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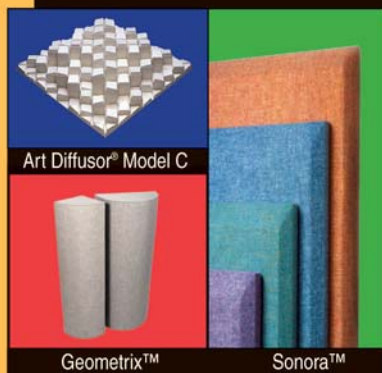
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$50 one year (11 issues). \$90 two years (22 issues) to U.S.A. addresses. \$75 one year (11 issues), \$140 two years (22 issues) to Canada and other foreign countries. Air mail delivery at cost.

SINGLE COPY (and back issues, limited supply): \$9.95 to any address, surface mail. Air mail delivery at cost.

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OTHER MAHER PUBLICATIONS:
DownBeat, UpBeat Daily

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include your current MUSIC INC. label showing your old address. MUSIC INC. (ISSN 1050-1681)

Published monthly, except April. Printed in U.S.A. by Maher Publications Inc. 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2932. Periodical Postage Paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSIC INC., P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688

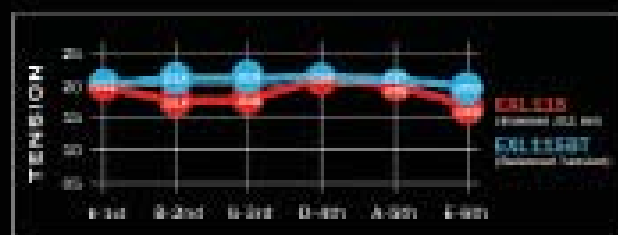


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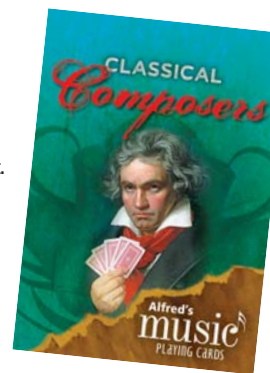
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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY DAVID ZIVAN

PEOPLE GET READY

I'm so excited. And I just can't hide it.

— P. SISTERS

Every working musician I know has a variation of the story.

They were a kid, they walked into a music store, they were amazed — and they were hooked. Their local store became a place to hang out, to discuss upcoming shows and great albums and gear, gear, gear. They would visit often, and certainly find themselves wandering by on Saturdays. (It will likely come as no surprise to hear that this hypnosis seems to work most powerfully on guitar players. You know the joke: How many guitars does a guitar player need? *Just one more.*)

That attachment — the excitement about a place — may be the most valuable asset a music dealer can possess. And these days there may be nothing more difficult to achieve and maintain.

Some of the conventional ways of making your store an exciting and relevant destination still work. The other day a drummer friend of mine sent me a YouTube clip of Brian Blade & the Fellowship Band playing a live set at Chicago Music Exchange. The excitement in the air during their gorgeous playing is electric, even when watching it on a laptop. Seriously. Go take 20 minutes and check it out. I'll wait.

The location of the performance did not really surprise me — CME, after all, was the originator of the viral “100 Riffs (A Brief History of Rock ‘n’ Roll)” video, and was one of our Retailing Excellence Award winners in December. But unless

you have some kind of crazy luck, I doubt you're featuring world-class jazz in your store every week. You're going to have to find another trick.

Billy Cuthrell's column this month offers some excellent thoughts on how to keep customer interest high. To overly simplify his message: Today's music dealership needs to be the place that knows what's going on. And today, more and more, that means not just possessing expertise and knowledge about the latest gear. It also means being knowledgeable about emerging technologies. Do you and your staff use apps? Can you explain them to customers — maybe show them some they haven't seen before? Can you use them in your lessons program? Our industry's customers, especially the student set, are at ease with these things. We have to be, too.

What I especially like about this month's insights from Cuthrell is that so many of the ideas are relatively low-cost — especially considering the potential long-term upside. In the brave new world he is steering us toward, even POS can be fun, for the first time in a long while. Given the number of sales that will be enabled when your floor staff can ring up a customer anywhere in the store, you have to wonder what we're waiting for. **MI**



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LETTERS

Customer Whisperer Rebuttal

When I read Greg Billings' customer whisperer column, I think there's going to be something to take away from the article and stuff into my salesman bag of tricks. In the January 2013 column "Whispering 2.0" I was left looking into

my bag and deciding it had all it needed.

I happen to believe that a sale is about the customer and not the salesperson. It shouldn't matter what personality type I have. Selling isn't as difficult as it appears. It should be as easy as having a conversation.

I think the suggested directions to be-

coming a customer whisperer in the article are total bunk. The top three things are all about the salesperson and not about the customer at all. That isn't whispering.

Here's my list of things to do to become a customer whisperer:

1. Shut up! It's not all about you and what you know. It's about the customer and their needs.

2. Ask plenty of questions. It hasn't changed since elementary school. Ask, "What would you like to do with this guitar?" When in doubt ask, "Why?"

3. Listen. Find the hidden agenda and the customer's true motivation.

4. Affirm. This isn't a "stroke their ego moment." It's making sure you have all the information you need and to make clear the customer's motive and motivation.

5. Show the customer what they came in for. Never overwhelm them with too much information or choices. Provide two, no more than three, possible solutions.

6. Close the sale. When closing, it's OK to move the customer along to a buying decision and, again, offer two suggestions.

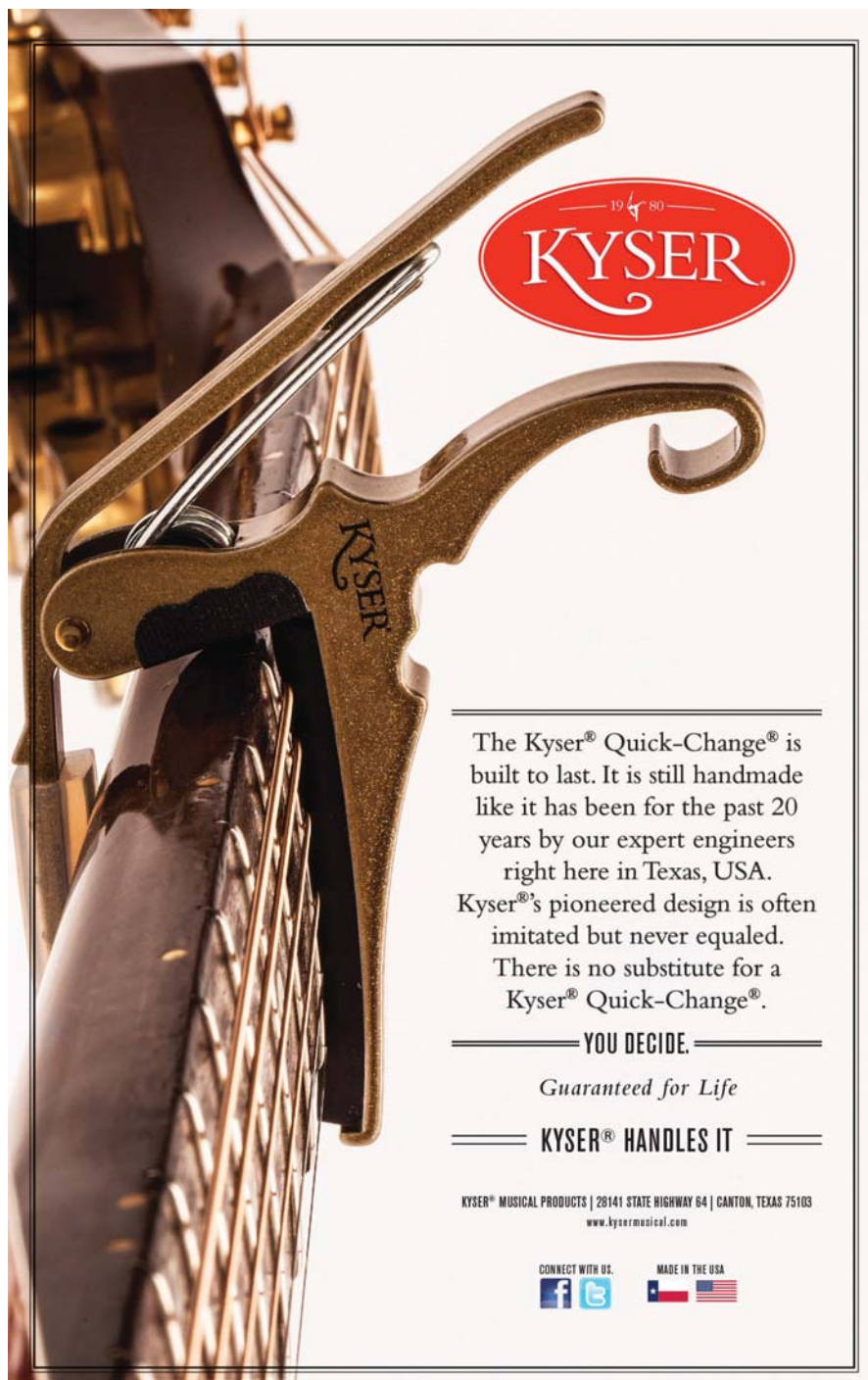
7. Follow up. It's always OK to send a thank you card or phone call thanking them for coming in and asking for referrals.

It's pretty simple. The hard part is getting out of our own way. You don't need to sell yourself or the product. If marketing did their job right, the customer was already convinced enough to come in and see firsthand what all the hype is about.

Confidence in sales is knowing that you know what you are doing. More than that, the customer leaves feeling confident in their purchase decision and doing business with you. And that is what sales is all about. Right?

Mitch Garcia
Vice President of Marketing
Bakersfield Winds

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RETAIL



BANANAS AT LARGE | BY HILARY BROWN



PUTTING HIS FOOT DOWN

If you want something done well, do it yourself. Take a lesson from Alan Rosen, president and CEO of West Coast effects mecca Bananas at Large.

The widespread reputation of Bananas at Large as a pedal emporium is no secret. Rosen's dealership, with locations in San Rafael and Santa Rosa, Calif., has long been associated with its eclectic stomp box selection, ranging from the popular to the obscure.

The store's expansive pedal inventory — along with a recent social media push — has attracted a loyal following of

Bananas at Large kicks exclusive pedal offerings into overdrive

pedal enthusiasts, many of whom willingly make a cross-country exodus to Bananas in search of perfect tone.

"There are definitely people that come in looking for specific brands and models," Rosen said. "I have people that literally come

in once a week to peruse the stuff we have."

In recent years, The NAMM Show has offered glimpses of an analog resurgence. The boutique effect sector is transitioning from what Rosen calls "a fun, trendy little market" into a super-saturated category of custom pedal builders.

So how has Rosen, one of the top pedal dealers in the country, remained afloat above the sea of newcomer and hobbyist builders? He has become an influential player in the pedal-manufacturing game.

"The pedal category has cer-

tainly grown, and more retailers are starting to see that category as an opportunity," Rosen said. "So, we started doing our own line."

The idea for a Bananas at Large pedal line was realized shortly after pedal manufacturer Toadworks crafted the Big Banana signal buffer, a signature stomp box in honor of the pedal-pushing retailer. Now, a new selection of limited-run pedals will be exclusive to Bananas locations, further capitalizing on the store's longstanding reputation as a pedal destination.

"The idea was partly a pas-

sion of mine and partly because it has been successful," Rosen said. "It's what people expect from us."

To get the idea off the ground, Rosen utilized his well-established connections with builders and sparked a business relationship with celebrity guitar technician Scott Appleton. Under the banner of Phi Electronics, Bananas at Large now offers exclusive Phi pedals: the SCION3 Overdrive, the 1.618 Boost and 1.618 Boost mkII, the PhiPhuzz and the Tube Compressor.

Rosen explained that it's always necessary to stay in touch with the styles and tones that are in vogue in order to remain relevant in the marketplace.



"Pedals can be an inventory suck because you're talking about a lot of small units," he said. "It requires babysitting, paying attention to the trends, and learning to let go of things when they jump the shark."

Another important aspect of

the industry that Rosen remains aware of is the economy. While the price point of a pedal is traditionally more pocket-friendly than a guitar or an amplifier, he knows the benefits of further aligning with bargain-hunting pedal junkies.

"There's tastes, there's quality levels and there's budget restraints," Rosen explained.

Bananas at Large is currently in negotiations with a major manufacturer to build and distribute an economical import version of the pedals. But Rosen remains true to his belief that pedal construction is just as much pleasure as it is business.

"The fun part is developing your own individual, unique voices and finding the products that fit their needs," he said. "There are a lot more choices for people to individualize their tone." **MI**

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GC Teams With Fender, Gibson and Martin on Clapton Edition

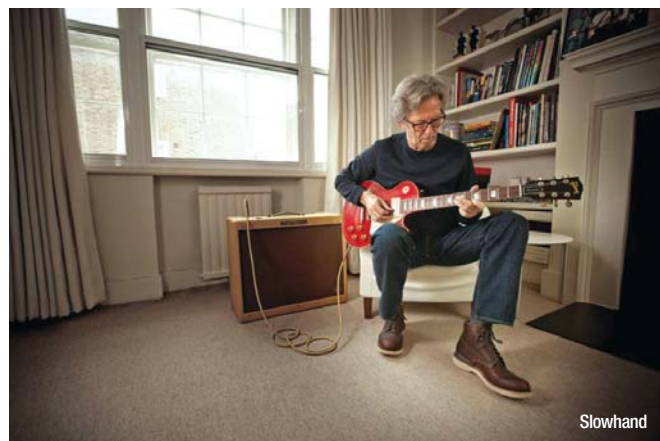
In March, Guitar Center launched the Eric Clapton Crossroads Guitar Collection, a limited-edition set of five tribute, replica and signature guitars. Sales of the instruments will help benefit Clapton's Crossroads Centre charity.

