

FALL PRODUCT PREVIEW

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FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

AUGUST 2013
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music inc.

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NEW FACILITY**

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*Muncie Music Center climbs into the Top 100 with a
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ON THE RISE

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MUNCIE MUSIC CENTER'S
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Keeping in contact and partnering on promotions are just two of the ways dealers maintain good relations.

BY HILARY BROWN

Cover photo by Jeff Cagle

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

"Let's put a new coat of paint on this lonesome old town."

— TOM WAITS

Store design continues to be a major issue in this industry. Granted, there are only so many ways to hang a guitar on a wall and display a drum setup. But, when it comes to outdated slatwall, cluttered floor space and dark showrooms, music stores often take center stage.

No one wants to rummage through merchandise in a dark, messy, uninviting atmosphere. Big players like Best Buy and The Apple Store have it down to a science: clean, orderly, bright and to the point. It's easy to fall into the trap of worrying about what to order, how much to order and how to increase foot traffic. But one aspect of increasing foot traffic is simple: create an atmosphere that customers enjoy spending time in.

Take Dave Helms, owner of Muncie Music Center and this month's cover story retailer. After taking over the Muncie, Ind., staple 10 years ago, he was fed up with the overstuffed merchandise and dark, windowless repair shop. The last straw was when his customers began to complain.

"We had done everything we could, to the point you just couldn't do anything else to it," Helms said. "It got to the point where customers would say, 'I really love you guys, but I can't

stand shopping here. That was a big thing."

So last year he started from the ground up. Literally. Now, his new 9,300-square-foot shop boasts seven lessons studios, an improved showroom with handicap accessibility, soundproofed guitar rooms, a performance area and an updated repair shop — with windows.

If you don't have the budget to completely overhaul your store like Helms, you can still gather a few ideas from our Walk-Through feature. This month, we focus on Long & McQuade's flagship location in Toronto, which features clear signage, smart merchandising and track lighting — MI store staples, that, when done right, can increase any shopper's buying experience.

And that's what it's all about, right? Customers want to return to a place where they enjoy hanging out. Nobody wants to spend money in a cluttered dungeon. At that point, online retailers get the business.

So, get those boxes off the floor, install some bright lighting, add a new coat of paint and, if your shop needs a total renovation like Helms', flip to page 38 to get some solid ideas. **MI**



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In Defense of Plastics

It's certainly an achievement to design and build a serious brass instrument from plastic. Today's engineered materials and methods are up to the task if someone has the capital to invest in the tooling and wants to commit to the challenges of the design process.

We at the Magic Fluke Company located in Sheffield Mass., have been making ukuleles using injection molded plastics since 1999. Inspired by Maccaferri who pioneered the use of plastics in stringed instruments back in the 1950s, we've had great success with a hybrid wood/plastic design that is made here in the United States.

The use of injection molded plastics has let us stay competitive with the flood of imported traditional wood instruments that rely mostly on low-cost labor.

Because plastics can be engineered to have properties close to wood, acoustics can be very similar and in some cases enhanced. Another big advantage is the ability to design complex assembly features and shapes into the molded parts which typically require significant labor and energy-intensive processes to fabricate in traditional materials. If done properly, the end result can be a consistent, high quality, durable product, produced with minimal labor and cost.

The term plastic has negative connotations, but it encompasses a wide range of materials and processes showing up in most every aspect of our lives whether we like it or not. Given the many advantages of its use in musical instruments, I believe there is much untapped potential. The

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THE FUTURE OF PLASTICS

It was only two years ago when jazz trombonist Jiggs Whigham sent a plastic trombone to John Storer, president of Conn-Selmer. Company executives didn't have to think about it long before signing on as global distributor for the Jiggs pBone.

"We were very impressed by the design and playability of the instrument," said Mike Kamphuis, senior director of product marketing at Conn-Selmer.

The creators of the pBone, Chris Fower and Steven Greenall, told Conn-Selmer they had a mission of spreading trombone playing to as many children as possible. And Whigham, as president of the International Trombone Association, wanted to boost membership through the promotion of these instruments.

"We launched the pBone into all our global markets with the mission of getting more youth into music at younger ages, specifically the third and fourth grade," Kamphuis said.

POWER OF PLASTIC

Much to everyone's surprise, the pBone went viral quickly. A simple YouTube search for

"pBone" yields nearly 10,000 video demonstrations from trombonists around the world. Even professionals are picking them up. Tom "Bones" Malone periodically plays one on the *Late Show* with David Letterman.

