

# RETURN OF THE SYNTH

PAGE 36

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

MARCH/APRIL 2013  
MUSICINCMAG.COM

# music inc<sup>®</sup>

# SAMUEL MUSIC



## THE NAMM SHOW REPORT

GEAR TRENDS  
TOP 50 PRODUCTS  
BEST IN SHOW

PAGE 44

## ASK THE RETAILER

WHO IS TODAY'S  
KEYBOARD  
CUSTOMER?

PAGE 98

After six decades,  
a dealer in the  
heartland  
keeps serving  
its communities

PAGE 28

A large orange circle containing the text "Roland" in white and "CONNECT." in black. Below it is a smaller black circle containing the text "APR. 2013" in white. The background of the entire page is a collage of various musical equipment, including a guitar neck, a synthesizer keyboard, and a mixer console.

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NEW YORK



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A musician is shown from the waist up, playing an electric guitar. The scene is dramatically lit with a strong red hue. The musician is wearing a black and white horizontally striped t-shirt. The guitar is a dark-colored electric guitar with a white pickguard. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a stage environment.

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Second-generation retailer Samuel Music keeps serving its wide-ranging customer base in the heartland.

**BY JEFF CAGLE**

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Whether driven by popular music or nostalgia, consumers are seeking out retro sounds. Smart retailers are stocking the cool new generation of gear.

**BY MICHAEL GALLANT**







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#### 98 WHO IS TODAY'S KEYBOARD CUSTOMER?

A snapshot of who is — and who is not — buying in this challenging environment

Cover photo by Jeff Cagle



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# PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY DAVID ZIVAN

## LIVE REINFORCEMENT

*It's very nice to go traveling.*

— C.O. DEBORD

You shoulda been there.

Perhaps you were. If not, you missed something big. As our extensive coverage starting on page 44 demonstrates, The NAMM Show in Anaheim, Calif., really had its mojo working this year. Got its swerve on. Found its groove.

Word around the floor was that it had been a rough fourth quarter, but that, overall, cash registers were ringing again. The buzz was optimistic. And for rejuvenating your approach to business, there's just no substitute for face-to-face interactions.



"We're in the midst of rapid change," said Joe Lamond, president and CEO of NAMM, in his wrap-up remarks. "Those who came to the show, met with their vendors, attended NAMM University sessions, hung out with their peers — those will be the ones more likely to succeed than the ones who stayed at home."

Certainly the trip has made me a better, more energetic observer of the industry. One after another, I witnessed events and had meetings that made me smarter. The day before the floor officially opened, I was privileged to attend an unveiling event for Vandoren's Juno Reeds, its presenters clad in bright bowling shirts to emphasize the product's branding: "Play!" The room was filled with a select gathering of some of the sharpest retailers in the nation (you would recognize all

their names). Although the product line, its packaging and campaign all convey a sense of fun, the presentation had a bottom-line focus. Shouldn't we all? (For more on this and other B&O developments, see page 84.)

A week in Anaheim for NAMM isn't entirely "work." Between appointments, I came upon a trio of kids, maybe 11 or 12 years old, decked out like rockers and sporting wireless earpiece/microphone sets. Their pretty passable version of the No Doubt hit "I'm Just A Girl," led by a bassist/lead vocalist who fit the description to a T, had a crowd yelling for more. The poppy Los Angeles-based quartet Raining Jane knocked me out at the Sennheiser booth, and as soon as I got home I ordered copies of one of their CDs — one for me, some for friends.

As for more lasting experiences, I'm grateful to the numerous experts who met with me and the rest of our contributors. These ladies and gentlemen know their products front to back, and are more than willing to share their knowledge. We all benefitted from the face-to-face time.

That's just the tiniest of snapshots of what I experienced in Anaheim. And the simple fact that you are reading this means you've been qualified for my sales pitch. So I'll close with a simple question: see you in Nashville? **MI**

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# LETTERS

## Hello & Thanks

On behalf of all of us here at Hello Music, I'd like to thank *Music Inc.* for the January 2013 cover story, "The Birth of Anywhere Commerce." We felt the story was spot on in communicating our strong musician advocacy mission and the unique marketing and incremental sales benefits of our new social commerce business model.

Last year was an incredible year on all levels highlighted by a *Music Inc.* Top 10 Retailer Excellence Award, the launch of our new V3.0 Social Commerce Platform, and more than 100-percent sales growth. None of this would have been possible without the incredible support of our more than 200 supplier partners who have taken a huge leap of faith to think outside of the box and try something new. Together, we are unlocking new market demand and growing by innovating new ways to reach and engage musicians every single day.

A warm and sincere thanks to *Music Inc.*, our supplier partners, and most of all those we service: our passionate Hello Music members.

**Rick Camino**  
CEO  
Hello Music  
Los Angeles

## Goodbye MAP?

I find your putting Hello Music on the front of a MI industry magazine insulting.

Within the past decade, many people have thought of such back-door tactics to skirt MAP, I know I have. However, I and many other dealers have decided to take the high road and adhere to policies. We've done this in an attempt to keep our industry whole and profitable



for all dealers.

Furthermore, I find it discriminating that manufacturers have sold to these guys, completely looking the other way, and going against their own policies that they want brick-and-mortar stores to adhere to.

**Name Withheld**

## Voicing Concern

I feel the need to voice concern with your most recent issue. I hope you realize that you are propping up a website and a company responsible for hurting many retailers in the music community you serve by advertising prices well below MAP.

I also know of three large manufacturers who are currently scrambling to figure out how to stop the loophole that Hello Music has found in their

MAP policies.

I say this because I am worried about the state of our industry. Remember: With low to no margin in music items the local music store will be gone. Many of these retailers and manufacturers that are getting hurt by Hello Music are your readers. I am shocked that a magazine as well respected as *Music Inc.* would prop up such a destructive company like Hello Music.

**Name Withheld**

## Oral History Praise

The minutes of meetings, annual reports, and trade magazine coverage all combine to tell much of the story behind any business or industry — but it's not the full story. Oral history (color commentary and stories from thought leaders and real

people) fills in the gaps and makes the numbers and trends come to life.

The NAMM Oral History Program is a priceless industry treasure. In my four decades in our industry, I've seen and experienced a lot, but only from my own vantage point.

The opportunity to view so many industry experts and stakeholders telling their stories is one of those things that causes Stiernberg Consulting to renew its NAMM membership year after year.

It makes us proud to be part of the international music products industry. It is a real thrill to be included in the program. Keep up the good work!

**John E. Stiernberg**  
Stiernberg Consulting  
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

## A True Resource

The NAMM Oral History Program — what a resource, what a gift, and what an opportunity. NAMM Oral History lets us prepare for the future by studying the past; to draw immense pleasure from learning about the roles our industry leaders played in the "good old days;" and to document and venerate the many individuals who all played their parts in shaping, building and driving the diverse and ever-evolving world of music we enjoy today. Thank you NAMM!

**Nick Rail**  
President  
Nick Rail Music  
San Diego

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*Vic Firth*

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Got Funky in K.C.  
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- > **Skip's Music**  
Names New V.P.  
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- > **Robert M. Sides**  
Acquires Haines Music  
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- > **Tribute**  
John Giovannoni  
PAGE 19

»»» **THE NAMM SHOW EDITION**

# RETAIL

THE NAMM SHOW | AWARDS

# DEALERS REAP AWARDS IN ANAHEIM

The changing of the calendar brings a variety of annual celebrations — the Grammys, the Oscars, the Super Bowl. And, of course, Dealer of the Year recognitions from suppliers in the music products industry, given at The NAMM Show.

Schmitt Music, the 15-store perennial powerhouse centered in the upper Midwest, was honored with the Kawai dealer of the year award, a designation noting that the company sold more Kawai pianos than any other operation in the U.S. last year. Schmitt carries the Kawai line in all its markets.

Schmitt was similarly honored by the Lowrey Organ Company, which awarded the retailer its 2012 Dealer Excellence Award, and by The Music People, who gave the company its “Most Improved AIMM Dealer” for sales of products like OnStage stands and bags, cases and accessories for band and orchestra instruments, guitars and more.

**PLAYING THEIR SONG**

At its very popular Keyboard Division dealer breakfast,



Paul Calvin, Yamaha; Gary Egger, Julianne Kloos, Bill Kloos, Robert Catalano and Yesenia Catalano of Music Exchange; Bob Heller and Rick Young, Yamaha

Yamaha gave a variety of awards to businesses from around the nation. Receiving top honors was Music Exchange of San Francisco, which was named Dealer of the Year. The company is one of the most successful piano dealers in the United States, and consistently ranks among the top in keyboard sales categories.

Other award recipients receiving recognition by Yamaha included:

- Classic Piano (Portland, Ore.) for Dealer of the Year – Hybrid Pianos
- Faust Harrison (New York and White Plains, N.Y.) for Dealer of the Year – Acoustic Pianos

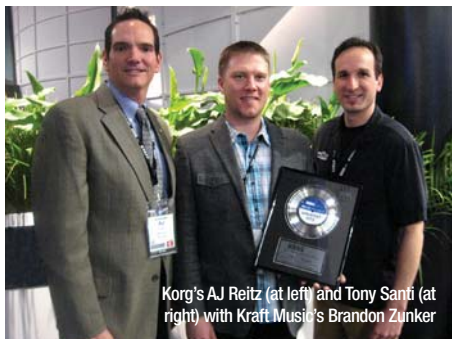
- Keyboard Concepts (Los Angeles) for Dealer of the Year – Disklavier
- Piano Distributors of Florida (Clearwater, Naples, Orlando, Sarasota and Tampa-Citrus Park, Fla.) for Dealer of the Year – Clavinova
- Allegro Pianos (Stamford, Conn.) for Outstanding Dealer of the Year - Bösendorfer Pianos
- Grand Piano Haus (Skokie, Ill.) for Leading Edge Dealer of the Year
- Heid Music (Appleton, Wis.) for Music Education Dealer of the Year
- Menchey Music (Hanover, Pa.) for Institutional Dealer of the Year

- Meyer Music (Blue Springs, Mo.) for New Dealer of the Year

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS (& KEYBOARDS)**

Korg USA recognized four U.S. dealers for top performance in 2012 with its Key Note awards. Morgan Music in Eau Claire, Wis., was named Best New Brick and Mortar dealer. Las Vegas-based E Studio Star received the Best New E-Commerce Dealer award. Korg's Commitment to Excellence honors were shared this year by Kraft Music, based in Franklin, Wis., and Sweetwater Sound, based in Ft. Wayne, Ind. Both were recipients of 2012 Retailing Excellence Awards from *Music Inc.*





Korg's AJ Reitz (at left) and Tony Santi (at right) with Kraft Music's Brandon Zunker

“Korg USA is proud to recognize our retailers who have exemplified excellence as well as shown exceptional loyalty to Korg USA’s brands and products,” said AJ Reitz, Korg USA national sales manager. “These awards are not only significant for the recipients but also important to Korg USA, as our company continually strives to return the same support and commitment our dealers demonstrate to Korg USA every day.”

ON THE BOOKS

Alfred Music Publishing announced the winners of its 2012 Premier Dealer Awards at the Show. The recipients were Gayle and Russ Beacock from Beacock Music and Lori Supinie from Senseney Music. These awards honor the dealers for building strong relationships with Alfred over the past year and achieving excellence in the music products industry.

Located in Vancouver, Wash., Beacock Music is the largest independent music store in the Pacific Northwest. It has been a family-owned company since they first opened in 1976. Founded in 1984 by a former music educator, Senseney Music strives to provide exceptional products and services to students, music teachers, amateur and hobbyist musicians. They are active in servicing the schools in their areas on all levels and have sponsored a community band for the past 25 years.



Gayle Beacock and Lori Supinie receive their 2012 Alfred Premier Dealer Awards at the Alfred booth

GET UP ONSTAGE

On-Stage, an accessories supplier, presented its first annual Dealer of the

Year award to Musical Fulfillment Services, based in Midland Park, N.J.

“MFS stood out with exceptional growth in 2012,” said Sharon Hennessey, On-Stage senior vice president. “They have consistently supported On-Stage brands and products. Our dealers are the cornerstone at what we do at On-Stage, and Musical Fulfillment Services did an extraordinary job this year.”

Mike Kane, Musical Fulfillment vice president, accepted the award.

“On-Stage takes the one-stop shopping experience to a whole new level for us,” he said in a press release. “Their manufacturing, importing and marketing experience offers us innovative products, design capabilities, incredible turns and profits in great packaging. And, it is fun doing business with such great people.” **MI**



SPRINGFIELD MUSIC | ACQUISITION

## Springfield Music Gets Funky

In the final quarter of 2012, Springfield Music, based in Springfield, Mo., closed a deal to acquire Kansas City, Mo.'s Funky Munky Music.

According to Springfield Music Vice President Donovan Bankhead, the decision to purchase Funky Munky Music was fueled by instrument manufacturers who have wanted Springfield Music's management team to break

into the Kansas City area for some time.

"Funky Munky Music is one of the top places for musicians in the K.C. area," Bankhead said. "They were known for hosting fun events and activities."

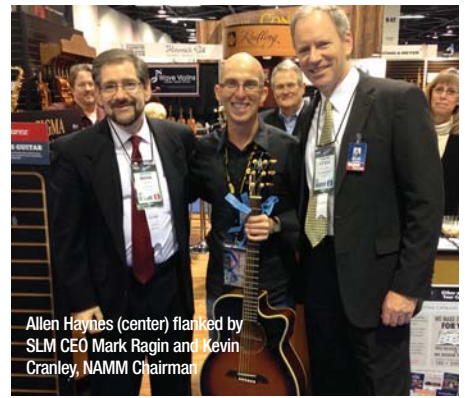
"We will work to maintain their legacy here in the Kansas City area and enhance [it] as much as we can," he added.

SKIP'S MUSIC | PROMOTION

## SKIP'S GETS NEW V.P.

Skip's Music has promoted Mike Snyder to vice president of operations. Formerly general manager, Snyder's new role will match his talents with the company's expanded business priorities and growth plans.

"Mike has been instrumental in the day-to-day operations since he started with our organization," said Skip Maggiora, president and CEO of Skip's Music. "His reputation for 'getting the job done' has benefited our customers, vendors and employees alike. I'm confident he will bring that same enthusiasm to his new leadership position."



Allen Haynes (center) flanked by SLM CEO Mark Ragin and Kevin Cranley, NAMM Chairman

THE MUSIC STOP | CONTEST

## Music stop Owner Gets the Axe

St. Louis Music dealer Allen Haynes of The Music Shop, based in Murfreesboro, Tenn., won a new Alvarez Yairi WY1T at The NAMM show. Any SLM dealer who spent \$100 at the booth at NAMM was eligible for the drawing. A TS model favored by the likes of Joe Bonamassa, Bob Weir and Ani DiFranco among many others, the guitar features a vintage tobacco sunburst finish.

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ROBERT M. SIDES | ACQUISITION

## ROBERT M. SIDES FAMILY MUSIC ACQUIRES HAINES MUSIC

Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers recently acquired Haines Music in Selinsgrove, Pa. Haines Music owners, Pam and Nevin Garrett, are retiring after 37 years in the music business, while 25-year Haines School Service Representative Rob Ensinger will continue to serve his schools as the newest member of the Robert M. Sides team.

“My sister, Alysha, and I are absolutely thrilled to be working with someone at Rob’s level of professionalism and industry experience,” said Peter Sides, president of

Robert M. Sides Music. “We’re pleased he’s joining our team and continuing to service his customers. We take very seriously the responsibility of maintaining and building upon the solid reputation with customers and educators built by the Garrett family and Rob. Haines Music is a natural fit in our existing business.”



From left: Peter Sides, Pam & Nevin Garrett, Rob Ensinger, Alysha Sides Greevy

### TRIBUTE

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

#### Bill Crowden

Bill Crowden, the founder of Drums Ltd. in Chicago and a pioneer in percussive retailing, passed away in February, aged 82.

One of the leading drum retailers and pioneers of percussive musical instrument sales, Bill Crowden was, as percussion veteran Karl Dustman put it “a pillar.”