The guitars were developed in partnership with Clapton, Guitar Center, Fender, Gibson and Martin Guitar, drawing inspiration from the guitars used by Clapton at pivotal points throughout his iconic career. The collection includes a replica Fender Custom Shop Eric Clapton "Brownie" Tribute Stratocaster, Gibson Harrison-Clapton "Lucy" Les Paul, and Eric Clapton Signature Martin 000-28 and 000-45 models, as well as Eric Clapton "Crossroads" guitar straps from Ernie Ball.

Guitar Center has co-sponsored each of Clapton's four Crossroads Guitar Festivals and been a strong supporter of the Crossroads Centre charity, having purchased

several of Clapton's most famous guitars including his "BLACKIE" Stratocaster and the CREAM Gibson 335 at the Crossroads Guitar Auction in 2004.

"We have always admired Eric Clapton



Slowhand

as one of the all-time great guitarists, singers and songwriters and for his extraordinary influence on musicians around the world," said Michael Doyle, senior vice president of guitar merchandising. "We were honored to be invited by Eric to collaborate with him on this unique collection of guitars which have been the inspirational tools of his trade throughout his career."

LISITSA PERFORMS AT GRAND PIANO HAUS

On March 18, internationally renowned pianist Valentina Lisitsa performed at Grand Piano Haus in Skokie, Ill. The stop was part of the pianist's national tour promoting her new two-disc set of classical music entitled, "Rachmaninov," a collection of the Piano Concerti as well as the Paganini Rhapsody.

A Bosendorfer artist, Lisitsa played on a 6' 7" 200SP Grand Piano model (measuring 6-feet, 7 inches), as well as on one of the store's Steingraber models (7-foot, 7 inches).

"She played some beautiful Schubert, and a little bit of Liszt," said Jeff Tasch, president of Grand Piano Haus. "The pianos have completely different tones, and hearing both lines was very interesting."

Nearly 100 people attended the recital.



From left: Emmy Tasch (Treasurer), Fritz Tasch (CEO), Valentina Lisitsa, Jeff Tasch (President) and Laman Tasch (Jeff's wife).

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TOP BASSIST ROCKS RICK'S

Acclaimed electric bassist Stu Hamm gave a master class, some private lessons and a free clinic at Rick's Music World in Raynham, Mass. Hamm has performed and recorded with legendary guitarists, including Steve Vai, Frank Gambale and Joe Satriani.

"It was a tremendous event," said owner Rick Santos. "We had a full house — about 85 people — and he was so good with the crowd. An event like this — having a name like that — brings in people who haven't been to the store in a while. And we did get some retail business out of it; we sold a couple of his signature Washburn basses right away."



Sherman Clay Sells Bay Area Piano Business to Steinway

Sherman Clay, the storied San Francisco-based piano retailer, this week announced an agreement to sell its Bay Area retail piano business to Steinway & Sons. Locations in San Francisco and Walnut Creek, Calif., will transition to Steinway, while locations in Santa Clara and Sacramento, Ca-

lif., not part of the sale, will close. Sherman Clay will continue to operate stores in Seattle and Houston.

"We're confident that Bay Area musicians and piano lovers will be in good hands with Steinway," said CEO Eric Schwartz, whose family has owned Sherman Clay since 1960.



MONSTER MUSIC HOSTS SCARY BIG SHOWCASE

In March, Monster Music in Levittown, N.Y., hosted a large-scale student showcase at Mulcahy's in Wantagh, a storied venue on Long Island. More than 300 people heard more than 65 Monster Music students perform on a wide variety of instruments. "[It] was a big day for the Monster Music family," said Mike Zegelbach, general manager. "Jaws were dropping as all of the performers made their way into the vast music hall."



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Note from Joe Thoughts from Capitol Hill

It's a cold Wednesday morning in Washington, D.C. I'm here on Capitol Hill with the NAMM Executive Committee, Members of our Board of Directors and representatives from 30 Member companies for NAMM's Advocacy Fly-In, where we lobby on behalf of music education. So far, we've had two solid days of meetings, briefings and media interviews, and today, between all of us in the contingent, we have about 70 or 80 meetings scheduled with members of the House and Senate.

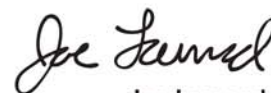
Our ask is simple: to keep music and the arts a core subject, allow greater flexibility in funding and give the Department of Education discretion on how to best handle the cuts demanded by the "sequester" so that all kids, especially those from disadvantaged areas, will have access to making music, something that we know will help them succeed in school and in life.

When I was working at Skip's Music, I could never have imagined that one day I'd be walking the halls of our nation's capital talking about music education, but that's exactly what dozens of NAMM Members and I are doing here. We're participating in the most fundamental right of all Americans—to go to our Capital, speak with our elected officials and "promote our cause."

We've also brought along some special celebrity guests who are helping us to tell our story, including former New York Yankee and Latin GRAMMY-nominated guitarist Bernie Williams, and Chad Smith, drummer for the Red Hot Chili

Peppers. Singer/songwriter Vanessa Carlton is here too. Bringing these celebrities along to talk about their own personal stories helps our message to resonate with elected officials and generate a tremendous amount of media in the process. One minute Chad Smith is sharing the role his fourth grade music teacher played in his life; the next thing we know, the story is being told in *Rolling Stone*.

To take part in the D.C. Fly-In is a life-changing experience for the NAMM Members who participate, one that I believe connects them to the larger meaning of the industry. There's something extremely gratifying about working to protect music education so that our kids and grandkids will have the same opportunity we did to grow up with music. I hope someday every NAMM Member will have the experience of coming to Capitol Hill to speak on behalf of music education.



Joe Lamond

NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



Photo by Rob Davidson



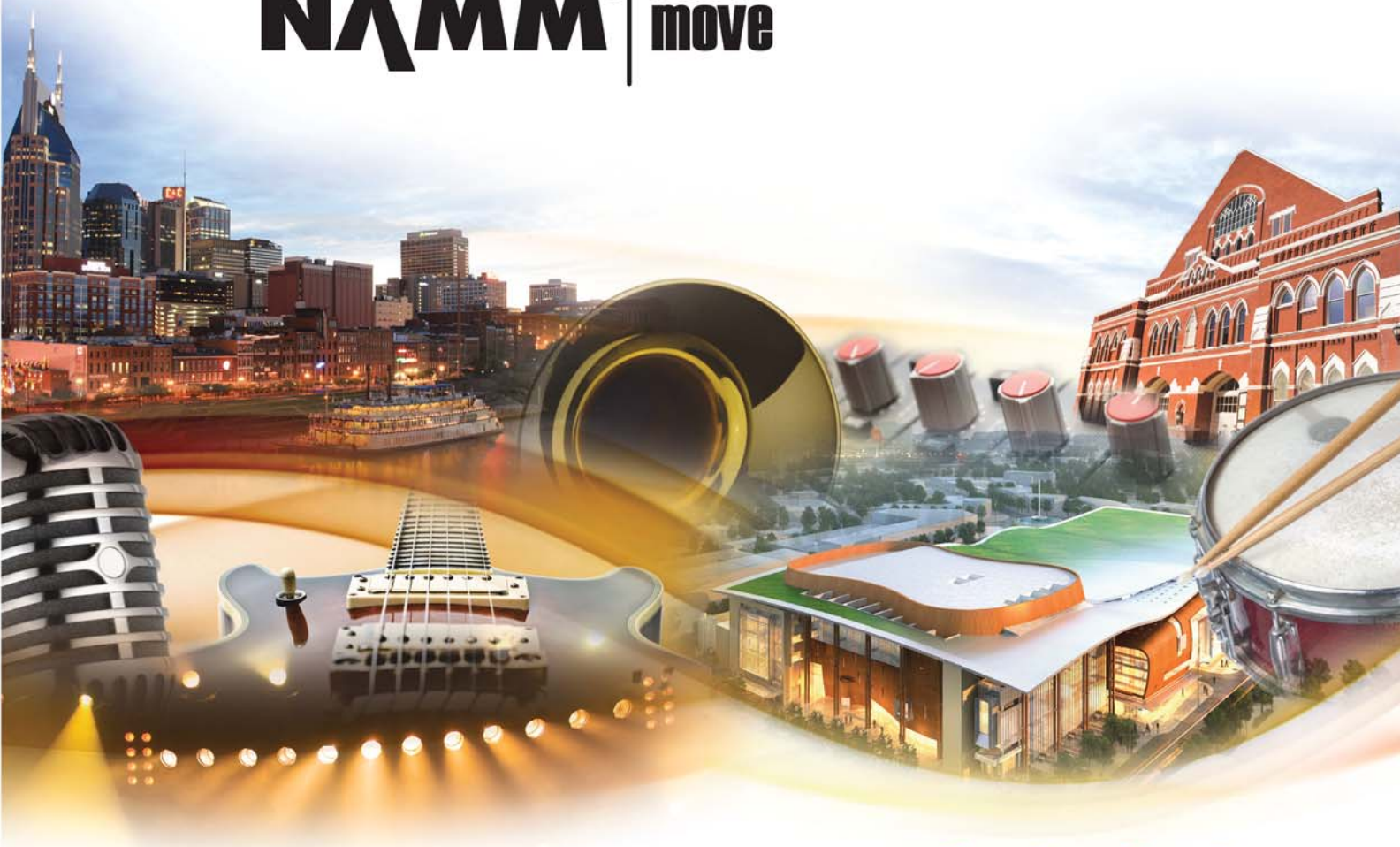
NAME
NAMM News

No.
May 2013

NAMM News is published by NAMM. To keep up-to-date on the latest breaking industry news, sign up for our NAMM News e-newsletter at info@namm.org.

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SUPPLY

GRAPH TECH | BY KATIE KAILUS

GRAPH TECH TURNS 30

Dave Dunwoodie started Graph Tech after encountering a problem with the string binding on traditional guitar nuts during a gig. “I went to do my first big ‘wang’ and went totally out of tune,” Dunwoodie recalled.

Nearly 30 years later, the Canadian guitar accessory manufacturer is still going strong, continuing to introduce new lines and developing plans to double the size of its manufacturing facility.

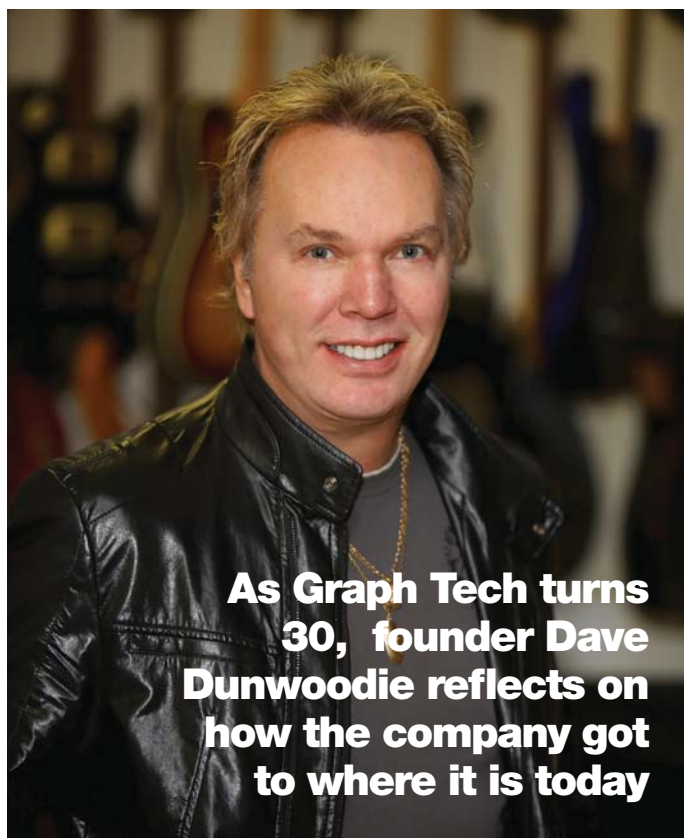
“We started with humble beginnings: \$5,000 and a kitchen table,” Dunwoodie said. “Now, we probably supply more guitar components to guitar manufacturers than anybody else in the world.”

EXPANDING BUSINESS

In fact, about 50 percent of Graph Tech’s business is done directly through guitar manufacturers spanning across 30 countries and including such companies as Martin, Taylor and Gibson.

Setting itself apart from its competitors has been something Dunwoodie and his team have focused heavily on.

“I think having products that do what we say they will do is the biggest thing,” he said. “Our most common email is, ‘Wow, your product actually works.’



When we say String Saver Saddles reduces string breakage, we mean it really reduces string breakage.”

Graph Tech also looks long term when building its brands and focuses on what they mean, the value they bring, who uses them and what products fit with what brand.

“A lot of our products are an excellent lead-in for the repair shop — an important revenue

part of many indie stores,” Dunwoodie said. “Sell a TUSQ saddle and bridge pins, and the store may likely get the installation charge, a setup and new set of strings on top of the TUSQ product sale — all at retail margins.”

As the company expands, so does its plans to expand its warehouse, located in Vancouver.