For music retailers, this kind of exposure — combined with the product's light weight — has helped pBones sell like hotcakes, leading dealers to give it a "Best in Show" award at The 2012 NAMM Show. Dealers say the pBone has boosted business not by replacing brass instrument sales, but by adding incremental sales, according to Kamphuis.

The success of the pBone begs the question, is there really a great future in plastics?

"These aren't meant to replace brass instruments," Kamphuis said. "Plastic makes these instruments durable and usable for kids who might not be ready to take care of a brass instrument."

As a trombonist and owner of a blue pBone myself, I can attest to the "why not" effect. When I

first heard about thought about buying one, someone said, "It's only \$150. Why not?" And so I did, as has just about every trombonist I know. I agree that the horns sounds surprisingly good, for what it is. (Granted, it will never replace my cherished sterling silver horn.)

NEXT GENERATION OF PLASTIC

The idea of making instruments from plastic materials isn't all that new. Back in the 1950s, luthier Mario Maccaferri designed a line of plastic guitars and ukuleles. The '50s also saw the introduction of the white plastic Gryphon saxophone, famously played by Charlie Parker and Ornette Coleman. Yet, neither of these instruments caught on.

However, plastic technology has come a long way. Besides the pBone, Vibrato Co. Ltd., based in Thailand, began producing saxophones made of polycarbonate in 2010. At this year's NAMM Show, the products received a good response from professional saxophonists who tried it, said Puck Ananta,

president of Vibrato Sax USA.

"The expectation of a plastic saxophone is something like a cheap toy," he said. "And once they pick it up, they smile. It's so light. And once they play, they have a surprised look on their face, because it actually sounds like a real saxophone."

Vibrato already has a tenor model in the works to supplement its line of alto.

Will we see other types of plastic instruments emerge? Ananta thinks so. A mechanical engineer by trade, Ananta said he's intrigued by the possibilities of plastic mold injection. "A saxophone probably has more parts than any other instrument, so if they can make a saxophone out of plastic, I'm sure any other instrument can be."

For Conn-Selmer, the success of the pBone might very well lead to more plastic instruments on the market.

"Our friends in the U.K. are always thinking of something new to support music education," Kamphuis said. "All I can say at this point is there is more to come ... and there might be pistons involved!"

Steven Greenall
Chairman
pBone

Giving Thanks for Amped Up Growth

We appreciate your profile on Fargen Amplification titled "Imagine Growth" in the July issue.

Our successful growth has resulted from careful planning and execution of our strategy, but also from having strong relationships with such partners as J Design Speaker Enclosures, Warehouse Guitar Speakers, Evidence Audio and Mercury Magnetics — all playing an integral role in the quality products that we strive to produce.

We are carrying our momentum through Summer NAMM and look forward to introducing some new exciting amp and pedal products in the coming months.

Ben Fargen
Fargen Amplification
Sacramento, Calif.

Correction:

In the June 2013 issue of *Music Inc.* the "Ask the Retailer" feature included a quote by Ellie Stevens of Ted Brown Music in Tacoma, Wash., discussing a Tower of Power clinic. The clinic was sponsored by Yamaha. *Music Inc.* regrets the error.

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use of plastics can assist U.S. manufacturers in competing with low cost imports, and help to keep quality, affordable instruments accessible to everyone. Students, travelers and recreational music makers all stand to benefit.

Dale Webb
The Magic Fluke
Sheffield, Mass.

The Low-Down on the pBone

From its first sketch and concept, the pBone [plastic trombone] was centered around accessibility and fun, especially for youngsters. It was designed by musicians for musicians.

We all recognized that traditional brass instruments were losing their appeal in an increasingly digital world. The

life-long skills that come from early musical education create experiences and opportunities which are relevant across all facets of life — especially the teamwork and collaborative nature of music.

Combining the innovative and creative skills of our team, we had developed a novel technique which enabled our instruments to sound as good as brass instruments.

The plastic material offers us the chance to improve ergonomics, feature exciting color options, add robustness, remove weight, but above all to manufacture attractive products which make a quality sound.