#### John Giovannoni

John Giovannoni, vice president and co-owner of The Music Room in Palatine, Ill., passed away in January after a long battle with brain cancer.



Giovannoni started the downtown business with partner Carol Cook in 1994. Occupying 10,000 square feet over three floors, the business received a Retailing Excellence award from *Music Inc.* in 2007. Among other successful initiatives, the store was known locally for its Gear Shift program, where donated instruments were repaired at the in-house shop and given to underprivileged children.

A graduate in music from Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Ill., Giovannoni was “a smart, extremely funny, irreverent dude,” said Zach Phillips, Director of Professional Development at NAMM, and former editor of *Music Inc.* To read more tributes to Giovannoni, please visit [musicincmag.com](http://musicincmag.com).



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*Note from Jon*

## Celebrating the Passion of Music Retail

**“Retailers are truly the backbone of our industry because, in most cases, they are the ones who first get people hooked on making music.”**

We work in a great industry—one that I’ve been in all my life. I got my first job in a music retail shop when I was 15. In 1989, I opened my own store. It was a tiny place, but we kept growing and eventually grew out of it. Now we have three full-line stores and a pro audio showroom, and we’re still expanding. These years of experience have taught me that you never stop growing.

So it’s great that NAMM is recognizing retailers with the Top 100 Dealer Awards—acknowledging the people who take care of customers face-to-face and help them get their first instrument. Retailers are truly the backbone of our industry because, in most cases, they are the ones who first get people hooked on making music.

Summer NAMM is a great place to celebrate our business. The last summer show was one of the best NAMM trade shows I’ve been to as far as networking and meeting with my contacts. A lot of people look at it like it’s a sleepy show—and it’s obviously smaller than the winter show—but you really have some quality time to get things done there. It’s also a great music town to get the juices flowing and keep focused on why we’re in this business in the first place. I would encourage everybody to go to Nashville and be a part of this.

Of course, last year’s show was special for Alto Music. When I heard our name called as Dealer of the Year, it was a real surprise and an honor. The whole event was well done and the presentation was excellent. It was also exciting being in a room with other retailers in our industry—learning from other people and really celebrating what we do every day.

While our day-to-day business keeps us pretty busy, it didn’t take long at all to submit our store in the Top 100 and share what we think we do well—and it was obviously worth it.

We continue making the most of this honor by using it in all of our marketing—putting the Dealer of the Year logo on our website, on Facebook, and really anywhere we can brand our company. We’re proud to share this with our customers.

I hope you that you’ll take the time to throw your store’s name in the ring for this year’s Top 100 and make the trip to Nashville. It’s a win-win for your business . . . and for our industry.

**Jon Haber**  
Owner • Alto Music

**NAMM**  
**Top 100**  
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**“Best of” Winners**



NAME  
NAMM News

April No  
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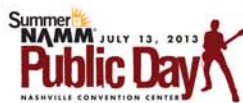


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THE NAMM SHOW EDITION



# SUPPLY

NAMM | PERSONNEL

## MEET NAMM'S NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS



From left: Kevin Cranley, Andy Zildjian, Ron Manus, Ben Kraft, Rob Joseph, Jessica Freehling-Kazzie, Jim DeStafney, John D'Addario III, Gayle Beacock and Joe Lamond

At the annual meeting of members held on Jan. 26, NAMM elected new members to its board of directors. The eight new directors joining the board for the 2013–2016 term are described below.

Gayle Beacock is the co-owner of Beacock Music Company, a full-line retail store located in Vancouver, Wash.

Ron Manus, CEO of Alfred Music Publishing, in Van Nuys, Calif., is a member of the Retail Print Music Dealers Association and National Association of School Music Dealers.

John D'Addario III, executive vice president of D'Addario, in Farmingdale, N.Y., is a member of the National Association of School Music Dealers and the Music Distributors Association.

Jim DeStafney is the owner of Blues Angel Music in Pensacola, Fla.

Jessica Freehling-Kazzie is the

manager of Art's Music Shop, a three-store, full-line and piano retail chain headquartered in Montgomery, Ala. Freehling-Kazzie is vice president of the Independent Music Merchant Group and treasurer of the Georgia Association of School Music Dealers.

Rob Joseph of MusicMax does business as R. Joseph Group, which is based in Columbus, Ohio. R. Joseph Group is a manufacturer's representative firm specializing in pro audio, commercial audio, lighting and recording products.

Ben Kraft is the owner and executive chairman of Kraft Music, a Franklin, Wis.-based retailer.

Andy Zildjian is the president of Sabian, which is located in Meductic, New Brunswick. Zildjian is a member of the National Association for School Music Dealers and the Percussive Arts Society. [namm.org](http://namm.org)



Record Plant President Rose Mann-Cherney with recording executive Ron Fair (left) and Slash

TEC | AWARDS

## TEC Awards Celebrate Sound's Best

The TEC Foundation presented its 28th annual Technical Excellence & Creativity (TEC) Awards, which honor the year's most groundbreaking audio production design teams and audio industry professionals, on Jan. 25.

Twenty awards were given for Technical Achievement and included double wins for Avid, Moog, Rupert Neve and Universal Audio. Among the eight awards received for Creative Achievement were those given to the teams behind Foo Fighters' *Wasting Light* album and tour and newcomer Gotye's single "Somebody That I Used To Know."

Highlights of the evening were the two lifetime achievement awards, beginning with the induction of Record Plant President Rose Mann-Cherney to the TEC Awards Hall of Fame by recording executive Ron Fair and Slash, followed by the Les Paul Award presentation to renowned recording artist and composer Pete Townshend.

"In every hope that I ever had for a device that would do something that I wanted to do, you fabulous people made it for me," Townshend said. "I'm so hip to what you guys do, hip to the amount of time that you spend, and as a musician and as a composer, I sincerely want to thank you." [tecfoundation.com](http://tecfoundation.com)





NAMM YP panelists Danica Levy and George Quinlan Jr.

NAMM YP | EVENT

## NAMM YP Hosts Workshop

NAMM Young Professionals (NAMM YP) held a half-day Pre-NAMM Workshop on Jan. 23 at the Anaheim Marriott. The workshop included keynote speaker Tom Bedell, of Bedell Guitars, as well as a panel discussion entitled “Bridging the Generational Gap” moderated by Ryan West of West Music.

Panelists included Danica Levy of Levy’s Leathers, George Quinlan Jr. of Quinlan & Fabish and Lauren Haas Amanfoh of Royalton Music Center.

The panelists discussed how to motivate different generations, updating social media and how to manage when you don’t see eye-to-eye with fellow employees.

The panel discussion was followed by roundtable discussions on technology, marketing, finance and recruiting. The workshop was topped off by a networking mixer. [namm.org](http://namm.org)

TKL CASES | APPEARANCE

## Cat Daddy Visits TKL

TKL Cases welcomed Jackson Galaxy, aka Cat Daddy, from Animal Planet’s show “My Cat From Hell” to its booth on Jan. 26. An avid musician, Galaxy goes on all his cat house calls with his signature TKL guitar case. While at the booth, TKL gave Galaxy a brand new Cat Daddy styled case with a leopard print interior. Inside the case was a gift from Gibson Custom Shop, a 1958 reissue Gibson Les Paul guitar. “I had such a blast at NAMM and can’t wait to come back next year,” Galaxy said. [tkl.com](http://tkl.com)



TKL’s Tommy Dougherty with Jackson Galaxy



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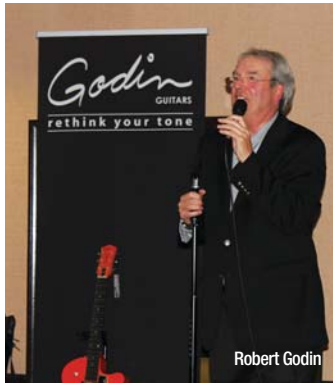
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Robert Godin

## Godin Celebrates 40 Years of Guitars

Godin Guitars celebrated its 40th anniversary at the Red Lion Inn in Anaheim, Calif., on Jan. 25 with an event that included live music.

ANNIVERSARY  
**GODIN GUITARS**  
**40 YEARS**

“These 40 years have really been something,” said Robert Godin, owner of Godin Guitars. “It all started with a dream. Today I live a dream. Our company is over 700 people now, and we’ve really made it.” [godinguitars.com](http://godinguitars.com)

## Yamaha Celebrates Big Year With Big Show

Yamaha marked its 125th anniversary Friday night with a star-studded, marathon dealer concert at the Hyperion Theater Disney’s California Adventure Park.

President Tak Nakata eloquently thanked the audience for coming, noting that the occasion was made more special by the public debut of the Yamaha Disklavier TV powered by RemoteLive technology, which allowed Yamaha dealers across the globe to experience Sir Elton John’s performance streamed live over the Internet.

ANNIVERSARY  
**YAMAHA**  
**125 YEARS**

Afterwards, the lights came up on a full orchestra, driving into the opening bars of Earth, Wind & Fire’s “Fantasy.” After that set, the Univer-



Sir Elton John with Yamaha executives at the company's 125th anniversary celebration

sity of Southern California Marching Trojans appeared in the hall, including a stray bass drum player — comedian Sinbad, who served as emcee for the evening. For more than three hours, the concert continued with performances by Chaka Khan, Sarah McLachlan, Amy Grant, Leogun, Michael McDonald, Dave Grusin and Lee Ritenour, Dave Koz and Toto. The evening closed with a set by Elton John, who played many of his hits. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)

## Vic’s 50th Bash

Vic Firth, the quintessential drumstick manufacturer, celebrated its 50th anniversary during The NAMM Show with a Friday night dinner party highlighted by heartfelt and hilarious speeches.

When company founder Vic Firth climbed onstage with his long-time friend Remo Belli, the two drummers seemed more like comedians than the founders of two of the strongest brands in percussion.

ANNIVERSARY  
**VIC FIRTH**  
**50 YEARS**

“The magical part about this is we’re still vertical,” said Belli as the two octogenarians had attendees in stitches. “I wasn’t at the birth of Vic

Firth Inc., but the basement of the house that he had in Dover is where I first visited Vic Firth Inc. And I said, ‘Well, Vic, if you ever get out of the garage, maybe you’ll make a success of yourself.’”

“I should have stayed in the garage,” Firth retorted.

When it was his turn, Firth told stories from the symphony concert hall to seeing an Iron Maiden concert, noting that he has lived in two worlds.

“Vic Firth deserves about 10 percent of the kind words I’ve been getting,”



Vic Firth (left) and Remo Belli

he said. “Because as I look about here I see friends who are distributors, dealers, artists and signature artists. It’s because of them that we’ve had the success. It’s been a give-and-take arrangement.” [vicfirth.com](http://vicfirth.com)





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YORKVILLE | LEGAL

## FORMER YORKVILLE EXECS PLEAD GUILTY

**F**ormer Yorkville Sound executives Philip Betette and Terry Sherwood pleaded guilty to misdemeanor petit larceny and agreed to pay Yorkville \$400,000 upfront cash compensation in an agreement which the Livingston County District Attorney's office mediated between the defendants and their former employer.

Betette and Sherwood had been working for the Rochester, N.Y.-based company since 1999 as a sales manager and accountant, respectively.

According to the Livingston County News, the company alleges nearly \$700,000 was stolen. [yorkville.com](http://yorkville.com)

## APPOINTMENTS

### Harman Names Bradley VP of Loudspeaker Unit

**H**arman has named Bryan Bradley vice president, general manager of its loudspeaker business unit. Bradley will be responsible for



all aspects of JBL Professional operations and continued development.

"I am confident that Bradley's skills and leadership will make our loudspeaker business unit more efficient with a unique capacity to provide customers in all geographic and vertical markets with high-performing, innovative technologies that address their needs and opportunities," said Harman Professional President Blake Augsburger.

Bradley joins Harman Professional having served as COO of Alfred Music since February 2009.

**Young Chang North America** has promoted Larry Fresch from the position of national sales manager to chief operating officer of HDC Young Chang Music.

**Renkus-Heinz** has named Scott Leslie as its new president.

**Solid State Logic** has appointed Paul O'Farrell-Stevens as marketing manager for SSL music products.

Steve Hendee has acquired the position of director of sales for **Yorkville Sound**.

**Harman** recently appointed Andy Flint to the position of senior manager, portable P.A. marketing, loudspeaker group.

**L-Acoustics** has added B.J. Shaver as regional sales manager.

Steve Harder has returned to **Alfred** in the new role of director of business development. Steve was formerly with Alfred from 2001-2005 in various sales roles.

Jay Morrissey has joined **Casio** as its director of sales, responsible for all national music channel retailers, including Guitar Center, Music & Arts and Sam Ash.

**DPA Microphones** has hired Bruce MacPherson as U.S. sales director.

**Yamaha** has named Jun Fujimoto Institutional Solutions group manager, Southeast region.



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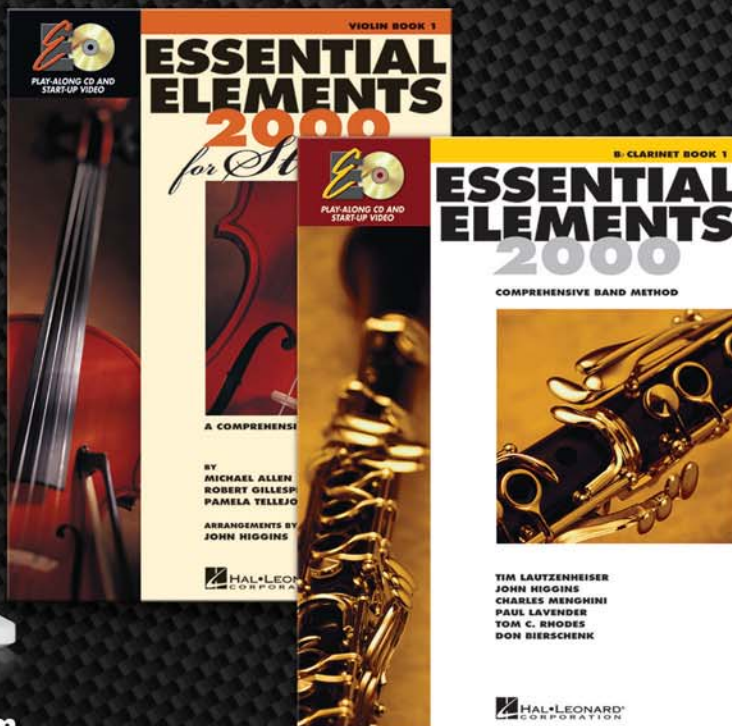
  
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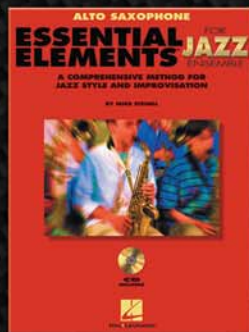
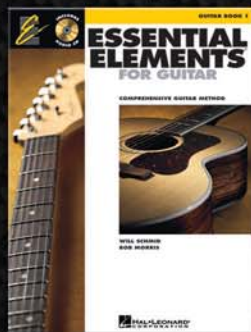
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Dean Samuel



# Three's a Charm

By Jeff Cagle

***After six decades, Samuel Music continues to serve its heartland communities***

**N**orth of the gently rolling hills around Effingham, Ill., Interstate 57 begins to flatten out, passing through farming communities and little burbs small enough to miss. Then, 80 miles along, the cornfields give way to a small cluster of towers — the campus of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

And while the vast majority of the people in those towns along the way probably don't know Dean Samuel, if they have played music at any point in their lives — or if there was a piano in their living room, growing up — there's a good chance they've heard of his business, Samuel Music. Family-owned and operated for the past seven decades, today Samuel Music is a three-store, full-line chain in the heartland — and Samuel, son of founder Lowell Samuel and second generation owner, has driven up from Effingham to visit the Champaign showroom.