“We want to double our output, and that can be done a

number of ways — through machinery, production processes and economies of scale at our plant in Canada,” Dunwoodie said. “After we refine that, which is a major project, we can take a look at a second factory making totally different products.”

GROWING LINES

In the last year alone, Graph Tech has launched three new lines, including Chops, a line of professional hand care for musicians, TUSQ guitar picks and NuBone XB, a new nut and saddle material for OEM customers that increases bass response.

Dunwoodie said being stubborn and having a vision has helped his company grow steadily.

“[We’ve managed to expand] by listening more than talking to [our] customers, competitors, suppliers and mentors, and never resting on our laurels,” he said. “If you are going to be a leader, you can’t stop improving and innovating.”

Dunwoodie said he’s also helped his company grow by designing and developing products that the music industry needs.

“Our products are not just products to stick our name on or make cheaper than someone else,” Dunwoodie said. “Our mission statement is five words: to improve the playing experience.” **MI**

D'ADDARIO | OPENING

D'Addario Exhibit Opens at MIM

On Feb. 19, the Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) opened its newest exhibit, and the first in the museum focused solely on musical instrument accessories. The D'Addario & Company exhibit takes guests behind the scenes for a look at the making of musical instrument accessories, including strings, reeds, drumheads and drumsticks.

D'Addario has been supporting MIM since before the museum's opening and John D'Addario Jr., president of D'Addario Music Foundation, is an active member of MIM's President's Cabinet.



The idea for the exhibit began more than a year ago and MIM's curatorial team worked with D'Addario to create a display that would delve into the art of string making.

Members of MIM's team traveled to company headquarters in Farmingdale, N.Y., to shoot footage of the factory and conduct interviews with staffers to be featured in the exhibit.

"Nobody ever talks about the accessories needed for many instruments to make beautiful music," D'Addario Jr. said. "We are inspired by the fact that MIM chose to honor this integral element of music making, and we are very proud to have the story of our family-owned business represented." daddario.com; museumofmusicmaking.org



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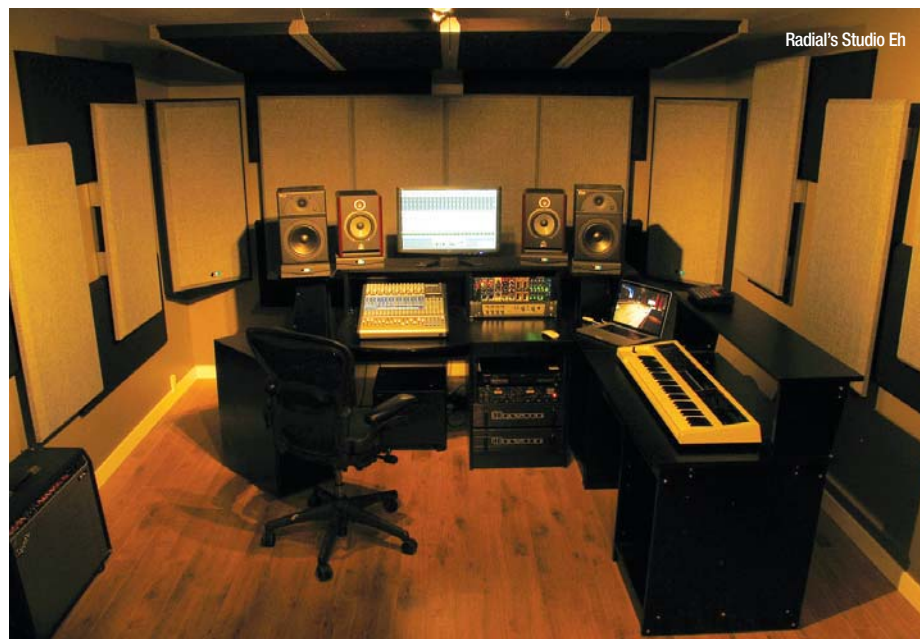

www.Things4Strings.com

RADIAL ENGINEERING | LOCATION

Radial Moves R&D Department

Radial Engineering recently moved its R&D department to a larger area in its Vancouver facility in order to accommodate the growing team. The new department is divided into three sections: The first houses the engineering team where circuit design, PCB layout and metal drafting occurs. The second is a meeting room where the R&D team gathers to vet out new designs, part requirements and development schedules. The third is the new test studio dubbed Studio Eh, which is equipped with a wide range of microphones, monitors, guitars, amplifiers, and more.

"We grew to the point where we felt it was time to take over the last 5,000 square



Radial's Studio Eh

feet in our building that was previously leased out," said Mike Hill, general manager. "The extra warehouse space not only helps

us manage inventory overflow, but this area now houses cable prep, trade show prep, the workbench and old files." **{radialeng.com}**

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DISTRIBUTION NEWS

Eddy Finn Teams
With Counterpoint

Eddy Finn Ukes has named Counterpoint Musical Services the exclusive distributor of its products in Canada.

Counterpoint was established in 1994 and will represent Eddy Finn ukuleles, Stentor Violins, Mirage Band Instruments, Akord-Kvint String Instruments, Thomastik, Pirastro and Aquila Strings, Headway Audio, Kun Shoulder Rests, Harpsicle Harps, Legere Reeds, PH Bows, Wittner Metronomes, and Fusion Gig Bags. eddyfinnukes.com

TML Joins Forces
With LR Baggs

The Music Link is now distributing LR Baggs pickups and electronics. For over 30 years, LR

Baggs has designed amplification products that convey authentic representations of acoustic instruments.

"LR Baggs has built their reputation with reliable, durable, great-sounding products that offer players optimal acoustic sound reproduction and make the perfect add-on to any acoustic sale," said Scott Thompson, The Music Link's vice president of sales. "Our dealers are looking for ease and consistency, and by combining LR Baggs quality with our industry-leading customer service, we can give them the best of both worlds." themusiclink.net

Things4Strings
Adds Two

Things 4 Strings, maker of orchestral accessories for beginning players, has added two new U.S. distributors. Metropolitan Music in Vermont and K & S Music in New Jersey have recently joined the international distribution network.

Things4Strings used print media to introduce the concept and brand its products starting in 2010.

Recently, the company has grown through print media and online social media. things4strings.com

NUMARK | MEDIA

Numark Featured on Spike TV Show

With more than 30 years of experience, Jon Taffer of Spike TV's reality show, Bar Rescue, is an authority on creating nightlife experiences. Now in its third season, Bar Rescue features Taffer as he leads a rotating team of experts in revamping struggling bars and clubs across the country.

Numark's Mixdeck Quad Universal DJ system was part of a complete overhaul of the Kasbah nightclub in Aurora, Colo., on the March 17 episode. Mixdeck Quad is a four-channel professional DJ controller and player with integrated effects. It gives DJs the ability to mix virtually any kind of media, including CDs, MP3 CDs and USB flash drives. numark.com

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APPOINTMENTS

Hohner Promotes Product Managers

Hohner recently promoted Drew Lewis to the position of harmonica product manager.

Lewis originally joined Hohner in May 2007 as an inside tele-sales associate and was quickly promoted to fretted product manager where he built Hohner's acoustic guitar business along with the Lanikai and Kohala ukulele brands.

"Drew's strong contributions over the past five years in making Lanikai the number one ukulele brand in the world attracted the admiration of the Hohner organization worldwide as well as the respect of key retailers across the country," said Scott Emmerman, director of marketing and sales.

Hohner also promoted Leon Lewis to the position of ukulele product manager. Leon originally joined Hohner in September 2008 as an inside tele-sales associate.



Aphex has named Jim Bailey general manager.

"We have worked really hard over the last two years, adapting, evolving and expanding our Burbank and Salt Lake City operations to position us for the next phase of growth," said David Wiener, Aphex chairman and CEO. "A key step is putting Jim in the position of general manager, where we can fully utilize his unique skill set in leading the product and operations teams."

Yamaha Corp. of America's Band and Orchestra Division has promoted Makoto Tani to assistant general manager. Formerly, Tani served as planning manager in the division, where he took on many additional responsibilities on top of his regular duties, including the implementation of a new inventory planning system.

"Makoto has played an intricate role in the division's success as a key member of the management staff, and he will continue to help Yamaha grow into the future," said Garth Gilman, general manager, band and orchestral division.



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WARWICK | WEB

Framus, Warwick Debut New Site

Framus and Warwick launched a new, unified website on April 1. Sporting a modern design and an easy-to-use interface, and a wealth of images, the bass and guitar manufacturer's new site will provide all relevant information in one location on the web. The new media center will provide users with the latest press releases and product videos. warwick.de; framus.de

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MAKEMUSIC | LEGAL

MakeMusic Merges With LEAP

Music software company MakeMusic has entered into a definitive merger agreement under which LEAP will acquire MakeMusic through an all-cash transaction. A special committee of MakeMusic's board of directors, consisting of independent directors, have unanimously approved the transaction.

Under the terms of the agreement, LEAP, through a wholly-owned subsidiary, will commence a tender offer to purchase all outstanding shares of MakeMusic at \$4.85 per share in cash, which represents a premium of approximately 31 percent over the closing share price on March 12, the last trading day prior to the announcement.

"The special committee and board believe this transaction represents an attractive value and are pleased to recommend it to MakeMusic's shareholders," said Robert B. Morrison, chairman of the board of MakeMusic. "Equally important, we believe this step will create new opportunities for the company, its partners and employees." makemusic.com

THE MUSIC SALES GROUP | EDUCATION

Music Sales Debuts MusicFirst

The Music Sales Group recently launched its new digital education division, MusicFirst, offering teachers and students easy-to-use, affordable, cloud-based music education services and related activities.

With MusicFirst, exploration, creation, sharing, and assessment are instantly accessible at any time on any Internet-enabled device, including a computer, iPad, smartphone, laptop or a Smart Board.

All teacher and student work is saved in the cloud. Software is automatically updated. Students have instant access to programs and their work. A suite of software products addresses all the key areas of music education: notation, sequencing and music production, music theory, music performance, music learning and appreciation. musicfirst.com

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Ray Yslas

has performed on stages and in recording studios around the world and is currently the percussionist for Christina Aguilera.

There's a cushioned seat for additional comfort and at 20-inches, it's taller than most cajons, making it the perfect height for seated conga players.

tocapercussion.com



IDEAS

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INDEPENDENT RETAIL | TED ESCHLIMAN

COMPLETE THE SALE

It's 1997 and I'm handing a \$10 bill to the cashier to pay for my sandwich. As she places the change in my palm I politely thank her, she responds with a gentle, "No problem." Literalist I am, these words irritate me because in my mind, her only job is to give me correct change and by golly, I'm a customer, not a problem. Taking my money is pretty much her only assignment all day, but when I look into her soft brown eyes and see her smile, I immediately lighten up. Fleeting epiphany, I get it — her reflex reply had nothing to do with my "inconveniencing" her, even though that was exactly what her words implied.

"No problem?" Of course, no problem.

Sadly, it took me months to get over this recurring "no problem" catchphrase from most of the under 25 crowd. It's a street language thing, like hearing someone say, "To tell you the truth ..." does not imply "What I said before was a lie up to now." Still, words do mean things. In the poetry of exchange, they paint bigger pictures.

One universal phrase I'd like to change in the salesfloor vocabulary is the noun "add-on."



We strategize making the big sale and squeezing the customer for more accessories and peripherals; perhaps from their side of the counter, we are only out to pad our paychecks with bigger commissions. Staff should be trained on the positive impact of bolstering the sales ticket with more margin-rich components — we do add to our bottom line, and in most cases recover from a margin-strangling price on the big stuff.

There is a far nobler motive for loading up the final ticket and it's in the customer's interest. How about the notion of "completion?"

I signed up for the Dollar

Shave Club last fall. It's a convenient way to get quality men's razors, they mail me four razors every month with an initial free handle, automatically pinging my debit card \$4 when they do. The problem is when I travel, I have no protective cover for it. I fear inserting my bare knuckles against a blade in my kit, so I end up having to buy another disposable razor when I'm out of town. I've suggested they offer something to make this great shaving tool complete for me (no answer back yet), but it demonstrates my point. Avoiding involuntary blood donations, I would gladly pay extra for this tiny enriched shaving "activity."

ENVISIONING COMPLETORS

There are plenty of things in our store that remain to be "completed" for our customers, too. We need to evolve our own mindset from what we can "pad" to what necessary peripherals can we advise to make all activities associated with the purchase complete. The cash register ought to be where we sell culture, not just commodity.

Maybe this isn't a novel idea in your store's sales habitat. Better employees are hired not just

for knowledge and mercenary sales skills, but for their passion for taking excellent care of people. The paradigm shift here is to envision all the support items the store has to offer as "completers," and not simply "add-ons." The latter implies casual frill. The former motivates staff to think customer first.

Isn't a good case or bag essential for protecting a guitar in transit? How about a polish to keep that piano shiny? Wouldn't that Langenus Method book help the new owner of that new wood clarinet get even more mileage out of her instrument?

Many novice salespeople are afraid of being too pushy with suggesting more after the fragile victory of a "yes" decision. Yet, if the customer's ultimate well-being is the goal, there's no excuse other than laziness not to help the customer discover completors. If a sales employee is not concerned about helping the store to profit, let's at least harness him/her to authentically help the customer. **MI**

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

THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

The Future is Now

Way back when, a long five years ago, walking the aisles at NAMM, I believe I saw one, maybe two iPads in use, and they were being held by people in their booths playing games. The next year was a different story altogether. The aisles were crawling with iPads. Zildjian had one built into their Gen 16 booth, sales reps took orders on them and everywhere you looked there was an app for this and that. As I watched a band play in the Marriott lobby I noticed the sound engineer standing across the room running the front of house console via his iPad.