After selling 85,000 pBones, we hope a few more children will either pursue a career in music or take the skills they

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> What's Old is New Again

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Moog names Sweetwater Sound Dealer of the Decade

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Chicago Music Exchange owner, a dotcom vet, launches new site for vintage and used gear

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RETAIL

KEYBOARD CONCEPTS | BY JOHN JANOWIAK

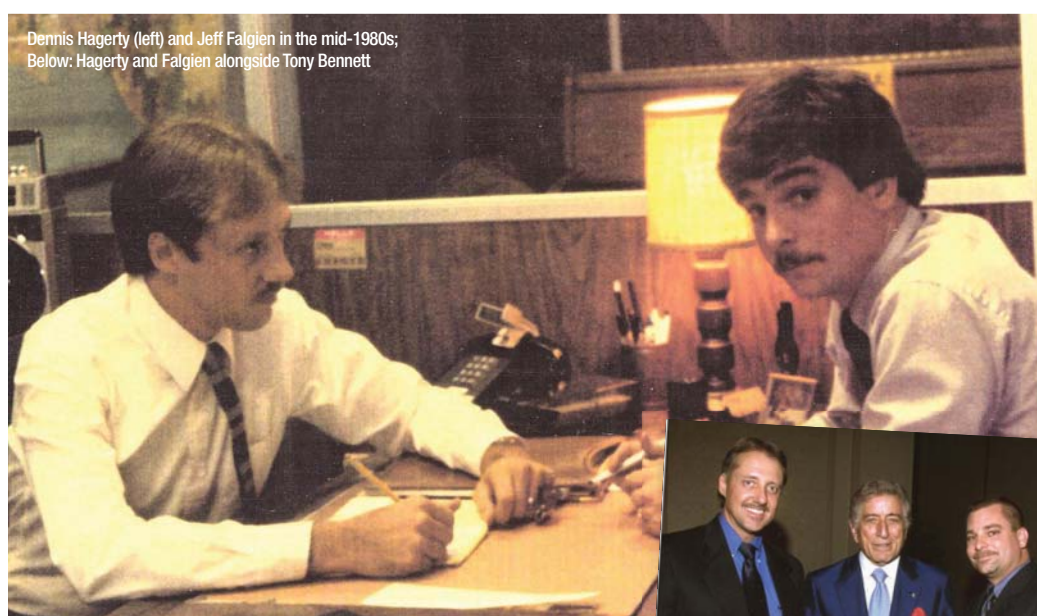
DEALER TO THE STARS

Dennis Hagerty always thought that if Eric Idle ever walked into his piano showroom, he'd know he had made it as a piano retailer. Sure enough, one day he looked across the room and saw the star of "Monty Python's Flying Circus" standing there.

Hagerty greeted him and told him he often used a famous Python catchphrase in his sales meetings: "Now for something new and totally different." He laughs when recalling the comedian's response: "Well, if you're going to use it, you gotta get it [bleeping] right. It's 'Now for something completely different.'"

IN THE FIRMAMENT

It is said that location is everything, and for Keyboard Concepts, the company Hagerty founded 30 years ago, that axiom surely holds true. "In Los Angeles, you can walk into a hot dog stand and see movie star pictures on the wall," Hagerty



Dennis Hagerty (left) and Jeff Falgout in the mid-1980s; Below: Hagerty and Falgout alongside Tony Bennett

said. The company's L.A.-area stores have benefited from their proximity to Hollywood, helping forge their reputation as the piano and keyboard dealer to the stars.

Idle is on a long list of celebrity customers that include movie stars, television stars and athletes as well as famous mu-

sicians and industry professionals. Mariah Carey was one of the most recent customers, and Anthony Hopkins, Paul Reiser and Clint Eastwood are regulars. Many aren't the type you would associate with piano playing. For athletes like Wayne Gretzky and Pete Sampras, or an actor-body-

builder-governator like Arnold Schwarzenegger, a piano can serve as another trophy for the collection.

"A lot of them have second homes," Hagerty said. "Some

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days we get lucky — the phone rings, they need another piano for another home, and we're shipping it."

Sometimes it's an assistant who makes the purchase, but often the stars show up in person to check out the inventory. Hagerty has fond memories of the time Stevie Wonder and Greg Phillinganes played a duet on adjacent pianos in the showroom. For a time, Wonder would order pianos as Christmas gifts for friends, usually putting in a call just a few days before the holiday, and — on at least one occasion — forgetting that he had already bought the friend a piano the previous Christmas.

As if that weren't enough, Keyboard Concepts sells and rents products to major studios like Disney, NBC and Sony. Again, location helps (the company operates four), but location alone can't account for the company's 30 years of prosperity, its status as the largest piano dealer in Southern California or, in fact, as one of the largest in North America.