It is a familiar journey, one that

allows a glance back in time at an industry that has seen massive change, and at the same time compels a long look ahead. Since 1946, Samuel Music has been a constant presence in the MI industry and in communities across central and southern Illinois. Samuel and his staff have seen — and capitalized on — the dawn of the digital era, and they have weathered the storm of the decline in the piano market. They have adapted along the way. But this stretch of road, and others like it, also demonstrates that some aspects of full-line retailing are not going to change anytime soon. School music in this part of the country requires covering a lot of miles, and Samuel's reps continue to travel them, providing the kind of service that dealers in the vast expanses of the United States have been providing since the first band director raised a baton.

"I don't know many other industries where people perform work without the expectation of being paid

in advance," Samuel said. "I believe there's a loyalty factor, which also comes out of trust. School programs need that trusted distribution vehicle. Maybe that's the reason that what appears to be a throwback to another era continues to thrive today."

#### COMING HOME

Some of Samuel's earliest memories are of the weekends he spent working for his father at the company's original Effingham store, sweeping the parking lot every Saturday for 50 cents. As he got a little older, he started hanging around the repair shop. Though he played first chair trumpet in high school, and took lessons on the keyboard and organ, Samuel said he simply wasn't a musician and never intended to follow his father into the business.

"I have a love and admiration of music and of how music changes peoples' lives, but I am not a musician," Samuel said. "I don't know whether subconsciously or not but I just wasn't going to follow that

path. I never intended to go into the music business and had repeatedly said that to my friends in college and grad school.” Indeed, after receiving advanced degrees in economics, Samuel began teaching at the collegiate level, lecturing in accounting and marketing for a number of years at Colby College in Maine.

When his father had a health scare in the early 1980s, Dean left teaching to manage Samuel Music and help his brother, David, with the family’s wholesale company, MIDCO [see “Music History,” page 32]. Lowell Samuel, an industry titan, passed away in 1999, and MIDCO was sold in 2003. And then — like the children of many small business owners — the son found himself running the whole operation.

“I’m sure no one else in the industry would know anything about father-son handoffs,” Samuel said jokingly. “There were some bumpy times. But we had our good moments, too, and I’ve been in the business ever since.”

## STRIKING UP THE BAND

Samuel Music was band-focused from the moment the doors opened in 1946. (Lowell was a founding member of the National Association of School Music Dealers.) Guitars were added in the 1960s, and later came pianos, which have also been a longtime strength. Samuel Music was one of the first dealers of Yamaha pianos in the country, and Dean Samuel remembers that the first models on the company’s showroom floor came with 78 keys. Samuel Music continues to carry Yamaha today, along with a range of instruments, including acoustic and electric guitars, band and orchestral, and live sound.

“[Band] has always been the

# SATELLITE OPERATIONS

## *Samuel Music overcomes geographic challenges with a partner program*

Being located in a semi-rural market presents challenges for any dealer running a lessons program. The difficulties are compounded when 75 percent of your target demographics are located more than 30 miles from your store location — as is the case with Samuel Music’s Effingham store. Samuel said it’s simply not economical for customers to drive that distance for a music lesson.

To resolve this, Samuel Music partners with music educators, particularly piano teachers, in many of the small towns that satellite the chain’s three locations.

“They are defined as a teacher-partner, which includes certain benefits from the store, like a discount on [purchases] and a recital hall for their recitals,” Samuel said. “We treat them as a partner.”

Samuel Music’s teacher-partners travel to student’s homes if there is a piano there, and many have their own studios to let students come to them. Samuel Music also has a number of in-store teachers, independent contractors who live close enough to rent the lesson rooms at the three store locations. Springfield offers 10 lesson studios, Effingham has nine and Springfield has four.

It’s a mutually beneficial, low impact strategy that keeps the Samuel Music name in front of customers without a lot of direct costs involved in running a lesson program.

“We charge a \$3 fee for studio space for in-store lessons, so it helps offset our leases for the buildings but it doesn’t have a great economic impact on the bottom line,” Samuel said.

foundation of the business,” Samuel said. “[Back then], a display of guitars might have been four guitars — and you would really be in the guitar business if you had four guitars.”

In 1995, seeking to be more important to its key franchise lines — and with young leadership in the company needing a place to grow — Samuel Music opened a store 80 miles away in Champaign, along with a location in Springfield. (A fourth, in Peoria, has since closed).

The growth was good but, as growth often does, it also caused some pains. For years, the various locations were run in what Samuel called a “cookie-cutter” approach, where each store was modeled the same — and stocked that way, too. Buying was identi-

cal for all three. “We tried it and tried it, and tried it some more,” Samuel said. “The staffs were not the same. The customer base was not the same. The ability of the staff to grow the base in each product area was not the same, and yet we were trying to make them all the same.”

When the economy shifted during the recession and it was apparent it wasn’t going to rebound very quickly, the Samuel Music team knew it needed to make a change.

The idea for a revised approach came from within the staff’s ranks. Liz Roepke, the chain’s regional manager, had bought her first flute from Samuel Music in the 5th grade, and during high school worked at the Effingham shop. She went away



to college for elementary education, but kept coming back to the store to work during breaks — and then, for good, after she spent a couple of years working in Illinois’ public school systems.

Roepke became a buyer for the original location, and then oversaw buying for all three stores before being named regional manager — a position that required her to visit the other shops.

“I kept hearing, ‘This isn’t working for us’ or ‘We have these guitars but we don’t want these guitars’ and ‘This isn’t going to sell here,’” Roepke said. “We realized we really did have three different markets.”

Roepke described Champaign (population 81,000) as a fluid community, home to the University of Illinois and its 30,000-plus students, many of whom come for school then return home after graduation, making it hard to establish long-term connections. Springfield (population 116,000), the capitol of Illinois, is a government town, Roepke said, and to some extent has a migrating population as well. Many of that location’s customers are gigging musicians, but in the jazz and classical realms, as they have found those styles suited to an audience of lawmakers. Effingham, a town of around 12,000, serves a customer base comprised more of the in-home family playing and garage bands.

## OTHER DIFFERENCES

On top of different markets, Roepke said, she has also seen some fundamental shifts in consumer buying behavior.

“Consumers used to trust the information they were given from their local retailer,” she said. “Now they research products on their phones and





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## Three's a Charm

computers long before they step foot into your store. As a result, it's more important now than ever before to build strong relationships with customers.

"The wedding industry is a great example. I recently went to rent 14 tuxes from a local men's clothing store for our wedding. When I returned for my second visit, the salesman knew my

with. A few minutes later we also said how we should really try to do more business with them. There's no reason we can't build those types of relationships in the music industry."

### MAKING CHANGES

In 2010, the company scrapped what Samuel called its "cook- ie-cutter" approach for a more

one on their floor. It would sit there for a long time simply eating up inventory dollars.

"We really empowered our people to have more of a voice to be able to say, 'This is what we're hearing, this is what our customers are telling us,'" Roepke said. "More or less we realized that the music industry is changing, and we had been doing business the same way for many, many years. We realized we couldn't continue [like that]. If you're not going to change, then the industry's going to change you."

The transformation made sense, too, based on the fact that each store has traditionally been staffed by gigging musicians and teachers with direct connections in each of the communities Samuel Music serves.

"Whether it's the live music scene, the school music scene, jazz clubs, whatever, somehow or another they're connected," Roepke said. "It's extremely rare for us to hire somebody who doesn't know at least 10 other musicians who used to work for us or teach for us or is somehow or another connected."

### HITTING THE ROAD

A strong community connection has always been important for Samuel Music, dating back to the days when Lowell Samuel would travel from town to town around southern Illinois meeting with band directors while his wife, Lucille, managed the store. Dean Samuel noted that walking into a school and asking the band director, "What can I do for you?" to start the relationship-building process is as important as ever, and a large part of why Samuel Music has the accounts it does.

"That hasn't changed in 50 years," Samuel said. "School pro-

grams need a trusted distribution vehicle. We perform a specific service of distribution, to and from, of product. The customer, whether it's the student or the director, requires a level of confidence and trust that minimizes paperwork and problems."

Samuel noted that public school band programs, especially, benefit from a regular program of transferring reeds and facilitating repairs. "Schools are not set up to mail a trumpet in for repair," he said. "The director recognizes that in many cases if he or she is involved in getting the horn repaired it will be done in a faster manner than if it's left to the child, who are dependent upon their parents, who may both work and therefore it may be very difficult to get that trumpet to a service center."

Samuel Music's territories span between 180 and 280 miles around each location and the company's two road reps service 39 schools, but the stores have contracts with students from 189 schools across central and southern Illinois.

"The structure of schools is the same as it has been for many, many years," Roepke said. "Until you see the structure of schools change, there's always going to be that need of transportation of product to and from that facility."

### LOW NOTES

Roepke said that while keyboard sales have contributed to the continuous decline of traditional pianos, sales of both were soft in the last quarter of 2012, which she and Samuel attribute in part to last year's contested presidential election, and other large-scale fiscal issues.

"We're in an insecure market right now with tax uncertainty, job uncertainty and healthcare,"



## MUSIC HISTORY

*Company founder Lowell Samuel became an industry titan*

Lowell Samuel grew up in southern Illinois during the Great Depression. But despite his family's poverty, his parents were able to scrape together enough to buy him a clarinet as a child, launching a lifelong love of music. Samuel put himself through school with the money he earned from a dance band he formed as a teenager, which led to another passion: music education.

Samuel moved to Effingham in 1942 but soon joined the armed services, playing in the Armed Forces Band and becoming an original member of the Singing Sergeants, a chorus which continues to perform. After completing his service, Samuel and his wife, Lucille, borrowed \$500 and opened Samuel Music in 1946.

Lowell Samuel was a founder of the National Association of School Music Dealers, and in 1965 he founded Midwest Musical Instrument Company (MIDCO), a distributor which served as a starting point for many executives in the industry.

Lowell's sons, Dean and David, eventually took over the businesses (he passed in 1999), with David running MIDCO and Dean at Samuel Music. David and Dean worked closely with MIDCO before it was eventually sold to Musicorp.

name, when my wedding was taking place, the colors I had chosen, and who my fiancé was. Every time I've returned since that day, I've always been greeted by my name. The result: after the big day was over and my new husband and I were reviewing all of the details, we both mentioned how superior the local men's clothing store was to work

entrepreneurial model and let each run independently. Orchestral instruments provide a good example.

"We purchase cellos for our Champaign store to sell and display on the floor," Roepke said. "Though we may occasionally be able to rent one in our Effingham and Springfield locations, we wouldn't think about putting



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## Three's a Charm

Roepke said. "And when people are insecure their pocket books are secure."

"Uncertainty stops people from buying grand pianos or any kind of trophy like that," Samuel added. "So our business pretty much shut off."

Samuel reported an unusually strong January, however, supporting the notion that national fiscal concerns had created

some pent-up demand. But as of press time, Roepke said February did not appear that it would be as strong as January was.

"Customers are still on a roller coaster ride with spending," Roepke said.

### MORE CONNECTIONS

Another way Samuel Music has touched the community is through its recently

implemented piano giveaway program, which provides an instrument to kids who might not otherwise be able to afford one. To date, six pianos have been given away to families in need through the store's referral program.


"[Some applicants] have been unsuccessful in sports and started taking piano and got a confidence boost but were playing on a teeny tiny keyboard and the batteries are dying and mom can't afford new batteries," Roepke said. "Or kids are taking lessons on pianos they'll never be able to fully learn on. We have pianos that we may not be able to sell because they may not cosmetically look good and may not be worth us putting all the money into making it look better. But internally they are good pianos."

Musikgarten is another program Samuel uses to give back to the community. Offered at the chain's Effingham location, Musikgarten is a sequential music and development program for children up to age 9, accompanied by their parents, centered around the piano. Samuel said it's a way to introduce music as a family activity, rather than on an individual level like a guitar.

"The guitar is typically pursued by an individual who then gathers a band of friends around them," he said. "That is a wonderful path, but it's not a family experience. It's been relegated to the basement or the garage. You don't hear the guitar ringing out when you're cooking breakfast like you can with a piano. Music so touches a part of all of us, and if it can be done at the family level it's even greater."

That truth seems to run through Samuel Music — the continuation of traditions that began in the home. Some of the participants in MusicGarten, Samuel says, are experiencing music for the very first time.

"I have been frequently reminded how comforting music is, and of the feeling that comes over me when I hear someone playing," he said. "Even if it's someone just learning, it brings me back to my own home when there were piano lessons and playing all the time. There is a part of our business that wants to get people into music because it makes life better." **MI**



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# RETURN OF THE







# ANALOG SYNTH



*Even in an increasingly digital world, the vintage sound of filters and oscillators heats up sales for retailers around the country.*

BY MICHAEL GALLANT

“Five or 10 years ago, we would only sell analog synths to big-wigs, like the Timbalands of the world,” said Ed Spence, an industry veteran who manages the keyboard department at Chuck Levin’s Washington Music Center. “Now, we’re seeing kids under 20 buying analog synths, things like Monotribes and Monotrons from Korg for under \$100, and just goof off with them. It’s amazing.”

Andrew Marrah, buyer and online sales manager for Midwest Pro Sound and Lighting in Chicago, has noticed the same intriguing, yet improbable, trend over the past few years. “Analog

# ANALOG SYNTHS

is definitely making a comeback and a lot of companies are realizing that and making affordable synths for the first time ever," he said. "There's the Arturia Mini-Brute, Dave Smith Instruments Mopho, the new Korg MS-20 reissue, Moog's new Sub Phatty. They're all popular and all within the \$1,000 price range."

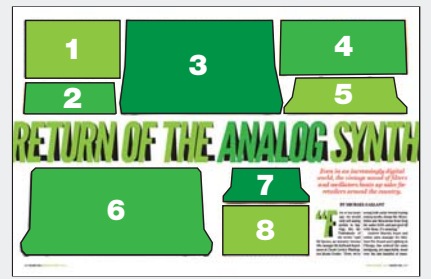
**EVEN** as digital technology continues to become more powerful and ubiquitous in the worlds of music production and performance, both men have seen their analog synth sales rise, month by month and year by year; Marrah's sales of Moog products alone have gone from roughly \$5,000 to over \$90,000 annually over the last half decade, and legendary synth maker Dave Smith reports a similar business boost, stating this his company's sales have doubled in the past couple of years. Based on who's buying these instruments — and why — the trend will only continue for manufacturers and retailers alike.

"This recent uptick in analog has been following the trend of music," stated Spence, pointing to major electronic artists like Deadmau5 as key influences. "Dubstep is a huge catalyst of it. The new digital music guys are drawn towards the warmth and

organic sound of analog waveforms, and they like being able to edit sounds in real time. For the most part, you can only do that with an analog synth." When it comes to dubstep, Spence particularly calls out the Access Virus series, a family of analog modeling synthesizers, as a prime example. "It's the standard for

ums, while younger bands, such as M83 and Passion Pit herald a new wave of new wave entrepreneurs. "M83 is noisy and ambient, one of the synthier radio bands, and Passion Pit uses the MiniBrute a lot," he said. "A lot of new hipster rock bands, and music in general

musicians towards analog synthesis, the evolving paradigm of digital music creation also plays a key role. "We've started to see a decline with virtual, digital instruments, which reached a peak



1. Moog Minibrute 2. Dave Smith Instruments Prophet '08 3. Moog Sub Phatty 4. Dave Smith Instruments Mopho X4 5. Moog Voyager XL 6. Korg MS-20 7. Dave Smith Instruments Voyager SE 8. Dave Smith Instruments Mopho Keyboard



Andrew Marrah  
Midwest Pro Sound  
and Lighting

dubstep and techno," he noted. "That's an expensive piece, but it's the mother of all synths."

Marrah also points to a revived interest in retro sounds and new wave music, noting that veteran, trend-setting groups such as Depeche Mode continue to make music and sell out stadi-

being put out by young people, is basically analog driven. And even if you're trying to sound like Depeche Mode, pulling out your Korg Karma won't get it done. To get that sound, you have to have the right gear."

While trends in popular music push many enthusiastic young

in popularity two or three years ago, with the influx of piracy, and then everyone using software illegally," Spence said. "Now we're seeing all of that technology go sideways and back outside the box. People are focusing more on high quality analog to digital conversion — we're selling way

## ANALOG SYNTHS IN ACTION



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Partial list



Thank you to all our customers who have made this 25th Anniversary possible.