NAMM always provides terrific courses and lots of ideas to take home, but that year it was the exhibitors integrating tech in new ways that gave me the best takeaways. I left California promising myself that when I touched down on the East Coast I was heading straight to the Apple store and putting iPads and technology to use in our shops.

Now jumping forward by a slight four years, I find that it's never been easier to integrate technology into your daily store activities, and the cost to do it is getting cheaper by the month. There are numerous developers putting out products that are specific to every industry and with a little training (or a tech savvy employee) you can develop your own custom apps for your business.

Here are five easy, low-cost ways to add tech to your business — and some thoughts on what the integration might mean for you.

1. iPads, Smartphones and Tablets

I've read in several publications and blogs that 2013 will mark the end of the desktop PC as we know it, and I believe that might be true.

I introduced iPads into our business a few years ago and watched the use of our desktop machines plummet. Our teachers use iPads in their lessons as a teaching tool to play videos, check schedules, receive messages from our front desk alerting them if they are running over or if their next student is waiting on them, and to write out assignments for students and send them via email before they even walk out of the door.

They use the built-in camera to film clips of the lessons — and email them to their students as a virtual archive. On the sales floor we have an iPad set up for customers to peruse inventory and make orders. They can even price compare if they like.

How about designing a “Tech Center” where you have music gear hooked up to an iPad to show how to use the product to its fullest extent? We are only seeing the tip of the iceberg as far as the many uses for a tablet in retail environments.

2. Point Of Sale Systems

Although we still use a desktop for our POS, those days are limited. My staff can answer the phone anywhere in our shop with a wireless handset — so why not make a sale anywhere in the shop? I'm already looking at various options to replace our stationary PC with a more streamlined, mobile system, and there are lots of options. I like Square (squareup.com), the payment platform developed by Jack Dorsey, a co-founder of Twitter. The software runs on both Android and iOS devices and it's free to sign up. Transaction fees are

still 2.75 percent, but you can ring a customer up on the spot (think Apple store) making your entire shop the check out area.



Transaction fees are still 2.75 percent, but you can ring a customer up on the spot making your entire shop a check out area



Another option I'm looking at is the iPad based Shop Keep system (shopkeep.com/ipad-pos). I like it a lot since it does have some features not found on the Square platform, but I think the ability to use a POS system anywhere in our store is the clear winner for me. Overall, Shop Keep is definitely worth looking at if you want to start with a basic streamlining.

3. Transparency

With a Wi-Fi camera, your customers can see what's going on in your shop even if they are a thousand miles away. I've been experimenting with various uses of the Belkin NetCam (belkin.com) and so far it has been awesome. We can place the camera in our teaching rooms so par-

ents, grandparents or anybody with the Wi-Fi password can log in and watch the lessons, or we can use it for performances in our shops. Have grandparents in Hawaii that want to see their grandchild perform in their first piano recital in New York? Set up one of these babies and they can see it live.

Store owners can keep an eye on the till and watch the shop remotely. This type of setup used to cost thousands — and now it's at your fingertips for \$130!

4. Apps

It's hard to imagine our world without apps now. There are millions of them and I subscribe to several newsletters that send out a "Best Of" feed every Mon-

day that includes the Top 10 for iOS. I'm sure you can find something similar for Android based platforms. Of all the apps I've tried in the last six months I really like Vstrator (vstrator.com). Developed primarily to cater to athletes, Vstrator is a video analysis app complete with side by side screens, a video analysis tool and sharing options for Facebook and Twitter. With Vstrator you can film your students and use it to draw diagrams on the problem areas and correct any issues they may have with form and technique. I look at all types of apps, even the ones designed for another industry, and see if they have possible uses in my daily routine.



5. One For The Future

I'm not sure how I'm going to use this device yet, but I have a few ideas in mind for the Leap motion controller (leapmotion.com) in our teaching rooms. While I've looked into SmartBoards (smarttech.com/smartboard) I think the use of the Leap controller with a computer is amazing and has all kinds of potential.

I'll have to play with it when it arrives, but that's the beauty of the times we are living in. At only \$70 it's not something that will break my bank even if it does not find a niche in my shop's daily workings — but it could add a whole new level of "supercool" to my shop, and let us to be known as "The Most Future-Forward Thinkers In Music." **MI**



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FROM THE TRENCHES | BY MYRNA SISLEN

Retailer's Best Friend

Five years ago, my sister thought it would be a good idea to buy a puppy for our aging parents. She decided on a personable male Cockapoo and also decided — without consulting me — to name him Mozart. Her plan was that if he didn't work out with the folks, he could be my store dog at Middle C Music.

I am not naturally a dog person. I had never owned a dog and, quite frankly, had no interest in owning one, much less having a store dog. Still, Mozart turned out to be an excellent companion for my parents, and when my father passed away, followed less than a year later by my mother, Mozart came to live with me.

I know there have been many books written about how dogs have changed and enriched their owners' lives, but you don't hear as much about the effects of having a dog in your business. All of us small independent business owners know that the only way we can survive, in this economy and with competition from the Internet, is to offer that tangible atmosphere where customers feel safe, cared for and nurtured. I had worked for the past 10 years to create that kind of store, and I thought I had done a pretty good job.

Enter Mozart. Who knew that a dog could add so much to a business? Especially a hard worker like this dog. When customers see Mozart behind the counter, I tell him, "Go and do your job, guy," and he picks up his bone and goes out to greet them. It gets a laugh or at least a big smile every time.

And then there are the kids. They all come to the store and ask, "Is Mozart here today?" Parents tell me that their children wait all week to come to their lessons to see Mozart.

He also sits with parents while they wait for their children's lessons, and plays with the children waiting with their parents.

THE MOZART EFFECT

I learned how much my customers cared about him soon after Mozart started working at Middle C. One of the parents came up to me and said, "Did you know that Mozart has a small lump

on his hindquarters? That could be very dangerous." A couple of days later another parent said the same thing. (I did have the vet check it, and there were no problems.)

It was then that I realized that Mozart was doing his job of bringing comfort to the customers, and the parents were responding by wanting to bring comfort to him. It's this two-way unconditional love that also helps my bottom line.

Of course there's the occasional child or adult who is afraid of or allergic to dogs — maybe 1 or 2 percent of my customers. I just keep Mozart behind the counter when they're around.

Not only has Mozart had a positive effect on my employees and teachers, he's even contributing on a purely business level. For his birthday, I had a party and weekend sale that I advertised heavily. Danny Smolinski, my Alfred sales rep, sent sheet music, "A puppy named Mozart." Mozart signed each copy and I gave them out to partygoers. The kids gave him birthday cards, and I had cake and balloons for everyone.

It was an excellent advertising campaign that produced many new customers and was responsible for lots of sales. It's enough to make me want to wag my own tail. **MI**

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



How having a four-legged friend in your store can effect your customers and your bottom line

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Sometimes innovation goes too far. Our Stand-top Thingy for iPad turns any mic stand into a tablet-driven music stand. It's perfect for lyrics, lead sheets, and set lists. Now you can go digital and stop fumbling with beer-stained napkins.

So to perform your best, even when you don't feel your best, choose Goby Labs stands. They may not hold you up, but they won't let you down.



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For more information contact your local dealer or visit www.goby labs.com

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Making Conversation

Unfortunately, most staff in our stores view student showcases (at best) as an event strictly for students, parents and teachers. We all know it's good for our music store, and provides revenue, and blah, blah, blah. But most of us have done a very minimal job of training our staff about our lessons programs and the teachers who make them work.



Staff can see which teachers are really passionate about helping their students become musicians

Our sales staff will say things like, “Yeah, we have piano lessons ... uh, you wanna know what day? Joey teaches on Tuesday ... Sure, he’s OK. Do you wanna sign up?” But they should understand the lessons program much better than that. And student showcases at your store can provide a great lesson on that topic for your staff and management.

How much does your staff and management really know about your teachers, what they teach, and what results they get?

Student showcases are a fantastic classroom for teaching your staff and management about your lessons program — and therefore about your entire operation. Those are customers up there performing.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT YOUR TEACHERS

At a showcase, your staff can learn what teachers are going the extra mile for their students by participating. They will see what teachers are doing with their students and learn what type of music the teachers teach. They can observe firsthand how teachers interact with students, and see for themselves which teachers are really passionate about helping their students become musicians.

Teachers who do all of those things have the amazing retention rates. They are the ones who keep customers coming back.

THE RIGHT FIT

The truth is, information about your teachers can not only help your staff promote the lessons program, but also help them suggest the right fit for their student customers. Good recommendations are at the heart of what we do every day.

It’s all about the right fit. Rather than simply asking the poten-

tial student, “What day’s best for you?” and signing them up for lessons on Tuesday with whoever, the staff can ask some questions about the student and get them with the teacher who’s going to groove with that student.

Imagine saying “I’ve got a teacher that’s perfect for you!” and really meaning it. When it comes true, you’ve made an important connection with your customer.

Staff attendance at your recitals and showcases creates a lot of material for them to use in conversation with parents (“Wow, Susie was awesome at the showcase”) and students (“You rock!”) when they come into the store.

PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

Student showcases help train your staff. It sounds crazy, but can everyone on your staff hook up a P.A. system or set up a drum set?

And what about print music? Your staff will see and hear different books and CDs in action, and find out what the teachers like to use. This kind of product knowledge will translate into increased sales. Because, after all, so much of business success is about connection. **MI**

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

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The enhanced version of the venerable Bass Big Muff Pi. Switchable 0dB and -10dB input ensures the pedal is equally effective with passive and active pickups. The built-in noise gate eliminates unwanted hum, while the blend control allows you to mix the dry and distorted signals to taste. Footswitchable crossover activates a variable low pass filter on the dry signal and a high pass filter on the distorted signal. Features Effect, Direct (buffered dry) and XLR DI outputs.



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SEVEN TRENDS TO STOCK NOW



You don't need a weatherman, Bob Dylan once said, to know which way the wind blows — but if you want to know what's selling, you better ask someone. We spoke with suppliers and dealers from all over the nation to find out what's turning now, and what will be turning tomorrow. Here are their insights on hot products — plus tips on how to sell them.

BY HILARY BROWN, ED ENRIGHT,
KATIE KAILUS AND DAVID ZIVAN



Photo by Marianne Williams

Lenny
Gerthoffer

LOVE THAT TWANG

The folk-rock explosion has shed a new light on resonator guitars, and the MI industry has surely taken note

BEGIN HERE

Lenny Gerthoffer's Vintage Nationals Resonator Shop located in Santa Barbara, Calif., sells nothing but resonator guitars along with a few acoustic guitars sprinkled in. "We are really dialed in to just resonators," he said.

While his shop has been in business for the last decade, resonator guitars have never been as relevant in pop culture as they are today. Jim Bryant, Fender acoustics product manager, said such folk-rockers as Mumford & Sons, The Civil Wars and even pop-country artist Taylor Swift are all responsible for a renewed interest in the instrument.

"With American folk bands gaining momentum, there seems to be no letup in sight," Bryant said. "Also, pricing and quality are getting better with imported products which makes the buying decision for a guitar player or new resonator player even

easier."

Gerthoffer, whose shop is the exclusive dealer of Chinese resonator line Hot Rods, said he has seen an uptick in customer interest and regularly receives inquiries regarding resonators.

"I get a bunch of emails a day from people trying to decide between the single cone and the tri-cone and find out which one is best for them because they are new to the instruments," he said. "I've seen a surge in interest."

MAKE YOUR PITCH

This past NAMM Show yielded a slew of resonator releases, including Gretsch, Saga and Kala ukuleles, which debuted its Resonator Uke. Due to the uniqueness of the instruments, manufacturers advocate hiring at least one staffer that is well-educated on resophonic guitars.

"It really helps if a salesperson has a working knowledge of the specifications and fea-

HOW TO SELL IT



Catch the Eye

“We display a lot of round- and square-neck resonator guitars together in a group nearby other bluegrass instruments like mandolins and banjos and some of our acoustic guitars. They are eye-catchers for the uninitiated.”

Ray Aleshire
Purchasing Department Manager
Elderly Music, Lansing, Mich.



RECORDING KING 60

tures,” said Chris Middaugh, Guild product manager. “It’s particularly helpful if they can demo the instruments to give the customer an idea of what a bit of practice can accomplish.”

Ashley Atz of The Music Link said dealers should focus on context with the notion that resonators are distinct instru-

ments with a specific sound.

“Any player can develop a whole new style from the first strum, slide or pick,” Atz said. “Understanding where these instruments fit into current ensemble situations, like a modern folk-rock band for example, can help dealers connect their customers with the sound they

might be hearing in their heads.”

Ray Aleshire, purchasing department manager at Elderly Music in Lansing, Mich., said he suggests resonators to customers who walk into his shop looking to mix it up.

“If a customer expresses an interest in the relevant styles of music or tells us they are look-

ing for something different, then we show them resonator guitars and explain the various differences — metal bodies versus wood, square versus round necks, types of bridges and cone setups — that account for tonal differences,” Aleshire said.

NEXT GENERATION

Resonator guitars may have a ways to go before they are a regular part of a teen’s “battle of the bands” setup.

But, with enough visibility from today’s folk-rock bands, Brian Vance, director of product management for D’Addario, said the instrument could be seen in the hands of a younger demographic soon.

