. The idea is that if they increase a certain percentage over their previous sales goals, they will earn Brass Bell points, and with these points, they can earn extra things — a paid day off, for example, or a lunch with me where you'll get my ear for an hour. We use Tri-Tech software, and all of our sales are recorded there for our 14 sales-floor employees. They're not extremely financial incentives, but they're centered around the store. We were goal-planning for 2013 and setting what our projects are going to be, so we just unrolled this to the staff. Along with salesmanship, our other goal is bettering our internal communication.



George Hines (right) with North Wales, Pa., Store Manager Sean Naylor

>>>

George L. Hines

George's Music
Philadelphia

How do you incentivize your salespeople?

When we interview potential new employees, we learn through our screening process that everyone is motivated differently. Most people are motivated by more than one factor, and financial rewards are just one piece of the puzzle. However, in the sales arena, the highest performers are greatly motivated by the amount of compensation they can earn. That's not a bad thing, and we look for that trait when we interview for sales positions.

The key to crafting a compensation plan is to focus on both the finan-

cial goals — sales and profits — of the company while not losing sight of the opportunity to reinforce culture — customer focus and relationships. A good plan will focus on both. In other words, "what you reward you get more of," so we craft our plan to address the things that are most important to our success.

We start with a base salary plus commission as a foundation. We want profitable sales, so higher profit transactions can receive higher commissions, and price-cutting can reduce commissions.

Achieving and exceeding sales goals in a

profitable way is important, but the experience our sales associates give our customers is also our lifeblood, so we address it in our compensation plan and employee-recognition systems, including hiring a mystery-shopping firm to rate the customer experience.

Good compensation plans are dynamic, and they need to change as our needs change.

We review our compensation plan regularly to ensure that we continue to focus on achieving excellence — both in servicing our customers and taking care of our great salespeople.

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*Touch panel and wireless iPad connectivity on CVP-605, CVP-609 and CVP-609GP only.





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