# ANALOG SYNTHS



## FIVE TIPS FOR SELLING SYNTHS

### SPEAK PLAYER TO PLAYER

"I come from the 'fellow musician' place rather than the super sales guy," Marrah said. "Instead of annoying customers with a pitch, I show them how to dig into the synthesizer. The synths will sell themselves."

### CHOOSE A NATURAL HABITAT

"We showcase our synths in a studio-style environment, which gives clients the ultimate proving grounds," Marrah said. "It also helps them discover other products they can add like studio monitors, pre-amps, interfaces, and so on."

### DISPLAY A VARIETY

Synths can be objects of aesthetic beauty as well as ear candy, and a player's physical connection with an instrument can be just as important as its features or sounds. So when it comes to shopping, give your customers plenty of options to look at and choose from. Spence said that Chuck Levin's has more than 200 different keyboards on display.

### LET THE CUSTOMER PLAY

Marrah said many customers lust after the knobs and keys of analog synths, so give them the tactile and sonic access that they want.

At Chuck Levin's, Spence will either hand customers a set of headphones or crank up the volume on the synth they're playing. "We will know if they like it or not — after 20 minutes, if you're still playing it, it's a wrap!"

### IT'S ALL ABOUT THE EARS

"What's most important is the sound," Spence said. "Does your customer love the sound of the synth? You can waste valuable time discussing features and benefits just to find out the customer hates it."

more high-end mic preamps than we were five years ago, for example. Buyers are appreciating quality as opposed to quantity."

Spence further pointed out that, for a while, many synth users were opting to work entirely with software synthesizers, but then noticed both the sonic and workflow differences of creating with physical, analog synths. "If you want to switch a patch in software, it can take a minute," Spence said. "To switch in analog only takes a second. When you're in the middle of making a track, that can be a big difference."

**FOR SMITH,** much of the appeal of analog synths just comes down to sheer enjoyment. "Musicians are realizing that real hardware musical instruments are much more fun to play than software synths," he said. "It's all about the sound and personality of the instrument. You can try to find a working old instrument from thirty years ago, or you can buy a new one from us."

In addition to the young analog fans, many music retailers are seeing another demographic invest heavily in analog technology: baby boomers.

Smith, for example, sees many buyers

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# ANALOG SYNTHS

who could not afford vintage Prophet-5 synths when they first became intrigued by analog gear, but now have the financial fortitude to indulge with his company's current Prophet instrument.

"I see customers walk in, people who used to buy analog synths 20 or 30 years ago for their bands and studios, and they'll spend hours in the store getting reacquainted with the instruments," Spence said. "Maybe they went to college, got married, had kids, and gave up music to support a family, but now they're coming back and saying, 'Wow, they still do that!'"

Middle-aged customers tend to "go big" and walk away with more expensive units from com-

panies like Dave Smith Instruments and Moog. "I have doctors and lawyers buying Voyagers, because they want to go home after work with a glass of wine and play with it," Marrah said.

As the re-introduction of analog continues to blossom, Marrah sees consumers travelling even deeper down the proverbial rabbit hole. "Here in Chicago, we're seeing interest in large, modular analog synthesizers grow," he said. "They're a risky market, since most of them are made by a single guy in Denmark or Germany, and they're hard to get your hands on, but people are lusting over knobs and the feel of that sort of instrument." Marrah predicts that products akin to the Moog Music 500 series modular synth will take



Ed Spence  
Chuck Levin's  
Washington  
Music Center

off in popularity.

Spence points to iPhone and iPad emulations of analog synths as another growth direction, though one that presents different challenges and rewards.

"Korg jumped on the iOS platform before everybody else did," he said. "Just go to the App Store and you'll see lots of virtual analog synths from them. iOS still has connectivity issues that don't work for the progressive recording studio, though. How

do you get the audio out of the iPad and into your system? Until that's really solved, they're basically toys with big questions marks."

But do iSynths of varying shapes and flavors threaten the health of brick-and-mortar retailers? "It's encouraging business for us, not hurting it," Spence said. "Apps educate people about analog synthesis and then they come to us to see what the real thing is like." **MI**

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# Here Comes the Sun

THE 2013  
NAMM SHOW  
REPORT  
BY DAVID ZIVAN

From left: Mark Dyke, Jim Bickley, Vic Firth and Tom Shelley

A jazz jam on the new Grand Plaza outdoor stage

**Sure, there was a little rain — but business got hot at a rejuvenated show**

It was evident before lunchtime on Thursday, The NAMM Show's first drizzly morning, that something was going on. Spirits had not been dampened. Guitars were still in tune. And the floor? Well, the floor was by-golly crowded.

It perhaps goes without saying that this is a good problem for the industry to have. In the end, this year's show saw 93,908 total registrants from 94 different countries with 289 new exhibitors.

Sure, that total attendance marked a 2 percent decrease from 2012. But it simply didn't feel like it.



Joe Lamond and Kevin Cranley NAMM



Former NAMM president Larry Linkin (second from left) with friends



Bernie Williams at the D'Angelico Guitars booth

She's just a girl — at least that's what she sang — but she rocked the floor.





A slight change in the composition of the attendees may have had something to do with it. NAMM made an effort this year to increase buyer (blue) badges and decrease guest (yellow) badges to create the most business-friendly event in years. And it worked. Exhibitors reported strong crowds at their booths that weren't only browsing, but buying.

A little commerce tends to brighten the mood. But celebrations were rampant, too — mostly to mark milestones of business longevity. Cakes were being cut everywhere you looked:

MIDI turned 30 — an achievement marked also by a Special Merit Technical Grammy award for Roland founder Ikutaro Takehashi and Dave Smith, former president of Sequential Circuits, for their contributions to the technology.

In 2013, the Vic Firth company reaches 50 — and the dapper company founder, who started the business out of a garage in Massachusetts, was in attendance for a well-deserved victory lap. (Those lucky enough to witness him onstage with fellow percussion veteran Remo Belli got a real treat, documented on page 24).

Kawai America, too, celebrated a half century. The parent company in Japan has been around since 1927.

Celebrating even greater longevity was Yamaha, which marked its 125th in grand fashion. Sir Elton John headlined a marathon concert, detailed on page 79, and he took the opportunity to highlight the value of endorser relationships. "I want to congratulate Yamaha on their 125th anniversary," he began, seated at an enormous, shiny grand. "I used to play another type of piano, a long time ago. A very famous American piano. And the company who made it actually didn't give a shit about if I played it or not. Which is kind of frustrating when you're ... you know... you're quite popular. And then Yamaha came long and they have been a dream."

And speaking of rock royalty: Pete



Craigie and Debbie Zidjian



VandoJam 2013



Chris Woods Prolog



L'Angelus performs at a PreSonus event



Howard Miyata Kansul Instruments



His honor Stevie Wonder at the Aquarian booth







Joe Lamond (center) celebrates with friends

Townshend was on hand for a star-studded tribute at the TEC awards. Jimi Hendrix's sister, Janie, helped launch Hal Leonard's knockout coffeetable tome, *Jimi Hendrix: The Ultimate Lyric Book*. And NAMM CEO Joe Lamond named Stevie Wonder The Mayor of The NAMM Show — as if there had ever

been any doubt.

Gretsch turned 130, and Zildjian reached its jaw-dropping 390th year; they were doing business more than 60 years before Bach was even born. Founder Avedis Zildjian, they say, was an alchemist, trying to turn metals into gold. This year, looks like it's working. 



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Victor Wooten jams at the Samson booth.



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PAGE 54

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Hal Leonard Banjo and Mandolin Play-Alongs  
Mel Bay Learn to Burn: Uke  
Cherry Lane The Best of Metallica for Ukulele  
Kala Rumbler



Taylor Grand Orchestra  
Graph Tech Ratio  
Alfred Classic Rock Ed. Volume 1  
Blackstar ID: Series  
Yamaha THR10C, THR10X, THR5A  
Faber Guitar Basics Workouts  
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Numark Orbit Mini-Controller  
Chauvet Geyser RGB  
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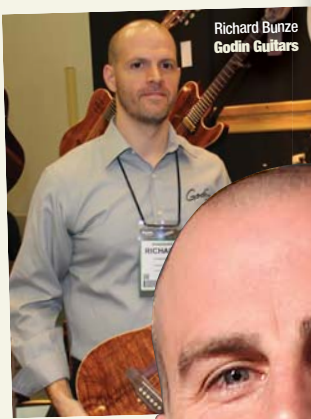


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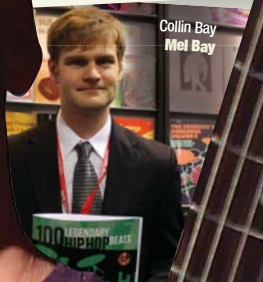




Richard Bunze  
Godin Guitars



Jim and Liz Beloff  
Flea Market Music



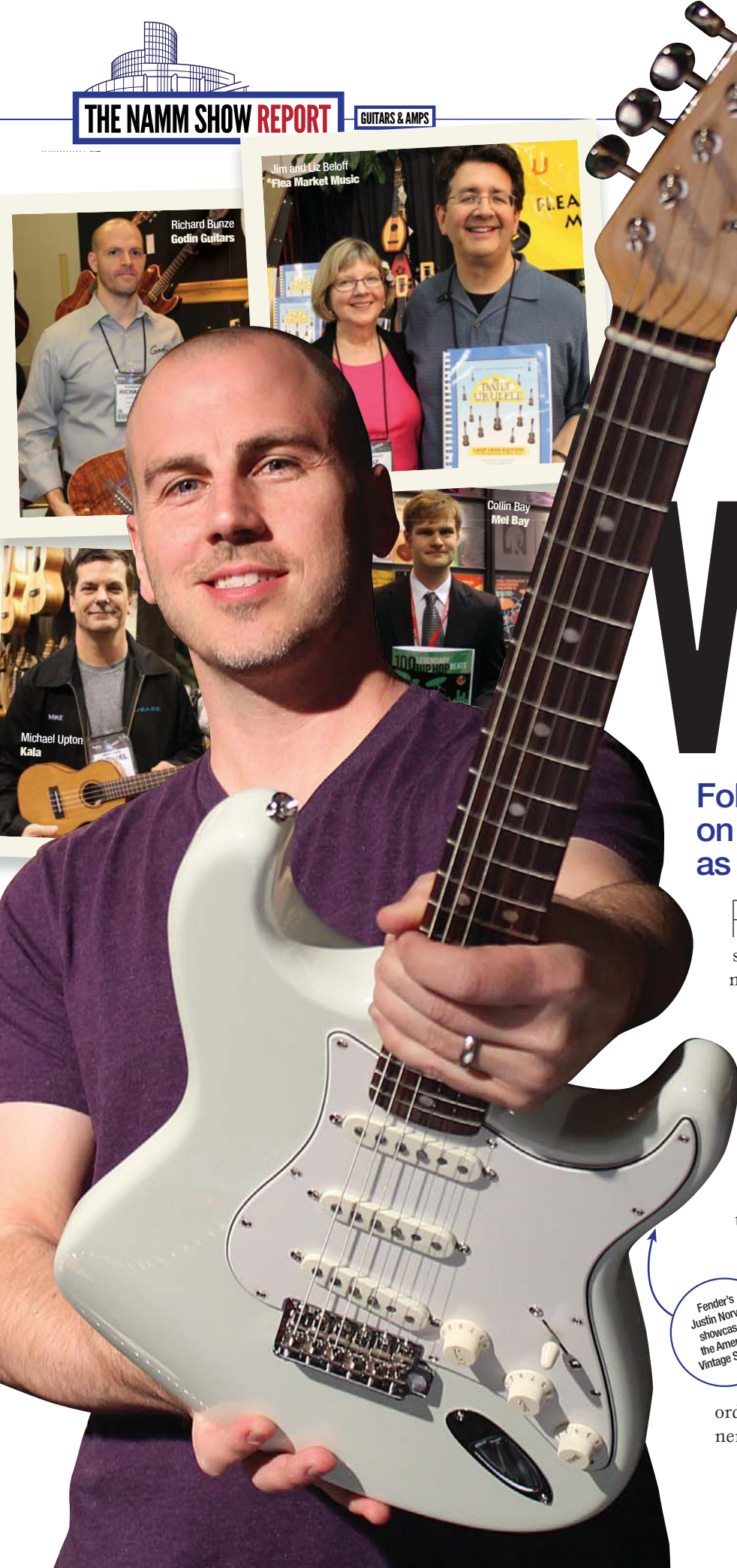
Collin Bay  
Mel Bay



Michael Upton  
Kala



Chris Meikle and  
Mark Ragin  
St. Louis Music



# GOOD VIBES

NAMM 2013  
BY KATIE KAILUS  
GUITARS & AMPS

**Folk-rock music hits it big on mainstream radio as well as The NAMM Show floor**

Positive vibes rang out across the show floor as guitar manufacturers described this year's show as "the busiest we've seen in a while." And not only were the attendees shopping — they were buying.

"The show has been amazing," said Chris Walker, marketing manager for U.S. Musicorp. "It seems like it has been a lot busier than in the past couple of years. More dealers are coming now. Yesterday it was packed, and I couldn't walk from one side of the booth to the other. We've already sold out half of the booth and have orders placed for the next three months."

Alfred's Head of Sales, Antonio Ferranti, echoed these sentiments.

Fender's Justin Norvell showcases the American Vintage Series.

"I have been coming to NAMM for Alfred for over 10 years, and no hyperbole, this is our best year," Ferranti said. "We have been slammed wall-to-wall with dealers. When dealers come in we do iPad ordering and our reps have iPad apps with scanners so they can quickly take their order. All the



iPads have been signed out and overflowing because we can't keep up with all the orders going on right now. It looks like dealers are back and ready to buy. Last year was a lot different. This has been so positive. We've been really pleased with it. It's been a great show."

### THE FOLK-ROCK EFFECT

Walking the floor, it was hard not to notice the influence folk-rock music has had on the MI industry. With bands like The Lumineers and The Avett Brothers seeing success on mainstream radio, and Mumford & Sons winning Album of the Year at this year's Grammy Awards, it's no surprise sales of folk-rock instruments and instruction are continuing to climb steadily.

"Bluegrass, Americana, folk — whatever you choose to call it, it's in right now," said Erik Lind, Tanglewood Guitars product manager at Musiquip, Tanglewood's U.S. distributor. "When movements like this extend right up to the Grammys, they also reach all the way down to the grassroots level."

In response to the trend, suppliers released a slew of "Americana" instruments. Gretsch added five new models to its Roots Collection, which consists of mandolins, banjos, ukuleles and Rancher acoustic guitars.

Recording King debuted its Madison 6-String Banjo, which boasts guitar-style playability with banjo appointments, while Tanglewood Guitars unveiled its newly revamped line of mandolins and banjos.

"There's definitely a surge ongoing in sales of these instrument categories, and we wanted

to make sure we had a Tanglewood product offering that could meet the demand of long-time players as well as people who may have only recently been turned on to the banjo or mandolin via mainstream bands," Lind said. "Instead of treating it as an offshoot segment of a guitar company, we wanted our banjo and mandolin line to be a legitimate, stand-alone offering that would cater to both new and established players."

Print music publishers have also felt the folk-rock surge.

"Some of our best trending titles right now [relate to] the whole folk-rock explosion," said Jeff Schroedl, vice president of popular and standard publications for Hal Leonard, which introduced the

Lumineers songbook and two mandolin and banjo play-along books at the show.

"The popularity of this type of music has really caused mandolin and banjo book sales to spike. And obviously ukulele books are still selling tremendously."

### RESOPHONIC REVEL

Also feeding into the folk-rock craze was the surge in reso-





nator guitars. Saga released the next generation of the Regal RD-40VS, as well as its redesigned RD-30 series.

“Americana and traditional American music has experiencing a resurgence,” said David Gartland of Saga Music. “That said, looking at popular music today, you find all kinds of traditional instruments being played.”

Gartland said Saga, which has been making resonator guitars since the 1920s, makes its instruments stand out by keeping an eye on the small details.

“[Our instruments feature] an adherence to traditional designs, not in general look, but in the details to make sure that construction techniques and material choices are similar to what a player would find in collectable vintage instruments,” he said.