“Young people are attending more acoustic festivals, and these bands are selling out big venues, increasing the visibility of acoustic and folk instruments, such as the banjo, mandolin and resophonic guitar,” Vance said.

Gerthoffer said that he is currently tailoring his marketing efforts to draw a younger crowd.

“We have uploaded videos onto the Hot Rod products’ site, which I run, that feature a younger girl in tattoos playing the demos,” he said. “We have also been featuring younger people in our print advertisements.”

While he may not know the demographics of those viewing his YouTube channel, Gerthoffer does know that he averages a whopping 680 views a day.

“I am 54 years old, and I am featured in the majority of the videos,” he said. “Our strategy going forward is to add some imagery to the site of younger people probably in their late 20’s playing the resonator that look more hip. We are hoping this will draw a whole new audience to the instruments.” **M**



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FINANCING
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By David Zivan

LISTENING IN

The home recording boom boosts sales of studio monitors and headphones

BEGIN HERE

Athan Billias has a story that explains almost everything about the past couple of decades in pro audio.

"I have a son who is into music," said Billias, director of marketing for Yamaha's pro audio and combo division. "A few years ago I gave him a box, which was the entry-level Steinberg product, and I said to him, 'You know, 20 years ago I took out a \$350,000 loan to buy something that did essentially what this does here.'"

Home recording: it got big fast, and it's still growing. Savvy retailers who can stock and sell the right equipment have an opportunity to ride a wave that has not yet peaked. Easy to demo, with good margins, studio monitors are a great place to start.



M-AUDIO
M3-8



YAMAHA
HS-7

Every producer — would-be, or new pro — needs at least one.

“DAWs have progressed over the years to be much more customer-friendly,” noted Nate Lane, product manager for In-Music’s Alesis, Akai Pro and M-Audio lines. “Virtual instruments have become not just more customer-friendly but they are doing a lot more; things that you used to rely on synthesizers or all-in-one hardware for, a lot of that has transitioned over to the software world. So when you look at monitors, the programming of software and controllers and everything MIDI has enabled more and more people to make music at home — to have home studios or project studios. That’s all reflected in monitor sales and demand.”

A longtime player in the studio monitor space, Alesis has just launched its M-Audio M3-8’s, which took home a “Best in Show” award from *Pro Sound News* at Winter NAMM. A 3-way coaxial setup with a stacked mid range and tweeter, the speakers have the same box setup and footprint as a standard 2-way monitor but with improved sound. Genelec has been making pro-level studio monitors since it started in 1978. Samson recently debuted its MediaONE Bluetooth monitors, supplementing its line of Resolv SE monitors. Adam Audio recently launched the F series professional monitors, consisting of the F5 and F7 nearfield monitors and SubF dedicated subwoofer (see page 70).

“The Neumann brand of Klein and Hummel — much more well known in Europe — has been a big seller for us,” said Alan Moon, sales manager at Front End Audio in Columbia, S.C. “Their KH120 is compact but it is a powerhouse. They are

making design and performance improvements that are a win-win for the brand in that they are able to make all these improvements, but make them more affordable to the end-user.”

The elegant design of the M3-8 exemplifies a lot of what consumers are looking for in

home studio equipment. Since musicians are bringing in fellow musicians, and home engineers are bringing in clients, many pro audio experts have noted that the design of the gear matters.

“We’re very conscious of the fact that the look of the product, and being creative and innovative

in that way, is definitely part of the equation for the consumer,” Lane said. “Those customers are not only building a studio but also building a creative environment that they want to be inspired by. They want to make a good impression on anyone they are working with.”

HOW TO SELL IT



Tell the Truth

“It’s not always cool, sexy gear that customers really need. We dig in. Sometimes the reality of room acoustics has never been addressed. You have to be careful not to spook the horse — obviously. But we earn that critical return business and gain referrals by giving great advice and getting great results for people.”

Alan Moon

Sales Manager

Front End Audio, Columbia, S.C.

SHOWING OFF

While selling pro audio in general has a host of challenges — an enormous portion of business in the category is done online — smaller dealers can participate in the boom with smart approaches (not to mention boosting their

own e-commerce efforts).

“To be successful, I think you have to carry probably at least three brands,” Billias said. “I know that sounds strange coming from a manufacturer. The independent dealer can’t compete with the online retailer in terms

of the number of choices they offer the customer, because the online retailer can have a very low inventory and sell across the U.S. The inventory is very low risk for them. But a mistake the smaller dealer will make is not appearing to be a player in the

game by not offering a number of choices. It’s the optics; if a person is in your store and can look and say ‘I’ve listened to three things and I have made a choice,’ and that’s the right thing, the ability to close that person there increases. You say, ‘Look, I am an expert, I have selected these products because I believe they are the best values in the marketplace today, and I have narrowed down your choices so it’s not so confusing.’ With three brands you might have nine products, and you may not have all of them in stock, but if you have three speakers and a salesperson who knows what else is in the line he can make a recommendation like, ‘You know, there’s a subwoofer for that, and I can order that for you.’ If the customers feel they have been offered a viable number of choices, then the independent dealer — or anybody — can do well. These products are typically very good margin — plus 40-percent margin — as opposed to a lot of technology products which tend to have a shorter margin.”

Taking advantage of the category does require proper display, and numerous sources mentioned how easy that can be. Even a CD player can be rigged up to let customers test-drive monitors of various kinds.

“We used to have a more conventional showroom,” Moon said. “But we’ve moved to demonstrating in more of a studio environment. Our studio is our laboratory for testing various mics, preamps, converters and so on. And we find that customers like it much better when we can play them something real that we’ve been working on, point to a piece of gear and say, ‘This is the combination that you’re listening to.’” **MI**

WE’RE ALL EARS

One of the most visible trends at January’s NAMM show (as documented in the March/April double issue of *Music Inc.*) was headphones — in various styles and price points. The trend represents a classic crossover from the general consumer market into MI retail, and should not be underestimated. *Rolling Stone* reported recently that the popular Beats by Dre did \$500 million in sales last year — a phenomenon driven by extraordinary marketing and product placement, but even more so by the ubiquity of audio in portable formats.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF CUSTOMERS

The Beats headphones are undeniably a high-end purchase — they range from \$199 upwards — so consumers may be prepared to step up.

“We get people looking for recommendations on headphones a lot — often for some of the more expensive headphones,” Moon said. “People really value that sound.”

“There are two kinds of headphones now,” Billias noted. “There are fashion headphones, and there are functional headphones. The difference is between stuff that sounds really, really accurate and stuff that sounds really, really good — which is a different thing.”

Dealers in the music products space can take advantage of their cache as experts. The quality at various price points represents an excellent opportunity for dealers to reach out to customers who are known audiophiles as well as musicians. There may be some demographic factors at work as well.

“A lot of people want to work on music at night, and they have families, and the kids are asleep and they have to work that way,” Moon said. “For musicians whose only quiet time to work is when everyone else is sleeping, it’s a big deal — even if they just want to enjoy some music.”

PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER

Headphones are a classic add-on sale for the customer who is working with recording equipment.

“For your home studio, certainly you need headphones,” Billias said. “You may need multiple sets of headphones if you are recording with some other people.”

“We do a lot with Shure,” Moon said. “They introduced their headphone line fairly recently and we found that the stuff was great and really got behind it. We do a lot of Audio-Technica and Sennheiser as well. I recently bought a pair of the DT 990 Pro from Beyer-dynamic, and I also own the Audio-Technica ATH-M50.”

Tascam expects big things from its versatile new TH-O2 headphones (see page 70). A big hit at Winter NAMM were the modern-looking, sturdy offerings from CAD Audio. Retailing around \$99, the Sessions MH510 are being touted as a product to help users “experience ... favorite tracks the way the artists intended.” Yamaha offers a wide range of headphones, too, from the RH1C (at about \$20) to the new HPH-MT220 Studio Headphones with a MAP around \$250.





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THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

From tone-enhancing accessories to crazy shapes, suppliers are taking the cajon to the next level

BEGIN HERE

For Jeff Moore, guitars aren't the folk instrument making the biggest splash.

National acts often swing into Brent's Music in Fort Myers, Fla., where Moore works as drum and rental manager. There's one thing that's been frequently appearing on their riders lately.

"A cajon," Moore said. "The artist's drummer likes to come out from behind the kit while the band plays a small acoustic set."

The popularity of cajons isn't limited to touring musicians and folk duos. They've become the focal point of drum circles and the percussive backbone of intimate coffeehouse jams. Moore said that half of all of his percussion sales stem from drum circle purchases, many of which now include cajons.

"Our numbers have jumped three times over with Meinl sales," Moore said.

With that in mind, more drummers — and non-drummers, for that matter — are forgoing



REMO MONDO CAJON

LP SNARE CAJON

tumbaos and djembes in favor of the six-sided wonder that's being revered as the industry's next ukulele.

LATIN SENSATION

"Cajons have replaced the djembe as the hand percussion instrument of choice for drum set players," said Dan Sullivan, general manager of Steve Weiss Music in Willow Grove, Pa. "With a djembe, the possibilities are a little more limited."

Over the last two years, cajons have flooded the percussion marketplace. From Pearl's three-sided cajons to Latin Percussion's cajon castanets, suppliers are profiting from the instrument's expansive customer base and the broad spectrum of price points provided by innovative accessories. One example is Gibraltar's pocket-friendly cajon bass drum pedal, which Moore has been stocking regularly.

"Gibraltar has been doing bass drum pedals for a couple of years now," Moore said. "Historically, they've been at a very high-end price point. This year, the company came out with one for \$99."

What else fuels the appeal of this Latin sensation? Portability for one, said Adam Anderson, product specialist for Meinl, which now boasts a catalog of more than 40 cajons.

"It's an instrument as well as a throne," Anderson said. "Now, the player has one less thing to bring to the gig."

A cajon's lightweight feel is just a small fraction of the draw. Gon Bops Marketing Manager Luis Cardoso also cites the instrument's tonal capabilities as the product's most effective selling point for pro percussionists.

"If portability was the only benefit, cajons wouldn't be so popular," Cardoso explained. "In terms of sounds literally available at the person's fingertips, and in terms of the genres they fit into, drummers love them."

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE

No two cajons are alike, but Sullivan explained that to the untrained eye,

those disparities are not obvious.

"To most customers, they just look like boxes," Sullivan said. "Why is one \$500 and another one \$100? We really try to highlight the differences and make it as easy as possible for the customer to understand."

Anderson advocates a three-pronged approach to getting your cajon inventory sold: quantity, variety and accessibility. Stocking cajons of varying price points is key to better distinguishing their features. Moore said that he keeps as many as 15 cajons at once in the store, and Cardoso added that along with entry-level cajons for new students, Gon Bops markets Peruvian-made Custom Cajon Shop models for professional drummers.

"The cajon is really its own section of instruments now," Anderson explained. "Only having a couple in stock from only one price point will hinder sales just as much as doing the same thing in the guitar or drum set department. You have to look like you are serious about cajons in order to sell cajons."

"Serious" cajon dealers should also recognize the potential return on accessories. From cases to percussion toys, cajon accessories and add-ons are profitable mini-segments that are quickly becoming just as saturated as the cajon category. Sullivan said that Steve Weiss Music had tremendous success with a recent promotion where customers who purchased a cajon also received a complimentary set of bongos.

Most importantly, in today's "try-before-you-buy" culture, keep the accessories within arm's reach for curious percussionists, especially Internet-savvy customers looking to make an immediate purchase.

"Once the customer buys the cajon, they are going to want to protect it and have more colors and textures available," Anderson said. "Things like tambourines, shakers, hi-hats, chimes and kalimbas are all things that a player wants — and cajon accessories don't end there." **MI**

HOW TO SELL IT



Stock and Stack

"I have them all stacked high in a nice point-of-purchase stack. You can literally just grab them off the stack and check them out. It's also a good time to qualify and ask a lot of questions. 'What are you doing?' 'Are you playing in an acoustic band?' 'Do you guys do an acoustic set?' Sometimes, I even know my guys well enough where I say, 'Hey Brian, remember when you guys were telling me you couldn't get the sound you were looking for when you were playing the congas? You wanted something that sounded more like your kick drum and snare? This is what you want.'"

Jeff Moore

Drum and Rental Manager
Brent's Music, Fort Myers, Fla.

By Katie Kailus

GOING GREEN

Customers are looking for sustainable products, and both suppliers and retailers are responding



Brandt Bourque

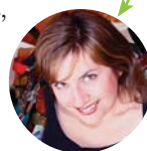
BEGIN HERE

Walk into Brandt Bourque's Music Inc. of Louisiana located in Gonzales, La., and you're bound to hear a customer raving about the store's recently enacted Dream Cymbal recycle program. Offered by Canadian manufacturer Dream Cymbals, the program lets customers bring old or broken cymbals to their nearest participating retailer and receive a rebate towards new Dream cymbals. The dealer also gets a credit to their Dream account, while doing their part to help the planet.

"What Dream is doing not only helps us grow brand awareness, but it helps us convert life-long customers of other cymbal brands to Dream Cymbals all while helping the environment," Bourque said.

Dream Cymbals isn't the only MI manufacturer to reduce its carbon footprint. Companies across the industry are seeking out alternative methods to produce their products. Jen Tabor, owner of Souldier Straps, makes her guitar straps out of recycled seat belts and said she believes the MI industry has finally begun to feel the green effect on the marketplace.