“All these features combined at a price point that makes this same quality available to the beginner, as well as the professional [makes our resonators unique].”

There was no shortage of ukes debuting at the show. But for anyone who wanted a twist on the traditional and was looking for that “folksy” sound, Kala debuted its Resonator uke models. The instruments, available in both concert and tenor sizes, boast an aluminum continental resonator cone that has been crafted into a figured mahogany body providing a distinct voice and appearance.

“We have wanted to do these for a while, but we had to redesign this tailpiece that solves the issue of strings breaking,” said Kala’s President Michael Upton. “We are excited about these.”



Jeff Schroedl  
Hal Leonard



Daisy Rock's  
Trish Ciravolo  
holds up Lady  
Bug model.



Lisa Grim and  
Erika Koorndyk  
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**RECORDING KING MADISON 6-STRING BANJO**

The Recording King Madison 6-string banjo features a combination of guitar-style playability with banjo appointments. Based on the banjo designs of the Madison series RK-R25, the Madison 6-string is assembled with a maple resonator, tube-and-plate style two-piece flange, and dual coordinator rods. [\[recordingking.com\]](http://recordingking.com)

**HAL LEONARD BANJO AND MANDOLIN PLAY-ALONGS**

Hal Leonard has debuted two new play-along series: *Banjo Play-Alongs* and *Mandolin Play-Alongs*. Both books let musicians play their favorite songs quickly and easily by following the written music, listening to the demo tracks on the CD, and then playing along with the live backing tracks. [\[halleonard.com\]](http://halleonard.com)



**MEL BAY LEARN TO BURN: UKE**

Mel Bay's *Learn to Burn: Uke* teaches players to learn the versatile instrument quickly. Strumming, chords, scales, and left hand techniques are all included. Each concept in the book is first presented in easy-to-master steps and then expanded upon in play-along pieces. [\[melbay.com\]](http://melbay.com)

**CHERRY LANE THE BEST OF METALLICA FOR UKULELE**

Cherry Lane has delved into the uke market and released *The Best of Metallica for Ukulele*. This folio features 18 of Metallica's best, arranged specifically for the ukulele. Songs include "Battery," "The Day That Never Comes," "Enter Sandman" and "Fade To Black." [\[halleonard.com\]](http://halleonard.com)

**KALA RUMBLER**

The Kala Rumbler is the latest model in the U-BASS line. The Rumbler takes the U-BASS into a new dimension with the addition of custom engineered electronics and new proprietary strings. The design integrates a specially designed Kala electronic system with a Piezo pickup and an active EQ with built in tuner. [\[kalaubass.com\]](http://kalaubass.com)





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# THE NAMM SHOW REPORT

MUSIC INC.  
**TOP 50**  
PRODUCTS

GUITAR  
TIPS



## TAYLOR GRAND ORCHESTRA

Taylor's new Grand Orchestra (GO) models feature a new bracing scheme that optimizes the movement of the soundboard to produce a louder, more complex tone with great sustain.

The GO models' expanded body dimensions help produce a balance across the tonal spectrum.

{[taylorguitars.com](http://taylorguitars.com)}

## GRAPH TECH RATIO

Graph Tech's new Ratio incorporates the string gauge into the tuning equation. Balancing the gear ratios for each string standardizes the tuning process making tuning faster and easier. Ratio machine heads fit most major acoustic and electric models in both a 3 + 3 and 6-in-line headstock configurations. {[graphtech.com](http://graphtech.com)}

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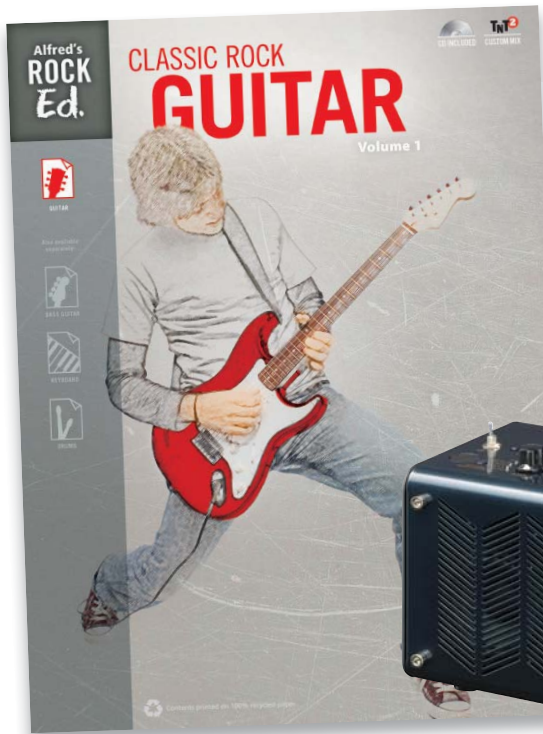
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**ALFRED CLASSIC ROCK ED. VOLUME 1**  
 Alfred has introduced its *Classic Rock Ed. Volume 1*, for the growing number of rock camps and schools where students learn and perform in the context of a real rock group. The books are available in guitar, bass, keyboard and drum editions. [\[alfred.com\]](http://alfred.com)

**BLACKSTAR ID: SERIES**  
 Blackstar's ID: Series of program-mable guitar amplifiers includes six amps and two cabinets, ranging from 15 watts through 100 watts. Each amp in the series has a control set like a traditional amp, coupled with versatile programmability and USB connectivity. [\[blackstaramps.com\]](http://blackstaramps.com)

**YAMAHA THR10C, THR10X, THR5A**  
 Building on the success of the THR10 and THR5, Yamaha has debuted three new models, the THR10C, THR10X and THR5A. The THR10X delivers commanding high-gain distortion and the response of a cranked, high-output stack – even at low volumes. [\[yamaha.com\]](http://yamaha.com)



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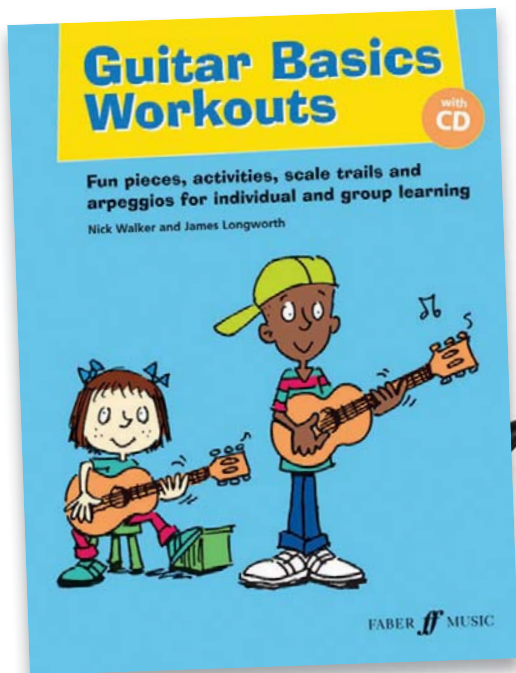
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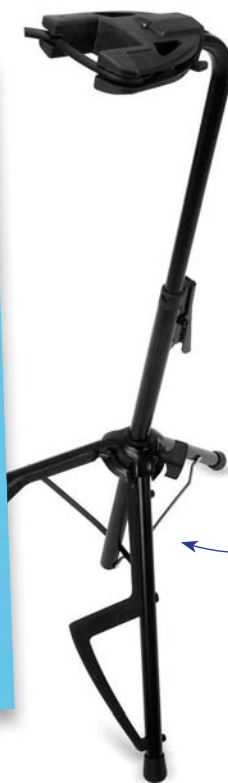
[www.stlouismusic.com](http://www.stlouismusic.com)

St Louis Music is a division of U.S. Band & Orchestra Supplies, Inc.



**FABER GUITAR BASICS WORKOUTS**

Faber's *Guitar Basics Workouts* introduces major and minor scales and arpeggios through an assortment of simple pieces, activities, warm-ups and technical tips. The book comes with chord accompaniments provided for teachers or fellow players, as well as a CD containing backing tracks. [fabermusic.com](http://fabermusic.com)



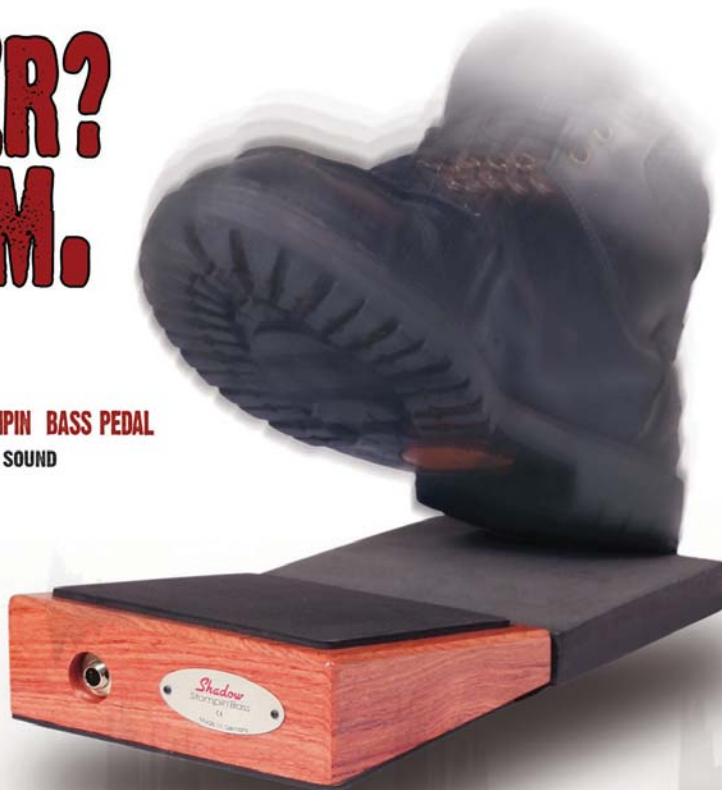
**GOBY LABS GBU-300**

Goby Labs' GBU-300 Universal Guitar Stand features adjustable leg and body supports and over-molded rubber contact surfaces. The new stand exhibits robust metal construction and is designed to travel well, and provides full-cradle guitar retention. The stand incorporates a lock-open/spring-closed mechanism. [gobylabs.com](http://gobylabs.com)

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**GODIN GUITARS**  
**5TH AVENUE JAZZ**

Godin Guitars' 5th Avenue Jazz model is now available in a high-gloss sunburst finish. The guitars feature an arched back as well as arched top, and include a Godin Mini-humbucker jazz pickup in the neck, ebony fingerboard, ebony volume and tone knobs. [godinguitars.com](http://godinguitars.com)

**TANGLEWOOD**  
**PREMIER SERIES ALL-MAHOGANY**

Tanglewood's Premier Series All-Mahogany lineup is comprised of three models: a slope shoulder dreadnought, an orchestra model and a parlor model. The models feature minimal, no-frills aesthetics, a satin finish and unbound body. [tanglewoodguitars.com](http://tanglewoodguitars.com)

**D'ANGELICO**  
**ARCHTOP REISSUES**

D'Angelico Guitars has added four new Standard reissues, a D'Angelico bass and an exclusive, limited edition USA Masterbuilt series. The Standard models include single cuts in natural and sunburst and double cuts in cherry, white, natural and sunburst. [dangelicoguitars.com](http://dangelicoguitars.com)

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Tracy Lei Soundking



Philippe Depallens and Chuck Reynolds Ultimate Ears



Aaron Chisena and Guy Low Electro-Voice

# Turn It Up

NAMM 2013  
BY DAVID ZIVAN  
AUDIO & RECORDING

## Price points on powerful technology continue to drop, fueling the home studio fires

Last year's show may have marked the widespread arrival of the iPhone as a pro audio controller; this year the trend was such a given that you'd hardly notice it. Amplivox updated its SW720 wireless P.A. system, a multimedia solution letting audio and video be played from any Apple device. Apogee re-

Raining Jane's Chaska Potter at the Sennheiser booth.



designed the ONE, a USB audio interface and microphone that offers a digital connection to any Apple product.

And there were more.

Now and henceforward, it appears, everything can be run out of the palm of your hand.

The pursuit of digitally produced retro sound continued, both in style and software, lead by Universal Audio's Apollo interface, a gargantuan virtual library of vintage processors (see page 68). A-Design Audio's Ventura, a single-rackspace mic pre-amp, nods to the 1970s Quad Eight console (See page 36 for more on this subject).

Other trends were strongly in evidence:

## HEADS UP!

No one knows exactly why — Dr. Dre's Beats, certainly, cannot be ignored — but everyone agrees: headphones are hot. A wide range of styles and price points were on display.

The Fostex TH-900 headphone, pricey and gorgeous, includes a driver with a 1.5-tesla magnetic circuit that helps the unit achieve a wide range. Crafted with Japanese cherry birch housings, they are finished in a traditional Japanese "Uru-shi" Bordeaux Red lacquer by a 100-year-old artisan group.

Not to be outdone, the Momentum cans from Sennheiser feature pads made with leather from sheep raised in England.

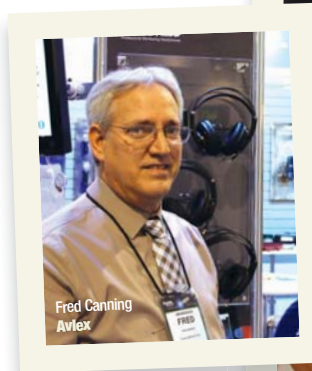
Beyerdynamic showed off the Custom One Pro, a headphone that lets users switch the audio mix of their music between four sound profiles. Vestax, seeking what Joe Jack, national sales

manager for American Music and Sound's DJ brands, described as the "pro-sumer" (the opposite of "con-") customer, showed off the HMX-05, featuring a 40-mm driver. "It collapses, it's portable, it has a removeable flat HD cable," Jack said. "It's just great packaging." Yamaha's new MT220 and MT120 studio-series headphones were designed for demanding monitoring environments, with changes including greater-than-CD resolution, noise-free recording and all-digital processing.

Dealers, it seems, believe the products will be moving well in the coming year. "Headphones are huge," said Audio-Technica's Jeff Simcox. "A big category in MI and pro audio. USB microphones are growing — but headphones are off the charts."

"I think price point has something to do with it," said Fred Canning, national sales manager for Avlex, which distributes Mipro and Superlux in the U.S. He pointed out the Superlux HD681. "It's a well-built headphone that sounds good. There is a big online body of headphone forums and the word gets out."

A star of the show had to be CAD Audio's new Sessions headphones (see page 69). "We've sold 2,500 of these here," said Tony O'Keefe, VP of sales and marketing for CAD Audio. "Dealers don't order right at the show as much anymore — but I'm selling these 100 at a time."



**WORKING FROM HOME**

The continuing democratization of studio engineering is fueling a boom in all things related.

Studio monitors are popping up everywhere. Fostex debuted its first two-way powered studio monitor system, the PMO.3, combining a dedicated 3-inch LF fiberglass cone woofer and 3/4-inch HF silk dome tweeter drivers together with a built-in class D amplifier. Neumann, the maker of legendary microphones, debuted the KH 120, a three-way active studio monitor. "It was a tricky decision to go to the output side," said Jeff Touzeau, who handles communications for Sennheiser and Neumann.

"We've been at the input stage for such a long time. And it's a very crowded environment with some very big successful players already. But we thought we needed to try."

**BIG TIME**

At a splashy dealer event, PreSonus (selected as a "Company to Watch" during the Best in Show breakfast session (see page 88) gave its lineup a TED-style presentation, highlighted by performances from L'Angelus, a quartet out of Nashville by way of Louisiana,



Tony O'Keefe  
CAD Audio

and by multi-Grammy winner Keb Mo, who helped debut the StudioLive Active Integration Loudspeakers series (see page 69). The 328AI, the largest of

the series, is a three-way system featuring dual 8-inch ferrite woofers, a coaxial 8-inch ferrite midrange speaker and a 1.75-inch compression driver.

Electro-Voice made plenty of noise at the show (see page 69), and Mackie, too, entered the powered loudspeaker fray with its compact and handsome DLM series. Designed to blend seamlessly with the company's popular mixer line, the DLM8 and DLM12 are full-range, 2000-watt powered loudspeakers with an integrated digital mixer.

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# THE NAMM SHOW REPORT

AUDIO & RECORDING

## GETTING TOGETHER

Is there a spirit of cooperation in the air? Maybe. Vestax touted its Spin 2, a DJ controller, as a collaboration with Apple (yes, them again). InMusic announced “an unprecedented strategic initiative” with Avid, where Pro Tools Express, an abridged version of the software, will be packaged with select Akai Professional and M-Audio products.

Among the niftier partnerships has to be the bundling of TC Electronic’s Voice-Live Play GTX with a Sennheiser e 835 fx microphone (see page 68)—a promising team effort (and an example of a trend: Please read on ...).

## VOICES CARRY (THE DAY)

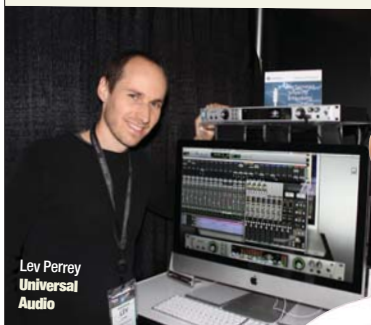
Did “American Idol” start all this? Hard to say — but it was clear this year that manufacturers are putting more tools in the hands (and on the lips) of singers than ever before.

Harman’s DigiTech introduced its Vocalist Live FX vocal effect processor (see page 68), featuring more than 65 effects, studio-quality sound and an anti-feedback setting. (No more excuses if invited to sing, say, at an inauguration or something.)

“We designed the Vocalist Live FX to help support singers by producing amazing vocal effects right out of the box,” said Scott Klimt, marketing manager for DigiTech.

DPA Microphones introduced the d:facto II Vocal Microphone. Designed to achieve studio sound in live settings, the d:facto II offers high separation and extreme SPL handling — put to beautiful use at the booth with live performances from Shel, a four-sister act out of Colorado. “It’s giving vocalists purity and high fidelity on stage,” said Paul Andrews, a DPA consultant. “You’re going to hear the singer for

Michael Deming, president of Charter Oak, lifts a future customer.



Lev Perrey  
Universal  
Audio



Sheena Loza  
Roland





# Rock is your religion

-and these are your altar boys



GBU-300



GBA-300



GBX-302

At Goby Labs, we believe guitars are much more than instruments. A good guitar can save your soul. Shouldn't you return the favor?

## Universal Guitar Stand GBU-300

Finally, there's a stand that cradles your guitar the way you do. We gave our Universal Guitar Stand a patent-pending neck catch that locks in both open and closed positions, so you can do a quick-change set with two guitars or lock down your favorite.

## A-Frame Guitar Stand GBA-300

The beauty of an A-frame guitar stand is its simplicity. Our A-frame Guitar Stand consists of a robust, mandrel-bent steel frame and all-metal locking hinge. We designed it to be opened and closed with one hand, so your axe need never touch the floor.

## Guitar-hook Thingy GBX-302

Wouldn't it be nice if you could hang your guitar from your mic stand? Now you can! We designed our Guitar-hook Thingy around a patent-pending pole lock that forms a closed loop around a mic stand for strength. Now you have room for that stack you've always wanted.

Some might say, of our plethora of innovations, we thought of everything. Nope, we just listened to the Gods of Rock.

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Audix

what they are. It has everything that DPA is known for in its standard reference series.”

The d:facto II also features an adapter system, which can be used with many professional wireless systems. “If a vocalist likes our products and they have to rent a wireless system, or if they are on television, they can always have a DPA capsule,” said Eric Mayer, DPA president. “I always use the analogy: A painter uses a certain brush, and so do engineers, when they collaborate with an artist.”

Indeed. Steffen Grachegg, head of marketing for Lewitt, echoed those sentiments, showing off the company’s new

940CM and 940DM microphones. “The idea behind all this is that artists are delicate, like flowers,” he said. “They are used to their microphones and they want to use their mics, even in the studio. So we decided to put as much studio gear inside this handheld as possible.”

Finally, there was a good bit of traffic at the Logitech booth, where staff in lab coats were offering free fittings for the company’s custom in-ear Ultimate Ears Vocal Reference Monitors. According to the press materials, the product helps singers “hear what’s most important to their performance.”

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**UNIVERSAL AUDIO APOLLO**

Universal Audio enhanced its Apollo High-Resolution Interface, turning the unit into a scalable system capable of recording larger music projects on both Mac and Windows 7 machines. The Apollo now accommodates multi-unit cascading, providing simultaneous use of 16 analog inputs/outputs. [uaudio.com](http://uaudio.com)

**SENNHEISER E 835 FX AND TC HELICON VOICELIVE PLAY GTX BUNDLE**

TC-Helicon and Sennheiser launched two bundles that include Sennheiser's new e 835 fx, a mic with an effects-control button, and either the VoiceLive Play unit for singers or the VoiceLive Play GTX for singer/guitarists. [sennheiserusa.com](http://sennheiserusa.com); [tc-helicon.com](http://tc-helicon.com)



**DPA MICS D:FACTO II**

The d:facto II offers natural sound with high separation and extreme SPL handling, giving users unlimited possibilities for their performances. In addition to use with the new wired DPA handle, the d:facto II adapter system allows for seamless integration with many professional wireless systems. [dpamicrophones.com](http://dpamicrophones.com)



**LEWITT LCT 940**

The LCT 940 combines the characteristics of a premium large-diaphragm FET condenser microphone and a top-notch tube microphone in one housing. Users can choose between the two main settings, "FET" and "Tube." The mic features a total of nine different polar patterns and push buttons for noiseless handling. [lewitt-audio.com](http://lewitt-audio.com)

**RADIAL ENGINEERING PS4 CHERRY PICKER**

Radial Engineering's PS4 Cherry Picker enables studio engineers to connect a microphone and select between four mic pre-amps in order to optimize the signal path and deliver the best sonic performance. The product features a balanced mic input with four outputs and a front panel 'radio-style' selector switch. [radialeng.com](http://radialeng.com)



**AUDIO-TECHNICA SYSTEM 10**

Audio-Technica's System 10 digital wireless system is designed for a wide range of applications. Operating in the 2.4 GHz range, immune to TV and DTV interference, the system offers accurate sound and easy operation with instantaneous channel selection, sync and setup. Up to eight channels may be used together. [audio-technica.com](http://audio-technica.com)



**DIGITECH VOCALIST LIVE FX**

Harman's DigiTech introduced its Vocalist Live FX vocal effect processor, featuring more than 65 effects, studio-quality sound and Live Adapt listening technologies designed to give performers the ability to immediately adapt to cues in the room. The unit includes built-in Lexicon reverb. [digitech.com](http://digitech.com)





**CAD AUDIO SESSIONS MH-510**

The Sessions MH-510 professional headphones were designed for performers in recording and live audio environments as well as audio enthusiasts who want to experience their favorite recordings exactly as the artist intended. {[cadaudio.com](http://cadaudio.com)}

**PRESONUS STUDIO LIVE AI**

The StudioLive AI-series Active Integration Loudspeakers were built to deliver studio-monitor accuracy onstage. The speakers, which feature both wired and wireless networking and communications, allow remote control and monitoring using an iPad or laptop. {[presonus.com](http://presonus.com)}

**ELECTRO-VOICE LX SPEAKERS**

The Electro-Voice ZLX line of powered and passive portable loudspeakers feature a bold new look and user-friendly features that give end-users control over their sound — including a full-function DSP stage controlled by a single-knob design. {[electrovoice.com](http://electrovoice.com)}

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2013 Frankfurt Musikmesse H4.1 D-30



# Timbre!

Exotic woods and unique materials excite percussionists' tonal palettes

Manufacturers had a lot to shout about over the cacophony of the drum floor. From Zildjian's 390th year in the business to Gretsch's 130th birthday and Vic Firth's golden anniversary, suppliers nodded to the good ol' days with commemorative snares, sticks and cymbals.

Vintage, however, has always been in vogue in Anaheim. As heartwarming as NAMM nostalgia may be, it is left-of-center shell materials, finishes and hand percussion that are resonating the loudest in 2013.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Banana, cherry and sugar maple were a few of the tasty, trend-setting tonal woods used by drum manufacturers, who passed over popular birch or maple in favor of exotic alternatives. Others opted for interesting shell construction, sandwiching poplar and birch between maple and mahogany plies, adding new dimension to the classic pop, punch and warmth of vintage-inspired kits.

Crush Drums Creative Director Mike Swenson explained that unique woods, such as wenge

NAMM 2013  
BY HILARY BROWN  
DRUMS & PERCUSSION

wood on Crush's Limited Reserve series, pique the interest of players currently using comparable-sounding kits.

"It's a dark, hard wood, so for people familiar with bubinga, it sounds similar," Swenson said. "It's been the most played kit at our booth."

Always a proponent of innovative shell concepts, DW returned from a yearlong NAMM hiatus with a bevy of creative products, including the punchy-yet-subdued cherry Collector's series.

The desire to dabble in raw materials also spanned into the hand-drum segment, where Latin Percussion touted the performance and portability of its new Durian wood congas.

"In the hand percussion market, most people only experiment with finishes," said LP Director of Sales Angelo Arimborgo. "Durian is a really nice shell material that weighs 25 percent less."

As Vic Firth Company celebrated 50 years with a commemorative series of hand-branded mallets, it also debuted sturdy Titan sticks, made from carbon fiber, for heavy-handed drummers.



Remo Belli  
Remo



Bob Kasha  
Big Bang  
Distribution



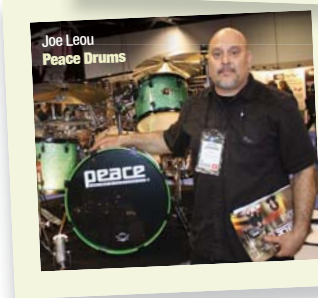
Nick Phillips  
Innovative  
Percussion



Mike Swenson  
Crush Drums



Angelo Arimborgo  
Latin Percussion



Joe Leou  
Peace Drums



Jim Catalano  
Ludwig  
Percussion





Johnny Franco  
TRX Cymbals



Bruce Hagwood  
RBH Drums

“They’re very durable,” said Neil Larrivee, Vic Firth’s director of education and product development. “Plus, every stick weighs within 2 grams of one another, and drummers enjoy the consistency of a product.”

**DRUMMING IN CIRCLES**

Ironically, many suppliers are targeting the non-drummer as a potential consumer, zeroing in on the therapeutic — and margin-boosting — benefits of recreational drum circles. One major advocate was Remo Belli, who pushed the Versa line of pre-tuned world-percussion

products. Available in djembe, timbau and tubano sizes, each drum head has the same bearing edge so novices can easily interchange them or play them as frame drums.

There’s also the unavoidable, continued popularity of the cajon, which Pearl Director of Marketing Steve Armstrong called “the ukulele of the percussion market.” Suppliers looking to stand out in the super-saturated



Los Cabos' Stephanie Guay rocks a pair of Grip-Dip sticks.



Russ Miller  
Zildjian



David Jewell  
and Jim Haler  
Yamaha



Neil Larrivee  
Vic Firth  
Company



cajon segment are rethinking the possibilities of this four-sided retail wonder, including some sound-enhancing add-ons. Pearl, for example, created the three-sided Wedge cajon, which maximizes performance comfort, and the ported Sonic Boom cajon for optimal low-end.



**PEARL WEDGE CAJON**

“The nice thing about a cajon is that you don’t have to be a drummer to play one,” Armstrong said. “The sheer volume of these that we’re selling proves that we’ve expanded outside of the traditional drum market.”

**GRAND INTRODUCTION**

Though rare woods and modified

pro-level hardware dominated the show floor, suppliers are always sensitive to entry-level drummers seeking quality kits at considerable price points. To meet the needs of that demographic, many manufacturers improved upon their introductory kits with mid-range specs.

“There are a lot more affordable drum sets out there because of the way the market is shifting right now,” said Taye Drums Product Specialist Ralph Clarke, who demoed a bevy of diverse-sounding, entry-level snares and reasonable, playable intro kits. “The idea is to put together a low-cost set for consumers, but also more importantly for retailers.”



Steve Armstrong  
Pearl Corporation



John Palmer  
Gretsch Drums

Cympad's Ingo Marte displays new colored cymbal washers.



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# NEW FOR 2013



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(FSCJM)

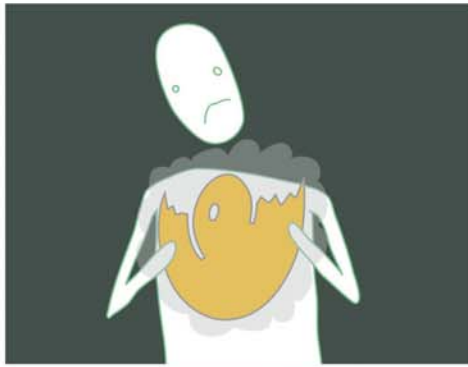
**Fiesta Djembe**  
(FSDJW)

**Fiesta Cajon – Walnut**  
(FSCJW)

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# THE NAMM SHOW REPORT

MUSIC INC.  
**TOP 50**  
PRODUCTS

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

### DW ECO-X BANANA KIT

The always-innovative drum manufacturer opted to go green this year with the Eco-X series banana kit, which features banana husk-wrapped bamboo and birch shells with 8-ply toms and 10-ply snare and bass drums. The kit maintains its sonic power with 1.6-mm steel True Hoops and a vibrant suspension tom mount system. [\[dwdrums.com\]](http://dwdrums.com)

### CRUSH LIMITED RESERVE KIT

Crush prefers to blend vintage sound with modern specs. The Limited Reserve series, which combines the company's Sublime E3 and Sublime Tour kits, features varying plies throughout, as well as minimalist lugs and wenge wood for deep, resonant sound. The toms also include a sandwich of birch for extra snap. [\[crushdrum.com\]](http://crushdrum.com)

### TAMA STAR SERIES

Available in bubinga and dynamic, warm maple shells, Tama's Star series includes a Super Resonant Mounting System to reduce stress on shells and hoops and enhance the drums' natural sounds. It also features Quick-Lock tom brackets for keeping a setup intact and newly designed lugs for minimal shell contact. [\[tama.com\]](http://tama.com)

### ZILDJIAN A SERIES CYMBALS

One of the world's oldest companies turned 390 this year, marking the occasion with enhancements on its Gen16 acoustic-electric and A Series cymbal lines. Responding to drummers in search of a thinner, lighter product, Zildjian has adjusted the cymbals' curvature and debuted a 23-inch sweet ride. [\[zildjian.com\]](http://zildjian.com)

### YAMAHA LIVE CUSTOM SERIES

The creator of the first 100-percent oak shells debuted a little something extra for the live drummer this year. The first kit to come from Yamaha's brand-new factory, Live Custom kits feature thick oak shells for extra projection and clarity, and a low-profile bass drum pipe clamp. [\[yamaha.com\]](http://yamaha.com)







**JOJO MAYER GEAR**  
 Drummer Jojo Mayer is not only revered for his electronica-inspired stick work; he's been pivotal in developing some of the category's most anticipated products. From his Best In Show winner (see page 88) to his new, innovative snare accessory, Mayer creates with the gigging, versatile player in mind.