"I hear firsthand that customers care about where their products are made and what they are made of," Tabor said.



“The marketplace will continue to place pressure on retailers and manufacturers to offer product that is made with responsible and ethical practices. The MI industry is only moving forward from this point with a focus on green and ethical manufacturing.”

REDUCE, REUSE, REPLAY

DW Drums recently debuted its Eco-X series of drums that are made mostly from bamboo with a few plies of responsibly-harvested birch.

“We already had a relationship with American Forests [a nonprofit conservation organization] and were always very conscious about using responsibly forested wood products, but John Good [DW’s executive VP and drum designer] had the idea to make a kit from bamboo,” said Mike Thomas, director of marketing for DW. “Bamboo is obviously sustainable, it’s readily available and it’s technically not wood, it’s a grass. This year we took it one step further and added banana husk as a finish option for our Eco-X line, another non-wood product.”

But have customers gone bananas for these new banana kits?

“Our customers were skeptical at first, but they are impressed with the unique sound qualities,” said Erik Paulson, owner of CymbalFusion.com. “There’s nothing else like it on the market.”

MAKING AN IMPACT

Print music publisher Alfred has taken major steps in recent years to reduce the size of its carbon footprint by printing 95 percent of its publications on recycled paper.

“We put the recycled paper program into motion as part of the Alfred Cares initiative because we care about our com-

pany’s impact on the environment,” said company CEO Ron Manus. “Since the majority of Alfred’s business is producing

print publications, we have a big impact on natural resources, and we wanted to find a way to minimize that.”

Alfred has even taken it one step further by minimizing its impact on the environment at its company’s buildings.

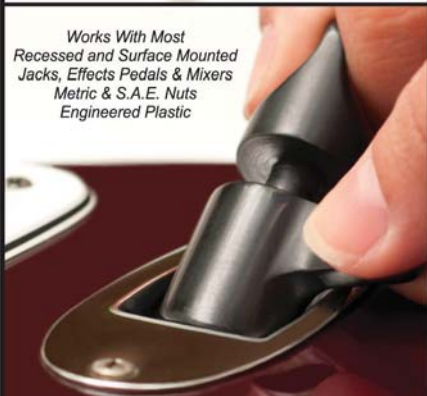


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HOW TO SELL IT*Show it Off*

"We show Souldier straps to everyone who comes into the store. Every player in our company owns at least one Souldier strap, and several of us are gigging musicians. We have them displayed with our other strap lines, but we have a hand-sewn sign with the Souldier name on it hanging at the top. We try to have the company's brochure with the story close by for people to read."

Jessica Freehling-Kazzie
Manager

Art's Music Shop, Birmingham, Ala.

"We changed the industrial lighting at our New York distribution center to a more efficient and brighter system that saves us money in the long term by using significantly less energy to operate," Manus said. "At our main Los Angeles office we have switched over to waterless urinals, and modified our DVD packaging to use less plastic by applying an eco pack. This list goes on and on. If we all take little steps, together we can make an impact."

RECYCLED REACTION

While an increased number of MI manu-

facturers have gone green, has it helped retailers make more green? Bourque seems to think so.

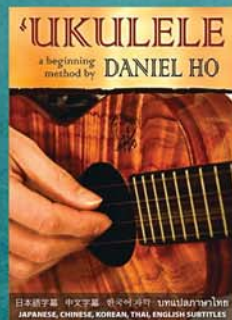
"The total reaction to the Dream Cymbals program has been overwhelming," Bourque said. "We can't keep [new Dream cymbals] in stock. We recently doubled our inventory to keep up with the demand."

Dream Cymbals recently released The Scotty Pellegrom Crop Circles, its first product made from recycled material. Company President Andy Morris said they are, "literally selling them as fast as we can manufacture them." **MI**

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By David Zivan

COMING ROUND AGAIN

Guitar players drive an ongoing demand for effects pedals



BEGIN HERE

One of the biggest launches at NAMM this year was actually very small — the Ditto Looper, from TC Electronics. The company touts it as “designed by guitarists, for guitarists,” and it was being demoed on the show floor over and over, all day long. Compact and easy to use, the pedal basically does just one thing.

“Brilliant,” said Freddy DeMarco, a marketing specialist for Korg, whose Vox Lil’ Looper is in almost direct competition with the Ditto. “One of the biggest things is real estate on the guitarist’s pedal board, and the way they made that so space efficient was great. Ours does a lot more in terms of features — but that’s a wonderful piece.”

Korg’s Vox Dynamic Looper is in some ways at the other end of the spectrum — but very popular. “It can do two loops at one time, and it has a lot of effects processing. All kinds of stutter effects, delays, distortions, phasing, which typically you don’t see on loopers,” DeMarco said. “It’s a bit on the complicated side — but black and red, very sexy looking.”

Even though the surge of interest in effects boxes began several years ago, the excitement has not gone away. “Looper pedals in general just sell,” said Matt Adrianson, purchasing director for Gear Tree, the online branch of Firehouse Mu-

sic in Grand Rapids, Mich., as well as the author of *The Visual Drumset Method*, a book/CD pack from Hal Leonard. “It doesn’t matter if it’s Electro-Harmonix or Digitech or Vox or TC, they just seem to turn. They’re still a popular thing for guitarists.”

WHY NOW?

So what explains the enduring demand? Partly it is the popularity of artists who use the pedals to good effect.

“Some people do it really well,” said Tony Green, a guitarist and owner of Greenhouse Sound, a boutique studio in Chicago. “Andrew Bird, for example. Bill Frisell, and David Torn. You’re at a gig or you hear a record and your first thought is, How the heck did they do that? And then you think, I’d like to get one of those.”

DeMarco thinks the pedals may also be a sign of the times.

“Kids are doing things alone a lot more today,” he said. “To me the loopers appeal to someone who is used to going in the bedroom at night and making some music. When I was a kid you had to have a guy playing rhythm with you to practice your lead.”

They have also proven valuable as teaching tools. “When you give a student a new chord progression, there’s nothing better than a little looper to have him play the chords into,” DeMarco said. “It’s a great phrase trainer.”

DISPLAY DEBATE

There are differing views on how best to display the products.

“I want someplace with a wide selection set up so I can try them out,” Green said. “You’re

gonna stomp on a bunch and see very quickly what you might want, and which has the greatest learning curve and which may have the greatest potential.”

Adrianson, on the other hand, favors a more traditional approach. “In our retail stores most of the pedals are in show-cases, and obviously it is going to take a customer engaging a salesman or a salesman engaging a customer to get it out and plug it in for them to try out. We have had big displays and small displays, but I don’t know that it made a difference. Somebody who is really interested in buying one typically will want to work with a sales guy.”



All observers agree, however, that current knowledge of the products is crucial to making it a success in your store. “This stuff is complicated,” Green said. “And they are all a little different. You want guys to say ‘this one is good for this, this

one is good for that.’ Everyone understands the basics of looping, but someone who can point you in the right direction makes a difference.”

Adrianson expressed an interest in having manufacturers provide even more training than they already do. “I think there is often an assumption that everybody already knows everything, or that they don’t want to be educated,” he said. “But I always try to be open to [training], and say, ‘Come in like we don’t know anything, because it’s your product. You’re the expert, not us.’ If they tell us something we already know it’s not going to offend us, and if they tell us something we don’t know we can pass that along to the customer.” **MI**

HOW TO SELL IT



Close!

“If you just leave it up to, ‘How’s it going?’ and ‘If you need anything I’ll be over here behind the counter making sure it doesn’t float away’ and ‘Thanks for coming in,’ you just lost the sale to the Internet. You have to ask for the sale — otherwise you’re not a salesman, you’re a clerk.”

Matt Adrianson
Purchasing Director
Gear Tree, Grand Rapids, Mich.

THE BIG HOLD UP

Stand manufacturers are growing their product offerings to fit all instruments and iDevices

BEGIN HERE

Every customer in a music store will require some kind of stand — whether it's for an instrument, audio equipment, iPad or any number of common accessories. Manufacturers are responding to this demand by creating more and more stands designed to suit musicians' increasing needs on stage, in the studio and in the practice room.

Go online, or take a quick look around The NAMM Show floor, and you can't help but notice that a wide range of stands at a variety of price points are currently available for virtually any musical device imaginable. There are a plethora of practical and highly innovative designs out there, and customers need them now more than ever.

The good news for retailers is that stands, like many other accessories, are high-margin items with the potential to boost sales and profits — not to mention customer satisfaction. They make for excellent add-on sales, and they look great when put on display alongside instruments and gear. No matter what your store sells, there's a stand that goes with it.

A STAND FOR EVERYONE

The newest subcategory of stands to hit the market is the computer-tablet holder.

"I don't know if anyone saw this coming when the iPad was originally released, but the reality is that everyone is using these," said Jose Gonzalez, product manager for Hosa Technology. "Its

Jose Gonzalez

K&M 21090
MIC TRIPOD
STAND

applications include everything from reading lyrics to adjusting monitor mixes to operating DAW controllers."

One of the company's best-selling products is the GBX-300 Tablet Frame, under the Goby Labs brand. Featuring a pole lock that facilitates support on mic stands, music stands and other tubular surfaces, the system features a counter-locking arm that engages as the clamp is tightened on a pole, forming a closed loop around the pole for added strength. Other highly successful Goby Labs products include the GBU-300 Universal Guitar Stand, which features a body support designed to look like classic car fins, and the X-Frame Keyboard Stand, which supports up to 350 pounds.

At the high end of the stand market, Hercules is known for producing super-durable stands and holders designed for guitars, horns, pro audio, tablets, percussion and sheet music.

"Hercules stands aren't commodity stands," said Mike Oken, merchandising product manager for parent company KMC Musicorp. "They solve real problems and provide stability and security, and they last forever. Even in a tough economy, they are doing extremely well while other categories are trending downwards."

Hercules' flagship stands include the GS414B and GSP38WB Autograb guitar/bass stands and wall-hangers, which hold the instrument by its weight and place no stress on the neck.

Gator Cases has had success with its Frameworks line of lightweight, durable stands

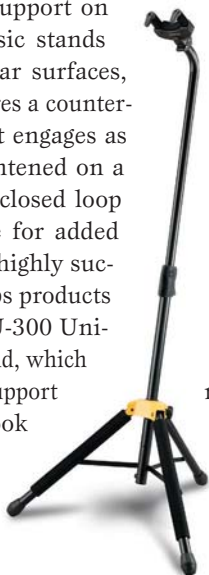
for microphones, speakers and tablets.

"We focused on creating every 'touch point' on our stands to be ergonomic," said Gator's Crystal Morris, referring to handles, knobs and latches. "It's important that the stands are out on the sales floor in the proper section of the store and are displayed in a way that they can easily be tried out. Getting branding both on the boxes and the walls helps to bring awareness to particular advantages to our brand."

Gator has recently introduced its new ID series of stands for speakers and microphones, with additional categories to come later this year. "We are redefining the look of stands and bringing an elegance to them with this line," Morris said. "At the same time we have added functionality in both how they are used and how they are stored." She advises retailers to bundle stands and cases with instruments and accessories in order to increase overall sales and offer customers added value.

K&M stands, distributed in the United States by Connolly Music Company, have been a popular choice among professional musicians for more than 60 years. Recent notables in the environmentally conscious company's vast product line include the slip-proof 21090 Tripod Microphone Stand with boom arm and the compact 15213 In-Bell Trumpet Stand, which folds up and stores neatly in the instrument's bell.

"We are seeing a trend toward wiser purchasing decisions, where consumers and [retail] buyers are leaning more toward quality and away from price as



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being a sole designator in decision-making,” said Dave Trout, national sales manager for K&M. “K&M stands are not the least expensive, but they are the most long-lasting, with a 5-year warranty and a replacement parts program. We always like to say that we don’t make landfill.”

K&M has created hang tags to indicate the features of its

European-designed products and improved packaging to benefit brand awareness and in-store merchandising.

On-Stage Stands is currently doing brisk business with its TCM9150 u-Mount Tablet Mounting System, the Mighty Uke Stand and the GS7153 Flip-It for guitars. Under the leadership of Jim Hennessey, who

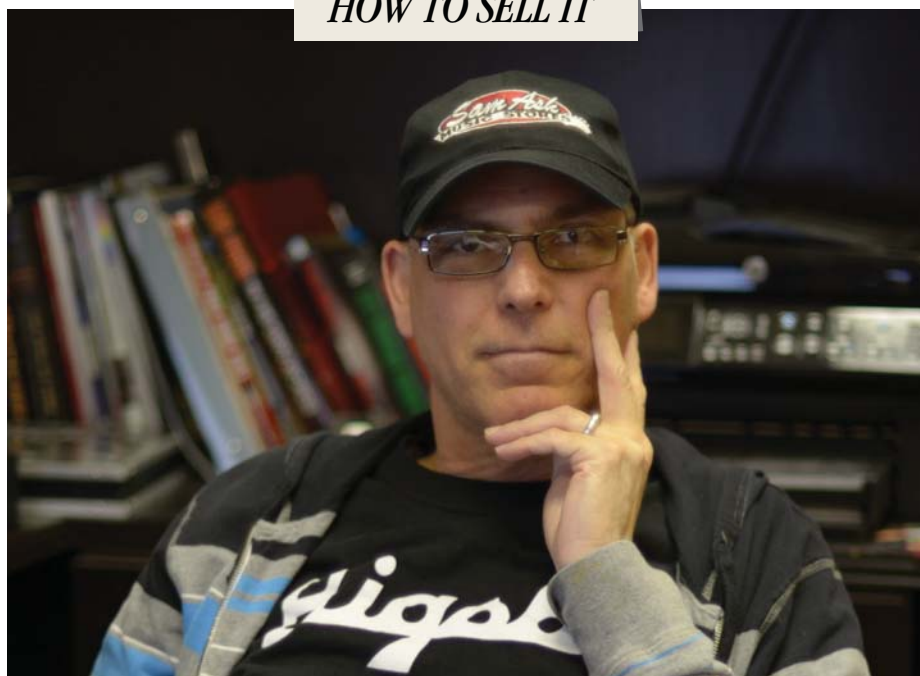
founded the company 34 years ago, On-Stage Stands has been a pioneer in full-color packaging for music accessories.