**SABIAN**  
**JOJO MAYER HOOP CRASHER**  
 Mayer's effect-cymbal rings are crafted from a set of B20 hi-hats. They can be played freely atop a snare by removing the including cotter pins or tightened to the drum using adjustable tension clamps. The top flotation ring's 32 holes add lightness, while the X-Celerator Air-Wave lip eliminates contact and airlock. [sabian.com](http://sabian.com)

**SONOR**  
**JOJO MAYER PERFECT BALANCE PEDAL**  
 Along with a folding mechanism for easy transport and a round-cam, low-mass drive system for alternating styles, the Perfect Balance bass drum pedal features a ballistic fiber strap that responds more smoothly than a chain. The elongated footboard is ideal for expanded heel-toe movement. [sonor.com](http://sonor.com)

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**PEARL HORACIO HERNANDEZ QUICK-RELEASE COWBELLS**

The cowbells' quick-release bracket system affixes to any 3/8-inch post. Users can drop in and remove multiple bells by placing them on two cushioned pins or stack them without interfering with wing nuts. [{pearldrums.com}](#)

**LOS CABOS GRIP-DIP DRUMSTICKS**

Drummers looking to avoid blisters from rubber-coated sticks will love the latest product from Los Cabos, who has lacquered its Grip-Dip drumstick handles in a lightweight, water-based material. The sticks come in two hickory models. [{loscabosdrumsticks.com}](#)

**LATIN PERCUSSION ADJUSTABLE SNARE CAJON**

With Latin Percussion's adjustable snare cajon, users can doctor their snare tension using a knob on the back of the instrument. The wood shell and birch project loudly, and the textured seating surface offers maximum comfort. [{lpmusic.com}](#)



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 fusion  
series

 fusion  
series

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# PlayTime

NAMM 2013  
BY BOBBY REED  
PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

## What did the piano say to the Internet? Let's play together.

Connectivity to the Internet in conjunction with the remote playing of pianos was a vibrant trend at this year's show.

Sir Elton John headlined Yamaha's star-studded 125th anniversary concert at the Hyperion Theater in Anaheim, Calif., showcasing the company's DisklavierTV, powered by RemoteLive technology. His performance on the Disklavier reproducing piano — backed by a 70-piece orchestra — was streamed live via the Internet and simultaneously to 24 Disklavier pianos located in 12 countries. John's actual piano keystrokes were duplicated in real time on each of the remote instruments.

PianoDisc is cleverly exploiting the ubiquity of YouTube with the launch of its PianoTube LIVE, a YouTube channel designed for use with any brand of acoustic piano that has a PianoDisc iQ Intelligent Player System. Users can watch a YouTube video and experience their own piano playing the music in sync with the video. The technology also works with streamed concert events.

Music educators and students can share their performances remotely, with each person seeing

keystrokes on the piano.

Thomas Dolan, president and CEO of QRS Music Technologies, explained where this digital technology is heading.

"Ease of enjoying a video has got to become very simple," he said. "You should be able to just log in, push 'play,' and your piano better play and you better see the image. There's also a trend of interactivity over the network, which will come more into play when HD MIDI is finally approved."

### CAPTURING INSPIRATION

A pianist's nightmare is to create a piece of music only to have it vanish forever. QRS is helping pianists avoid that potentially disturbing scenario.

"The essence of the PNO-Cloud is that for composers who have a PNOscan installed in their acoustic piano, all they have to do is sit down and touch the keys," Dolan said. "They don't have to hit 'play' or 'record' or anything. It's automatically recorded. After 30 seconds, or after they've stopped recording, that recording goes automatically up to the cloud. So the recording is saved locally as well as in the cloud automatically. It's always going to be there." 🎹



Richard Formidoni  
Korg



Daniel Gill  
Akai Professional



Bernie Worrell  
Moog Music



Randy Burnham of Piano Gallery (left) receives a 2012 Dealer Excellence Award from Lowrey's Bob Ashworth and Seijiro Imamura.



Casio artist Frank Lucas demos the Privia Pro PX-S5.

Kawai's Hiroataka Kawai (left) and Naoki Mori (right) present an award to Rick Cochran of Fort Bend Music Center.

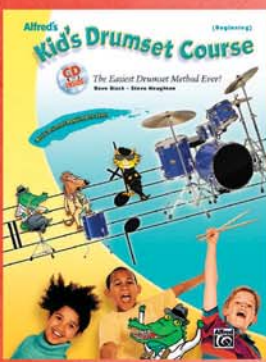
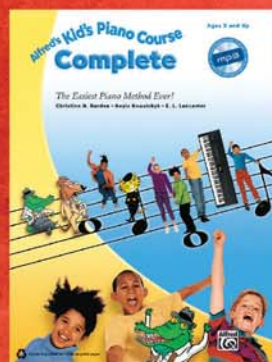
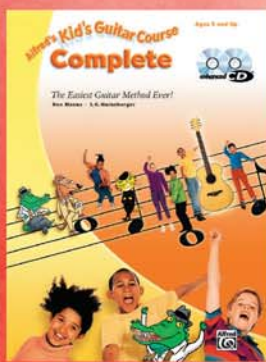
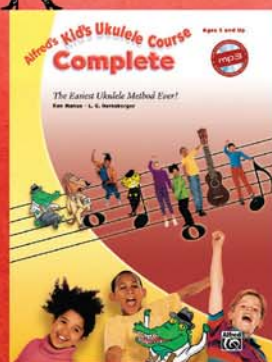


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# THE NAMM SHOW REPORT

MUSIC INC.  
**TOP 50**  
PRODUCTS

PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

### KORG MS-20 MINI SYNTHESIZER

Korg's MS-20 monophonic synthesizer has been reborn as the MS-20 mini. It features two oscillators with ring modulation and envelope generators. [korg.com](http://korg.com)

### KAWAI GX-3 BLAK GRAND PIANO

Kawai's GX-3 BLAK grand piano is part of a series of performance-class grands with new structural design elements for enhanced stability and tone. [kawaius.com](http://kawaius.com)

### CASIO PRIVIA PRO PX-5S ELECTRONIC PIANO

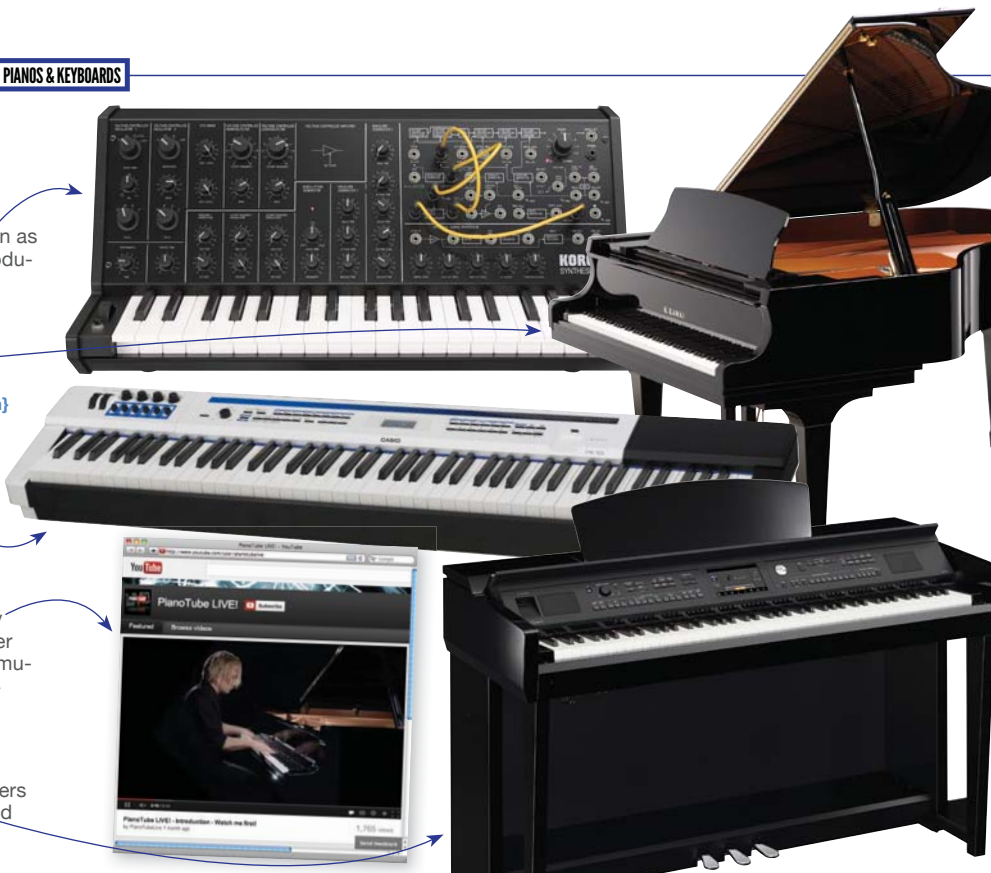
Casio's Privia Pro PX-5S boasts an advanced MIDI controller and an assortment of fully programmable sounds. [casiomusicgear.com](http://casiomusicgear.com)

### PIANODISC PIANOTUBE LIVE

PianoTube LIVE is a YouTube channel designed for any acoustic piano that has a PianoDisc iQ Intelligent Player System. Users can see an artist perform and hear the music on their own piano. [youtube.com/user/pianotubelive](http://youtube.com/user/pianotubelive)

### YAMAHA CLAVINOVA CVP-605 DIGITAL PIANO

Yamaha's CVP-605 enhances the playing experience with wireless iPad integration. Yamaha iOS apps let users record, share and archive their performances online and expand their library with new song titles. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)



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# The Tables Have Turned

## Gigging DJs take center stage

Today's DJs are coming out from behind the turntables.

Headlining scratchers? Arena DJing? Autumn Pittman, product specialist for InMusic, put this possibility into perspective as she demoed Numark's Orbit controller, a wireless, hand-held MIDI device that controls a mash-up from up to 200 feet away.

"Imagine being able to crowd-surf with this thing," Pittman said, and due to the explosive popularity of electronic music, that image is now a reality.

"It's more about performance now, rather than just mixing," said David Cabasso, vice president of product development at Gemini.

The backpack-toting record enthusiast still exists, but the DJ segment isn't just about scratching anymore; it's about showmanship. This year's chassis redefine the parameters of control while helping DJs refine their onstage signature sound.

### MAD SCIENCE

The DJ category underwent a drastic paradigm shift last year as turntablists opted for small pieces over all-in-one DJ solutions.

"The biggest trend is individual controllers," said Lars Schlichting, Pioneer DJ's national sales training manager. "You see a lot of modular controllers that you can customize. That whole controller segment

is, without question, the market segment that's growing the most."

As live DJs dabble more in music performance and production, manufacturers tout products that cater to that experimentalism as well as portability. Last year's modular setups — championed in part by Behringer, which finally ships its pocket-friendly CMD series controllers this year — continue to be hot commodities. Other manufacturers went back to the drawing board, crafting even more flexible products with improved pressure- and velocity-sensitivity.

"They're studio pieces, they're performance pieces, they can be anything you want, but they still have control voltage," Pittman explained, showcasing the Akai MAX25 keyboard controller.

### GOING MOBILE

All-in-one controllers aren't obsolete in 2013; they satisfy the demands of weekend warriors and help novices learn the ropes, even if they're on a shoestring budget.

"[All-in-one controllers] are a self-contained package," said Mike May, Rane national sales manager of DJ and retail products. "There's a foundation to timing and skill that you can learn on a turntable or an individual

NAMM 2013  
BY HILARY BROWN  
DJS & LIGHTING




Rane's Mike May demos the Z-Trip Sixty-Two Z mixer.



controller, but young DJs who wouldn't want to invest in CD controllers or turntables learn to DJ that way."

This year, manufacturers optimized these self-contained chassis with custom colors and cleaner, more navigable setups. At the forefront of the cosmetic renaissance is Pioneer DJ, which introduced an eye-catching platinum version of the CDJ-2000 and a palette of multi-colored headphones. Lighting manufacturers also catered to the needs of the mobile DJ, as Blizzard, American DJ and Chauvet debuted a series of hybrid lighting/stage effect products that are as compact as they are multi-functional.

Yet another trend — the implementation of USB ports on all-in-one controllers — is super-beneficial for mobile DJs looking to forgo their computers when traveling. "You analyze your files on your computer, set your cue points and export it to a USB stick," Cabasso said. "When you get to the gig, that's all you need." 



Ronald "DJ Ronix" Membrere  
Vestax



Ana Jaramillo  
Chauvet

**GEMINI G4V**

Gemini has rolled out an aggressively priced, all-in-one USB controller/audio interface that takes the guesswork out of setting up a rig. The G4V alleviates the need for a computer, letting users load a set list from a USB drive. This heavy-duty unit also boasts four channels of audio, 14-bit MIDI on the pitch faders and extra-large jog wheels, 16 multi-function pads and pre-mapped FX control. [geminidj.com](http://geminidj.com)

**LIVID INSTRUMENTS  
BASE CONTROLLER**

Livid's Base Controller touchscreen/drum machine hybrid includes 32 pressure-sensitive pads, nine touch sliders, eight touch-sensitive buttons and eight momentary buttons for mix versatility. The unit's RGB lights and LED fader feedback let users adjust and customize settings accordingly. [lividinstruments.com](http://lividinstruments.com)

**CHAUVET  
GEYSER RGB**

With 21 high-power RGB LEDs and vertical blasts of water-based fog housed in a single chassis, Chauvet's lighting-fogger effect, the Geysier RGB, offers a double dose of pyrotechnics in one compact setup, making it ideal for mobile DJs. [chauvet-lighting.com](http://chauvet-lighting.com)



**NUMARK  
ORBIT MINI-CONTROLLER**

This pocket-sized MIDI controller allows performing scratchers to mix wirelessly. The low-latency device is completely assignable with virtual control knobs, four banks of 16 backlit pads for blending effects and launching hot cues, and a two-axis accelerometer. [numark.com](http://numark.com)

**BEHRINGER  
CMD SERIES CONTROLLERS**

The CMD concept modular controllers are finally making their in-store debut. The line includes the MM-1 Mixer Module, CMD DV-1 Digital Vinyl Control Module, LC-1 Live Control Module, CMD PL-1 Platter Control Module and CMD DC-1 Drum Control. [behringer.com](http://behringer.com)



# Tweak & Refine

NAMM 2013  
BY ED ENRIGHT  
BAND & ORCHESTRA

Band and orchestra suppliers seek new market niches

Manufacturers of band and orchestra gear continue to tweak and refine the design of traditional instruments and accessories. Dealers saw subtle improvements to existing instrument lines as well as product debuts that fill specific market niches at the beginner, step-up and professional levels.

Vandoren has taken an aggressive approach to the entry-level woodwind market with its new Juno line of reeds, created in cooperation with Jones Musical products. "There's a specific application for this reed, and it is precisely for beginning students," said Michael Skinner, presi-

Mouthpiece maker and saxophonist Jody Espina of JodyJazz jams on the show floor.



Andy Blanco  
Dansr



Leesa McBeth  
Cannonball



Richard Barth  
Geneinhardt



Jody Espina  
President  
JodyJazz Inc.



dent of Dansr, which distributes Vandoren in the United States. “The tone presence in this reed is unbelievable — a big, round sound that will articulate immediately.”

Juno reeds will not be available to consumers via the Internet, in an appeal to traditional-brick-and-mortar dealers. “There are varying attitudes industry-wide about the necessity or lack of necessity of being an online retail presence, and how much online business is actually in your best interest,” Skinner said. “I think this particular industry [segment] has decided that enough is enough.”

Conn-Selmer is pursuing the step-up market with its new 32 and 42 saxophones, which incorporate a pro-quality neck and mouthpiece from Selmer-Paris into the body design of its Taiwan-made student model saxes.

“We’re filling a gap we’ve had for a lot of years in our line of saxophones,” said Mike Kamphuis, senior director of marketing at Conn-Selmer. “It’s sticking with tradition, but it’s a great collaborative effort between our two companies to come up with a solution for that market.”

Craig Denny, brand director at P. Mauriat, said he’s seeing a trend of dealers stocking deeper in core models. “With our new dealers we’re opening up, they are starting to look at new lines, especially on the student side, and it’s not necessarily just to replace something that has gone south.”

#### SIGNATURE SEAL

In the professional market, manufacturers are taking advantage of relationships they’ve established with top players. Drake

Mouthpieces appeals to pros with its Signature series models designed in collaboration with saxophonists, such as Pete Christlieb, Jerry Bergonzi and Dave Liebman. “It took two to three years going back and forth with the artists creating prototypes and talking about facing lengths and contours, and we’ve honed in on something we can be really consistent with,” said company president Aaron Drake. “It gives players the opportunity to experience what one of their favorite artists is experiencing physiologically and how they get an expressive sound.”