“Our philosophy is to have the packaging market itself, to be a true ‘silent salesperson,’” said Sharon Hennessey, senior vice president of sales and marketing at The Music People! Inc., which owns and manufactures

On-Stage Stands.

“We encourage our retailers to display our products out in the open. In fact, much of our packaging is designed to display the product in a fully functional way, meaning the customer can touch and see how the mic stand will work or how the guitar slide will fit.”

HOW TO SELL IT



Offer More

“Stands make an excellent add-on, and the margins are very high. The space they take up is small, and the customer service is tremendous. The more stands you can offer, the more your own brand loyalty strengthens. It’s another way to keep the ‘boots’ coming in the doors.”

Sammy Ash
COO

Sam Ash Music, New York

SELLING STANDS

Mark Risch, of Washington Music Center in Wheaton, Md., said that some manufacturers’ stands come in such attractive packaging, they sell just as well when stacked on the floor as they do hanging on slat wall. “If you’ve got the room to do it, multicolor packages really tend to help,” he said.

On-Stage Stands is in the process of changing its name to simply “On-Stage” as part of a plan to redefine itself as a producer of all kinds of musical accessories that are already part of its product line.

“Although On-Stage was built on ‘stands,’ being in the accessory market has allowed us to branch off into other sub-categories that complement our stands,” said Jeremy Payne, sales and marketing director. “We provide accessories that cover a broad range of categories. With all of the guitar stands we make, for example, it only seemed logical to make wall hangers, straps, cases, gig bags, slides, strap locks and tuners. By making them all available from one source, On-Stage saves dealers time and money.”

Sammy Ash, COO of the New York-based Sam Ash Music chain, advised displaying as many stands possible, across the store. “We have them in guitars, stage pianos, brass and winds, drums,” Ash said. “Almost every department has a segment that uses them today.” **MI**

"With their expansive product offering...On-Stage is a huge part of our accessory business."

Rich Jensen - Robert M. Sides

"The breadth of the product line means I can go to one source to get a large portion of what I want and that saves me time."

Mike Kay - Ted Brown Music

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EXPRESS YOURSELF

The new “producer-DJ” demographic has reinvented the controller segment

BEGIN HERE

Livid Instruments founder and CEO Jay Smith said DJs and guitarists are one and the same.

“If you look at a guitarist, they have their own special tuning and a bunch of pedals on the floor in a certain configuration,” Smith explained. “That’s how they create their sound.”

Smith’s analogy is spot-on. As electronic musicians become prominent fixtures on the pop charts, the MI industry is quickly acknowledging the turntable as an *instrument* — not a bunch of

buttons. Like guitar players, DJs are beginning to piece together units to shape their signature tone. The same can also be said for producers looking to incorporate scratch effects into their recordings.

“At the exact same time as we’re seeing production equipment such as keyboard controllers come to the stage, we’re also seeing DJ controllers go into the studio, so there’s crossover,” said Eric Palonen, marketing manager for InMusic. “It solidifies the fact that producer-DJs are trending.

The way DJs are performing is changing.”

EVOLUTIONS PER MINUTE

Aside from their obvious portability, controllers are becoming more customizable as the category evolves from vinyl to intuitive laptop DJing.

“DJs and producers are leaning on digital technology,” Palonen said. “Traditionally, DJs have taken a long time to adapt to new technology — from vinyl to CDs, from CDs to flash drives and from flash drives to

computers. Laptop-based DJing has been the fastest adaptation.”

Updated software platforms have also created a broader canvas for creativity. Matt Davis of Midwest Pro Stereo in Chicago said that Ableton Live and Native Instruments’ Traktor have been standouts due to their adaptability and abundance of features.

“They allow the user to define the idiosyncrasies of their sound,” said Jason Kramer of Control Voltage in Portland, Ore. “One thing that’s really

important to our customers is integration.”

Davis added that Ableton is definitely trending as far as producer-DJs softwares go.

“It is a totally new way to DJ that brings a lot of new things to the table,” he said. “Traktor is competing from a performance standpoint with features that were made popular by Ableton.”

Jon Short, vice president of sales at Keith McMillen, further attributed the segment’s increasing popularity to a demand for more expressive options and switchable “scenes,” in addition to the expansion of the overall DIY DJ market.

“Rather than following the floor plan that other controllers force you into, these controllers are not proprietary to one software,” Short said. “You can launch clips, play on an MPC-style drum pad and manipulate effects. It’s the flexibility of being able to assign the buttons to whatever you want. It becomes more musical. You can switch them up for different shows based on what type of audience it is.”

With a smaller footprint, DJs and producers are also better equipped for another trend within the electronic music segment — “smart” DJing.

“Because devices such as smartphones and tablets are integral to today’s consumer lifestyle, we’re making a push to promote connectivity,” said a Pioneer spokesperson.

COMMUNITY EFFORT

In the controller segment, product hype is typically generated by the consumers themselves, be it through online forums or artist endorsement.

“If the manufacturer has a

community forum, that’s a huge plus,” Kramer said.

For that reason, Smith added that a good controller should be able to sell itself.

“If you have to ‘sell’ it, then whoever is buying it doesn’t get it,” he said.

THE EYES HAVE IT

So how can a retailer pique the interest of wary customers? For DJs, seeing is believing.

“We look for what makes our customer’s eyes go big — that ‘wow’ factor,” Kramer said. His display of Keith McMillen’s flagship QuNeo controllers offers an automatic, plug-and-play setting that showcases the product’s LEDs and features, even without a computer.

“The new word of mouth is through vision, even if it’s just a YouTube video,” Smith added.

Another good way to increase visibility is to tap into the education market. Keith Mc-

Millen provides QuNeos to several music-production programs, and Short said a student often purchases the product after learning on it.

“Because you have to learn some about MIDI to get the controller fully set up the way you want, we find that schools are really liking it,” he said.

Davis also touts the importance of in-store clinics as a key way to educate customers and promote sales simultaneously.

“Software is hard to sell, so it’s exciting for me to have a product that we can stock,” Davis said of his upcoming Ableton event. “We’re almost sold out. Ableton is actually promoting it on their site, and some of the people from Ableton are going to be doing demonstrations.” **MI**



HOW TO SELL IT

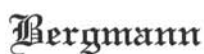


Gauge Their Interests

“I figure out if they’re using any particular software. That usually narrows the field of controllers right down to a few options. Basically, you should find out what their goals are as a producer — if they’re looking for more studio workflow-type products or more performance-type controllers, or something that may be a hybrid for both. Ask questions to find out what they want to achieve because sometimes they’re not really sure. Then you can further direct them from there. Ask what type of music they like, too, because certain softwares are more popular with certain genres.”

Matt Davis
Lighting Director
Midwest Pro Stereo, Chicago

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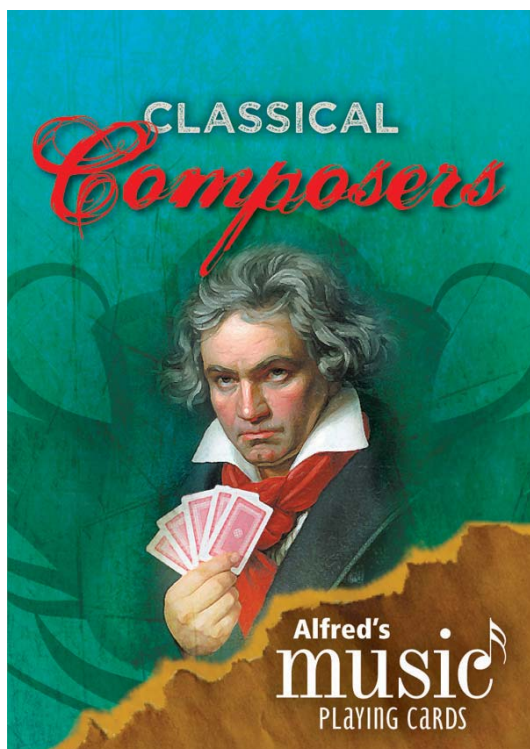
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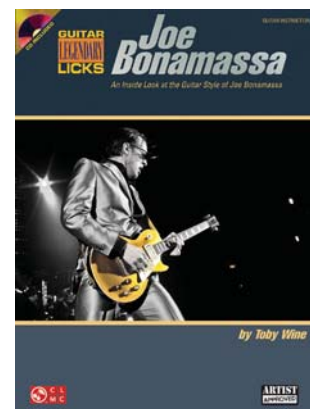
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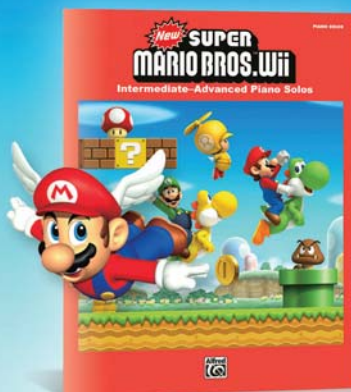
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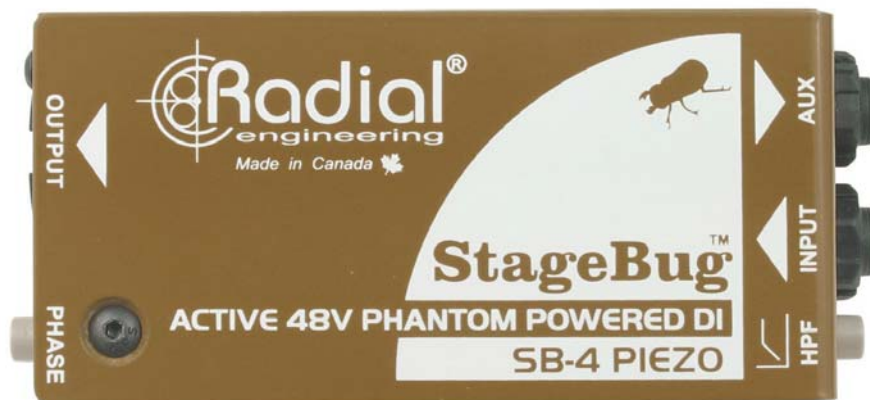
Aggressive fast riffs, complex chords, and palm muting are defined and cut through the mix. railhammer.com



RADIAL ENGINEERING | STAGEBUG SB-4 PIEZO

Catch the Bug

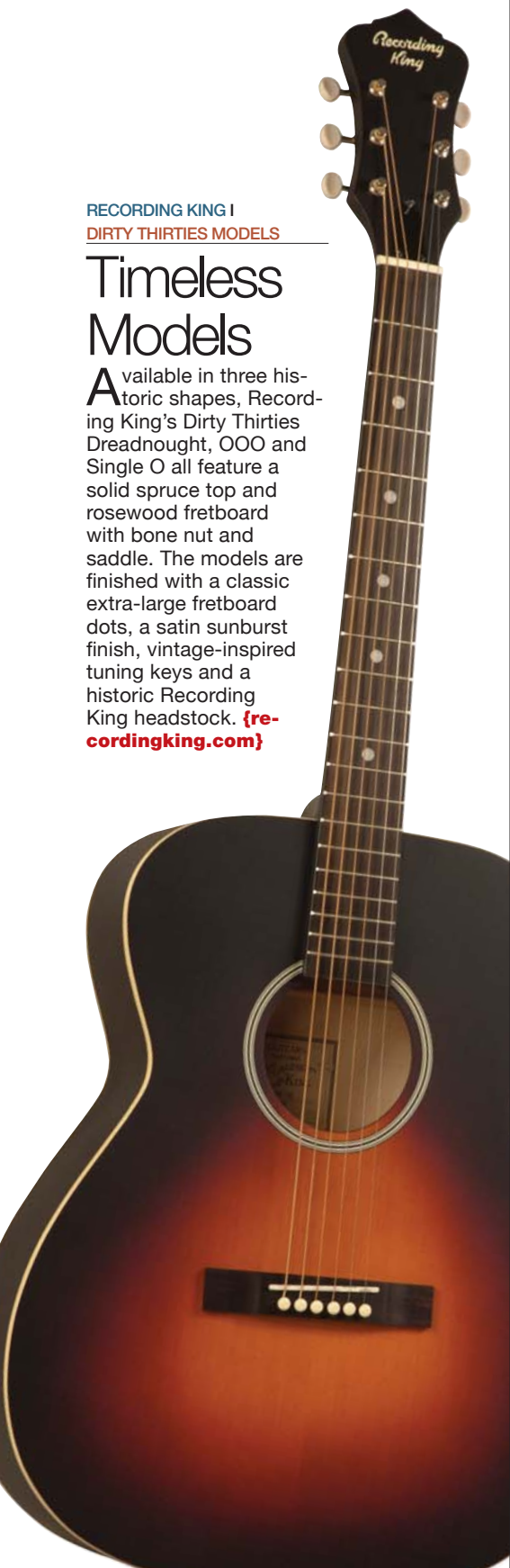
Radial Engineering's new StageBug SB-4 Piezo is a direct box specifically developed to solve the problems associated with amplifying acoustic instruments when using piezo-electric transducers. The unit features a 1/4-inch input to connect the instrument's piezo transducer output. radialeng.com