Buffet Group’s Matt Vance said that the company consulted with French saxophonist Fabrice Moretti in developing the Senzo saxophone line, and Conn-Selmer’s Tedd Waggoner noted that input from mariachi trumpeter Jose Hernandez and Cuban trombonist Massimo La Rosa contributed to the development of the Bach Stradivarius LR19043B trumpet and Artisan Collection trombones, respectively. Jody Espina of JodyJazz is planning to release another installment of his Tradin’ With The Greats series of playalong DVDs featuring saxophonist Donald Harrison.

Jazz bassoonist Paul Hanson appeared at the Legere Reeds booth. “Paul is one of the premier bassoonists in the world,” said Tim Elvy, Legere’s vice president of sales. “If anyone works a reed hard, it’s him.”



Matt Vance  
Buffet Group



Mike Kamphuis  
Conn-Selmer



Tim Price  
Theo Wanne



Tom Rinaldi  
Mapex/KHS  
America

Theo Wanne

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- Downbeat Magazine

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THE NAMM SHOW REPORT

NAMM® University

# BEST

IN SHOW

## 2013 AWARDS

**BEST IN SHOW, THE SUNDAY-MORNING** breakfast panel discussion, once again delivered top gear picks from The NAMM Show. Six retail gear experts shopped show floor and made their picks in four categories. *Music Inc.* publisher Frank Alkyer moderated the Jan. 27 session held at the Anaheim Hilton Hotel, as they discussed their choices in front of 865 NAMM attendees.

### LET'S BEGIN:

#### THE CATEGORIES

**BEST IN SHOW** **P.90**  
The best product or service that panelists saw at NAMM.

**GOTTA STOCK IT** **P.91**  
A product that retailers should stock right now, if they haven't already.

**BEST ADD-ON OR ACCESSORY** **P.92**  
A great product from the small-goods arena.

**COMPANY TO WATCH** **P.94**  
An exhibitor with trendsetting products or services.

#### THE PANELISTS

**Mike Guillot**  
Mississippi Music, Meridian, Miss.

**Donovan Bankhead**  
Springfield Music, Springfield, Mo.

**Brad Boyton**  
Rhythm Traders, Portland, Ore.

**Billy Cuthrell**  
Progressive Music Center, Raleigh, N.C.

**Ted Eschliman**  
Dietze Music, Omaha, Neb.

**Alan Friedman**  
Friedman, Kannenberg & Co., Farmington, Conn.



Frank Alkyer

CATEGORY

# BEST IN SHOW

**ALAN FRIEDMAN**  
**The Noodle, Slap-eroo Percussion**

"You don't really have to have much talent, but you have to have rhythmic ability. It appeals to all. In a matter of minutes, I was totally grooving it on this thing."

**DONOVAN BANKHEAD**  
**Taylor Grand Orchestra**

"This guitar has all the 'boominess' of a jumbo, without the big enormous body mass. It sounds like a grand piano on a guitar. It's really fascinating."

**BRAD BOYTON**  
**Sabian JoJo Mayer Hoop Crasher**

"One cool thing is you can play an entire gig with this and a snare drum without needing a cymbal or a hi-hat. And it's awesome because it's not just for kit players."

**MIKE GUILLOT**  
**Yamaha Stagepas 400i & 600i P.A. Systems**

"You have a 400-watt, 8-channel and a 600-watt, 10-channel complete P.A. system. It's something we can sell to everyone that walks in the door."

**TED ESCHLIMAN**  
**Kala Exotic Mahogany Ukulele**

"You can't believe the appeal these instruments have. They cross lines from guitarists to drummers. Even non-musicians are intrigued by these ukes. We are in love with the appeal as well as our bottom line with these."

**BILLY CUTHRELL**  
**3D Systems**

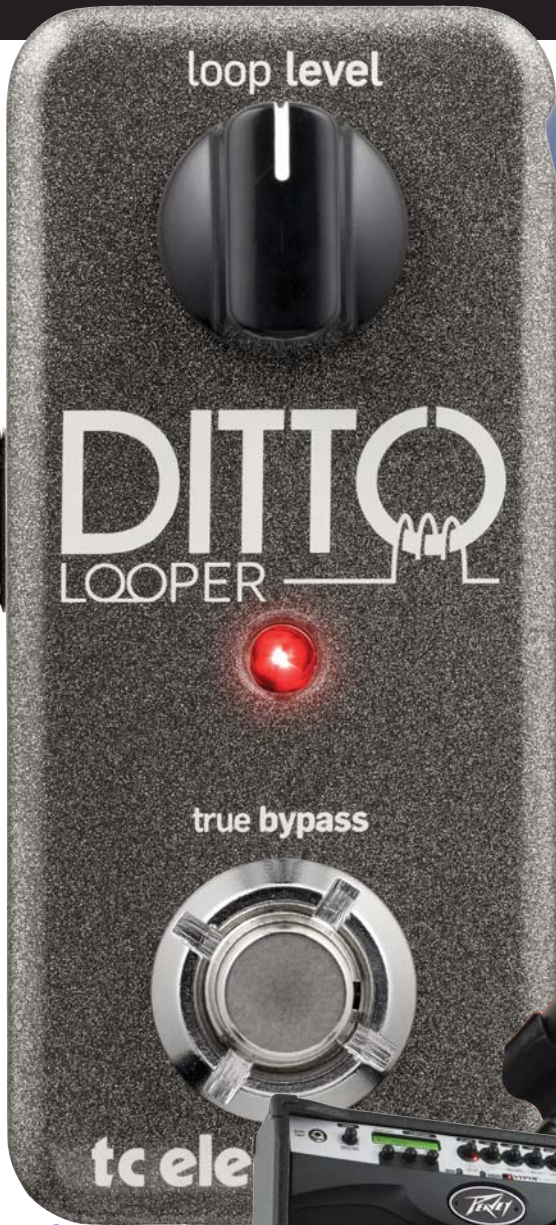
"It's a 3D printer that prints playable guitars. It's completely innovative. I even showed it to my five-year-old daughter the other day and she was like, 'cool.'"

Billy Cuthrell





# GOTTA STOCK IT



DONOVAN BANKHEAD  
**TC Electronic Ditto Looper**  
 "The Ditto Looper is really fascinating. These will fly off the shelves."



TED ESCHLIMAN  
**Fender Accessories**  
 "Something we need to think about as an industry is the way our products look. Fender accessories give a satisfying visual experience and display well."



LAN FRIEDMAN  
**Harp Arm, Dist. By Score Marketing**  
 "It attaches right to your mic stand and you just rest the harmonica on it. It stays because it is magnetized. They even have a little magnet to attach to a plastic harmonica. This thing is brilliant."



BRAD BOYTON  
**Meinl Make Your Own Cajon Kit**  
 "You can paint them, you can lacquer them, you can wood burn them — whatever you want. They're perfect for schools and summer music camps, and they make an awesome gift for someone."



BILLY CUTHRELL  
**RoomZorbers, Hal Leonard**  
 "They are great room treatments for old churches that are built from cinderblocks, as well as the home recording market. They are small, light and portable so you can move them around."



MIKE GUILLOT  
**Peavey VIP Vyper Modeling Amplifiers**  
 "Not only do these work with electric and acoustic guitars, but also bass guitars. Just plug in and select what type you're using. It's one amp for all instruments. How cool is it for you as a retailer to not have to stock so many SKUs because you have one item that can handle all three?"

CATEGORY

# BEST ADD-ON OR ACCESSORY

BILLY CUTHRELL  
**Prologix Russ Miller's  
 "All -N- 1" Signature  
 Practice Pad**

"You would think once you sell a practice pad that's it. But with this Prologix pad, you can sell overlays, so now you have an add-on. It gives you that ability to take one pad and maximize it."

ALAN FRIEDMAN  
**Ernie Ball Slinky  
 M-Steel Electric  
 Guitar Strings**

"This is a great premium string that sounds better, lasts longer and doesn't slip."



MIKE GUILLOT  
**Evans Level360 Drumhead**

"These new heads are aimed at correcting an age-old problem that we've all had where the drumhead doesn't sit level. This new collar design enables the head to sit perfectly level on the down-bearing edge of the head with no wobbling."

DONOVAN BANKHEAD

**Music Nomad  
 Equipment Care**

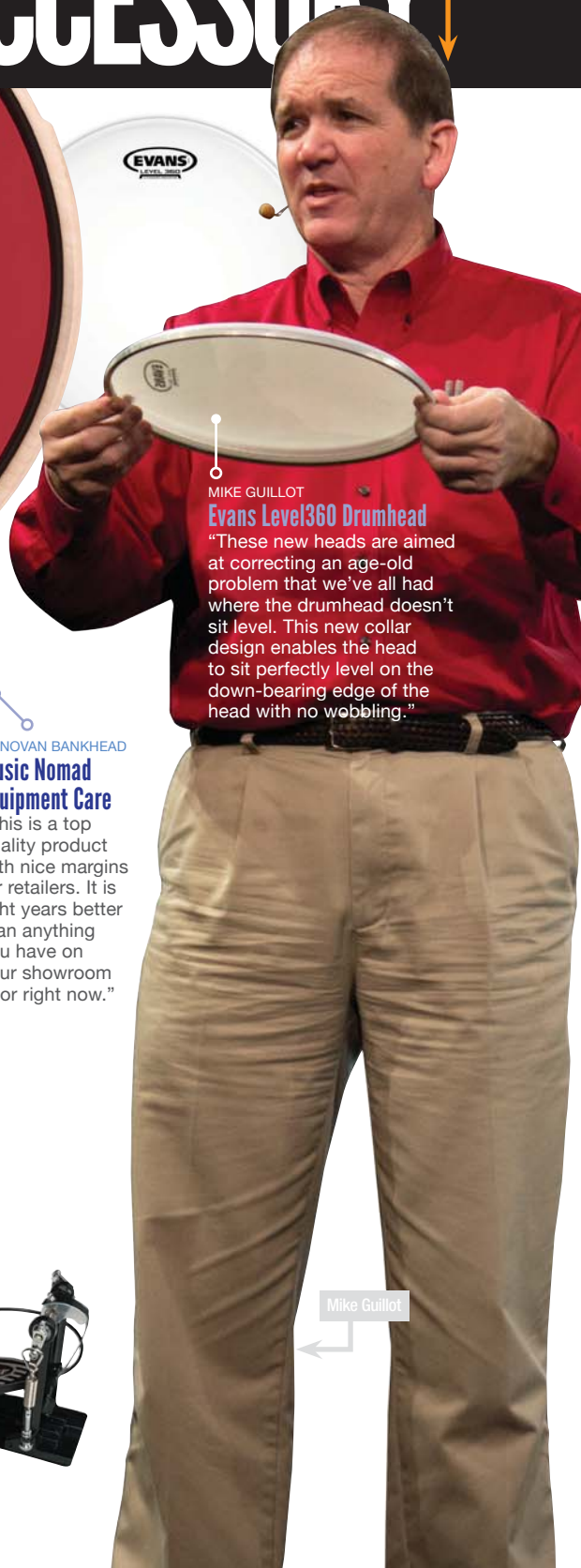
"This is a top quality product with nice margins for retailers. It is light years better than anything you have on your showroom floor right now."

BRAD BOYTON  
**Remo Frame  
 Drum Holder**

"It has a list price of \$10.75. They are awesome. I just ordered a ton of them just to use for displays and have an equal amount for customers."

TED ESCHLIMAN  
**Gibraltar Cajon  
 Remote Pedal**

"This pedal gives you the ability to move it around and adjust it accordingly. It will fit any cajon and is very well thought out."



Mike Guillot





NEW Gibraltar G-Class  
Bass Drum Pedal

# THE COMPANY TO WATCH.

At this year's NAMM convention, Gibraltar arrived with innovative new products, multiple merchandising strategies and widespread marketing support designed to make retailers more profitable.

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CATEGORY

# COMPANIES TO WATCH

## LINE 6

**DONOVAN BANKHEAD**  
 “They are integrating all their equipment where it all talks to each other and everything connects together. These guys are going to revolutionize the industry.”



**BRAD BOYTON**  
 “They have four great drum set lines, and I’m really impressed with their snare drum lines.”

## PreSonus

**MIKE GUILLOT**  
 “This company, if you haven’t done business with them, is worth jumping into. They carry a large range of products from studio monitors to digital mixers.”



**BILLY CUTHRELL**  
 “Hal Leonard is still bringing in new lines to distribute like Avid, Blue Mics and M-Audio. They aren’t only print music anymore. For dealers, that’s huge because they have over 20 lines, and it’s growing. It’ll be interesting to see what will happen in the future.”

## CONNOLLY

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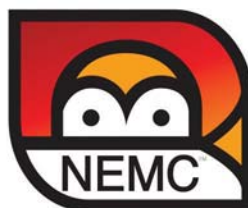
**TED ESCHLIMAN**  
 “They have grown from only a few SKU’s in the beginning to branching out adopting a new line of bows and, as of this show, some string instruments. They have very logical price points and great packaging.”



**ALAN FRIEDMAN**  
 “Gibraltar has started to produce some high-quality, very affordable drum accessories. The new bass drum pedal is not only ergonomically designed, but it’s easily adjustable.”



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**Betty Meyer**

**Meyer Music**

**Blue Springs, Mo.**

Our ideal customer base comes from our large studio operation. We have a lot of people that start with keyboards or an 88-weighted-key digital piano, and eventually they'll trade it in either for a console or a grand. I think the majority of our clients come from an educational standpoint. It's usually introductory-level folks that are just starting out, but especially children. We also do band and orchestra instruments, and we have seven road reps that go into the schools in up to a 60-mile radius here in Missouri. A lot of marketing is done from that standpoint. Other than that, it's mostly word of mouth after being in business for 47 years.

When we're marketing a step-up instrument, it really depends on the student's progress. Whenever the student has to take a lesson, they have to come into the store to do so, and when they get here, they see all the pianos. We're the Yamaha dealer for Kansas City, Mo., and we have three stores: one in Blue Springs, Mo., one in north Kansas City and another in Overland Park, Kan. Because of that, I try to do quite a bit of advertising in the *Kansas City Star*, but a lot of it comes from simply talking to people on the sales floor. Each time a student comes in, they have a vision every week of what they're going to end up with. We collaborate with and market within our lessons program.

>>>

**John Gist**

**Gist Piano Center**

**Louisville, Ky.**

Everyone wants to play the keyboard. You can prove it by simply giving people free access to one for about five minutes. Their eyes light up, they smile from ear to ear and they immediately start to explore the onboard sounds. Then, they kick on an automatic drum rhythm, put their bodies in motion and enjoy a few minutes outside of their normal, stressful lives. You can see it in any big-box store. The music department is always full of someone "getting down" on a keyboard. The right keyboard can be a gateway instrument, ushering the uninitiated into a magical world of melody and counterpoint.

Our mission as keyboard retailers is to maintain a relationship with these recreational music-makers and help them grow their passions into a lifelong pursuit. That's the tricky part. Everyone wants to play. It's up to us to help them achieve their creative dreams and turn that passion into future business.



>>>

**Cathy**

**Krubsack**

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## Who is today's keyboard customer?

That's a tough question. What I tell you today will be different tomorrow. The piano and keyboard end of the music business has very little consistency these days. What is selling great this month might be totally dead next month. Here at Lacefield Music, our take on the keyboard customer divides into groups.

Performance-based groups consist of serious, classically trained musicians — mostly institutional with some individual consumers.

The consumer end appears to be less and less. This is the "quality" buyer. These consumers are looking for quality used acoustic pianos more and more, but will buy new if they can justify the price and the need. Institutions usually purchase new pianos.

Recreational groups are often the middle-aged-and-up demographic, but we see younger people, too. This group has always wanted to play or played for a while when they were

younger. We specialize in this group. They want to start out inexpensive and often buy digital, but will trade up and buy a nicer piano if they learn to play in our adult piano classes.

There's also young parents looking to start their children. Though this varies, they are very hesitant to invest and will look for the inexpensive piano on Craigslist or get a free piano or keyboard from a relative. We do convert these customers often if they come in from a Craigslist ad.





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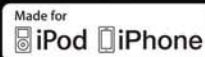
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STAGEPAS 600i  
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