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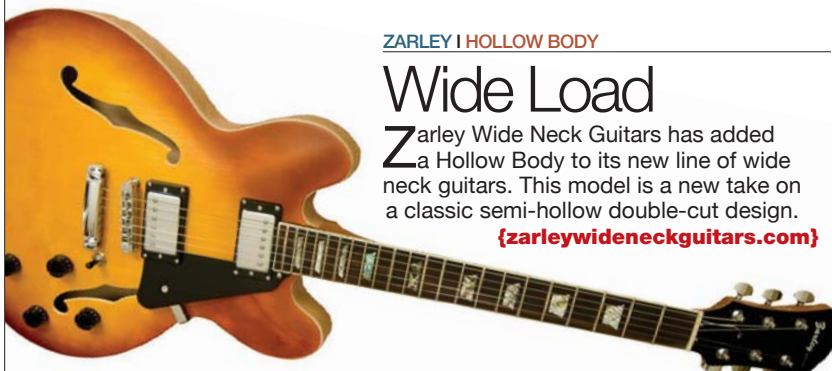


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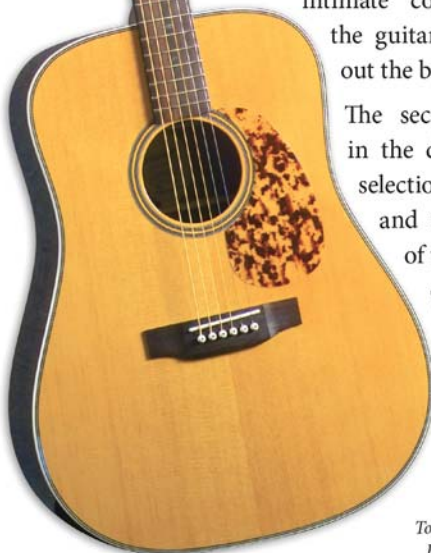
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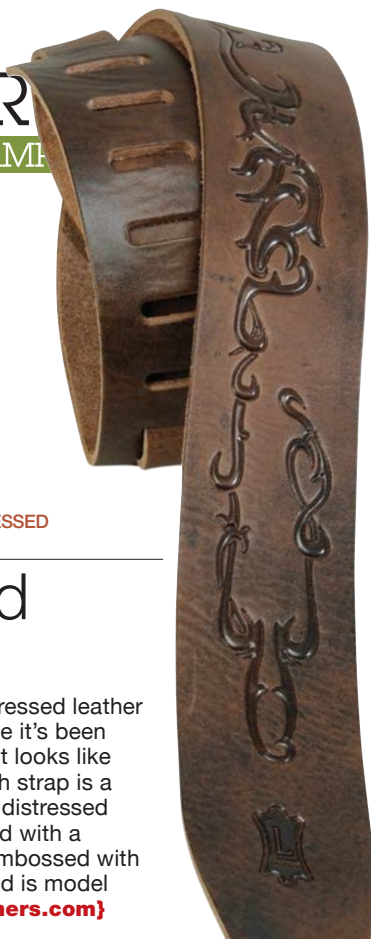
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Backup Harmony

TC-Helicon's new Harmony Singer is a professional multi-effects unit that operates with the simplicity of a guitar

stompbox offering three key features: guitar-controlled vocal harmony, tone and reverb. The pedal is aimed at all guitarists wanting to add accurate backing vocals and reverbs to their repertoire. tc-helicon.com



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AUDIO & RECORDING

AVID | PRO TOOLS 11

Going Up to 11

Avid has announced the release of Pro Tools 11, the latest version of its industry-leading digital audio workstation. The upgrade features new, high-powered audio and video engines, 64-bit architecture, expanded metering, and direct HD video workflows. A redesigned architecture allows for increased plug-in processing as well as the ability to run more virtual instruments, and the built-in video engine enables audio post professionals to play and edit a wide range of HD video formats. MSRP: Full version, \$699. avid.com



TASCAM | TH-02

Universal 'Phones

TASCAM's new TH-02 closed-back headphones deliver clear balanced sound regardless of genre or application. Featuring plush cushioned ear cuffs and a padded headband, the TH-02 can be put to work for hours of comfortable use. Both left and right ear-cuffs offer full 90-degree rotation, making TH-02 flexible to wear. The folding design of the TH-02 lets the headphones compactly fit anywhere. tascam.com



TC-HELICON | VOICELIVE TOUCH

Raise Your Voice

TC-Helicon's VoiceLive Touch 2 provides a complete suite of production-quality vocal effects, including harmony. Its new Touch Matrix interface with Slider FX allows precise real-time control and modulation, and the VLOOP Performance Looper adds loop-specific effects to the mix. VoiceLive Touch 2 takes care of vocal tone with adaptive EQ, compression, de-essing and gating. tc-helicon.com

ADAM AUDIO | F SERIES

Tweeter Tech

Adam Audio recently debuted the F series professional monitors with signature tweeter technology. The new F series consists of the F5 and F7 nearfield monitors and SubF dedicated subwoofer. Both the F5 and F7 feature the company's new ART tweeter that provides performance similar to Adam's X-ART tweeter in a smaller size to fit the new form factor with the same clarity and resolution as its predecessor, Adam's SubF. adam-audio.com





UNIVERSAL AUDIO | API 500 SERIES

New Collection

Universal Audio has released the API 500 Series EQ Plug-In Collection for the UAD Powered Plug-Ins platform and Apollo High-Resolution Audio Interface. This API-endorsed, UA-developed collection features emulations of the API 550A 3-Band and API 560 Graphic equalizers. The 550A and 560 modular EQs featured Walker's signature 2520 op-amp and proportional Q circuitry. uaudio.com

KORG | KP3+

Serious Kaoss

Korg has added the KP3+ Dynamic Effect/Sampler to the Kaoss series. The KP3+ provides creative power for live and in-studio use, while retaining the user-friendly Kaoss touchpad interface. It offers the original KP3 effects, sounds and features, plus 22 new, diverse effect programs for various EDM genres to rock and beyond. korg.com



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DRUMS & PERCUSSION

DW | 9000 BASS DRUM PEDAL UPGRADE

Updated & Upgraded

Drum Workshop recently upgraded its flagship line of 9000 bass drum pedals. Among the improvements to the new 9000 pedals are a Tri-Pivot Toe Clamp that includes three self-adjusting rubber-coated pads that securely anchors the pedal to a variety of bass drum counter hoop sizes, an EZ-Adjust Infinite Cam that lets drummers change from an Accelerator to Turbo cam with the twist of a drum key, and a non-skid rubber pad under the base plate. dwdrums.com



DRUM FIRE | CB4000 CYMBAL BAG

OnStage on Fire

DrumFire's CB4000 Cymbal Bag holds up to four 22-inch cymbals. Smaller pockets accommodate hi-hats and small/medium cymbals up to 15 inches. Adjustable backpack straps allow for hands-free transport and can be tucked away inside a back pocket when not in use. The bag features double-pull zippers and a double handle with Velcro closure for comfortable carrying. onstagestands.com

PROLOGIX PERCUSSION | ALL-N-1 PRACTICE PAD

Miller's Signature

The All-N-1 Russ Miller signature practice pad features a variety of stick and brush interchangeable playing surfaces to maximize user's sound and practice sessions. The pad is ideal for studying or teaching brush playing. The SHM (snare hoop mount) technology lets users mount the pad on top of any 14-inch snare drum hoop preventing any contact from the drumhead underneath. With SHM users experience the best feeling surface and snare element sound in a pad. prologixpercussion.com





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PIANOS & KEYBOARDS



KORG | "BEST OF TRITON"

Sound God

Korg's Best of Triton is the new, free bonus sound library for the Krome Music Workstation. The collection includes 128 programs that were converted from the most popular pre-load programs in the original Korg Triton Music Workstation. korg.com/krome

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BAND & ORCHESTRA



JODY JAZZ | BAND DIRECTORS
TRIAL KIT

Try It Out

JodyJazz has introduced its new Band Directors Trial Kit program. The kits are designed to facilitate the testing and selection of JodyJazz's most popular mouthpieces by band directors and their students. The kits are available to school music dealers, their road reps and individual band directors. Each kit consists of a velvet-lined hard-sided case containing five mouthpieces. The kit's selection can be modified to accommodate preferences or particular regional needs. jodyjazz.com

YAMAHA | YAS-62III, YTS-62III

Super 62's

Yamaha's YAS-62III and YTS-62III New 62 professional saxophones are ideal for concert band, jazz band and other solo and ensemble settings. These updates to the YAS-62II and YTS-62II professional alto and tenor saxophones feature a newly designed 62 neck for ease of playability and greater control. The New 62's additionally feature a backpack-style case offering contemporary looks and greater ease of transport, as well as a redesigned low B-C# connection. yamaha.com



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DJ & LIGHTING

BLIZZARD LIGHTING | FAB5

Five For Lighting

Blizzard Lighting's new Fab5 series includes the Puck Fab5 and the ToughPAR Fab5. The Puck Fab5 is a new variation of the Puck series flat LED par that features 7-by-15-watt, 5-in-1 RGBAW LED's, while maintaining all the same features of the original Blizzard Puck series. The Fab5 is fitted with 7-by-15-watt, 5-in-1 RGBAW LED's, all sealed inside a weatherproof black cast aluminum enclosure. **{blizzardlighting.com}**



PIONEER DJ | CDJ-2000NEXUS

Pioneer Goes Platinum

Pioneer DJ has debuted Platinum Editions of the CDJ-2000nexus professional multi-player, DJM-900nexus performance digital mixer and RMX-1000 Remix Station. The series' models will feature a sleek mirror chrome finish, each with a plaque engraved with the production run and serial numbers. **{pioneerdj.com}**



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CHAUVET | DJ OBEY 4 D-Fi 2.4

Compliant Controller

Chauvet recently released the Obey 4 D-Fi 2.4 controller. The wireless DMX controller takes setups to the next technological level and is compatible with all Chauvet products operating with D-Fi 2.4GHz systems. chauvetlighting.com



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AMERICAN DJ | MEGA BAR RGBA

Mega Color

The latest Mega Bar RGB from American DJ lets users splash more vibrant colors across stages and walls in a variety of color schemes. The new one-meter LED wash bar create a limitless spectrum of colors with its 320 x 10mm RGBA LEDs (64 red, 96 green, 96 blue and 64 amber). The addition of amber LEDs provides the ability to produce hard-to-blend orange, yellow and gold shades and gives users more design flexibility. MSRP: \$349.95. adj.com

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Ellen Von Essen

Strait Music Company
Austin, Texas

For parents and new students, band and orchestra can be a very exciting but very opaque thing. A new student might assume that the horn is all that they need, but that instrument is an investment that requires maintenance, supplies and a great deal of care. They'll also need crucial accessories such as mouthpieces that are dependent upon the needs of the specific musician. We work hard to develop product knowledge and carry brands that we (as a staff of musicians) would use and support.

As a local and family-owned business, we know that our relationships with our customers and the community are the keys to our success. When a student or family comes to us for an instrument, we are ready with an affordable rental program with long-term service and upgrade options. Our rental program lets students enjoy and learn their new instrument, gives parents the security of not having to pay up front and provides an excellent maintenance program. I also significantly increase the affordability of professional-grade instruments if the student continues to play and is looking to upgrade.

>>>

Evan Jones

Bandland
Clarksburg, W.V.

We are starting a program where we are going to reach out more aggressively to our rental customers about two-thirds of the way into their student rental contract. We'll apply those finances toward a step-up instrument. It would actually be geared to middle school-aged students because we feel like there is more interest and support from the parents when the kids are a little bit younger. As the students get older, they tend to get into so many other activities. There's also more competition for the dollar with parents trying to buy for a high school-aged player.

We plan to put that program into place during the latter part of this year. If you count on band directors to help promote step-ups, it doesn't seem to happen. We're finding that we just have to do it ourselves.



>>>

Peter Biedron

BandSource
Downers Grove, Ill.

How do you upsell entry-level band customers?

We're considering an equity-sharing step-up program while not doing intermediate rentals. It's a win for a family with a child who's committed to being in band, as well as a win for us.

So many instructors overlook the importance of a mouthpiece, but it's our key to getting the student a better sound. Because we're a little different in that we only do band and orchestra instruments, we have a crazy selection of mouthpieces. We'll go out to the schools that we service and do a "mouth-

piece day." We'll actually pull the entire clarinet section into a room, give them a talk about how important a good mouthpiece is and then give them a Vandoren mouthpiece to try. The student will go home to mom and dad with his or her fitting card and say, "This is the best mouthpiece for me." We couple it with rebates and other incentives, like \$20 off a student's next repair. You're essentially taking the product right to the school.

We're also doing spring step-up days with some of the high schools

and putting together a brochure that talks about why a step-up instrument is better than a student instrument. We'll send that flier home coupled with Conn-Selmer's whole spring rebate program. We're proactive in trying to get people to pay off their instruments early.

One other thing we really focus on is mailings and phone calls, which we do at the end of the school year to build long-term relationships. Customers are ready to buy from BandSource the next time around.

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