Hagerty and his vice president, Jeff Falgien, attribute their success to treating customers fairly, hiring and retaining good employees, and gaining the confidence of teachers, tuners and other industry people. That, and having good lines to sell. They carry Bosendorfer, Schimmel and Knabe pianos, plus PianoDisc player systems and Casio digital pianos. Keyboard Concepts became a Yamaha dealer in 1993, which dramatically propelled their growth.

EARLY VISIONS

Hagerty got his start in the piano industry at age 15, learning to tune, rebuild and restore pianos at a small family business. He went on to

work for Colton Piano, where he developed an interest in the organizational aspect of running a piano store, and it was there he met Falgien.

He opened his first store in 1983 at age 27. Two weeks later, Falgien happened to drive by, popped in and signed on as employee number one. On his first night alone at the store, Falgien called Hagerty to say he had sold a used Baldwin grand.

Hagerty's skills as a piano technician helped earn him respect in the piano industry. Well-connected tuners and technicians introduced them to their first high-profile customers, and they still do 30 years later.

"At least 50 percent of our business comes from referrals, and you can only achieve that by doing business the right way," Falgien said. "Our name is already in a lot of the decision-makers' Rolodexes, if anybody keeps a Rolodex anymore. If anybody needs something, they call us, and we make it happen." **MI**



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GIST HOSTS RECITAL ON FACEBOOK

Lexington, Ky., based Gist Piano Center recently hosted a monthlong “Give My Regards to Broadway” recital contest on Facebook. At the conclusion, the top vote-getter was piano student Arnav Dharmagadda, who received the “Gistony” trophy and a \$50 “Gist Certificate.”

“‘Give My Regards to Broadway’ is an oddball variety show that brings to life the treasured memories of American musical theatre,” said Heather McGriff, public relations manager for the store.

Student performers autographed Broadway-style playbills for their show and each student went home with a commemorative, signed playbill.

The recital was the latest in a series designed to give students fun performance opportunities. “Nothing motivates a piano student like seeing live performances by other students their own age,” said John Gist. “It’s important to give learners an informal environment to play in.”



GRUHN MOVES

In June, storied Nashville, Tenn., retailer Gruhn Guitars opened in a new location at 2120 8th Avenue South. The company began renovations on the new space in early 2013, customizing it to suit its specific needs. The ground floor features a larger showroom, letting the store display its full inventory of vintage, used and new instruments and providing additional space for instrument trial rooms and an appraisal inspection area. The second floor includes a high-end showroom, administrative offices, and instrument case storage. The top level houses the repair shop, shipping and receiving, and a photography studio.

“Moving away from Lower Broadway after 43 and a half years of operating within a 100-foot radius was not an easy decision, but our new location is less than 10 minutes from

downtown, has easy interstate access, is on a major thoroughfare, has ample parking, and is in an up-and-coming neighborhood,” said owner George Gruhn. “This is the type of location I dreamed of but couldn’t afford when I first decided I wanted to operate a vintage fretted instrument business.”

Gruhn opened his first downtown location on 4th Avenue in January 1970 and moved the store to its second location at 410 Broadway six years later. Gruhn Guitars had been doing business in its previous location at 400 Broadway since 1993. A mecca for musicians and collectors worldwide, Gruhn Guitars buys, sells, consigns and trades fretted instruments and houses one of the world’s premier vintage and used collections. The company employs 20 full-time staff members, including seven skilled repairmen.

SWEETWATER NAMED MOOG DEALER OF THE DECADE

Sweetwater Music in Ft. Wayne, Ind., was recently named MOOG's Dealer of the Decade. The presentation, made to Sweetwater Founder and President Chuck Surack (left) by Trent Thompson, product marketing manager for MOOG



Music, was a prototype of a limited edition Moog 10th Anniversary Voyager analog synthesizer, featuring appointments that have never before appeared on a Minimoog Voyager. With a limited run of only 31 units worldwide, and only five total units for the U.S. market, it will help celebrate the 10th anniversary of the iconic synthesizer.



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NASMD Announces Convention Plan

The board of the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) recently held a planning meeting for its 2014 convention, which will take place April 2-5 at the Lowe's Portofino Bay Hotel in Orlando, Fla. Pictured are (from left): Lori Supinie of Senseney Music; C.J. Averwater of Averwater Music; Mike Meyer of Meyer Music (secretary/treasurer); Robert Christie of A&G Central Music; Rosi Johnson of Mississippi Music (vice president); Evan Jones of Blandland Music; George Quinlan, Jr. of Quinlan & Fabish Music Co. (president); and Ron Kuykendall of Saied Music. For more information, visit nasmd.com.

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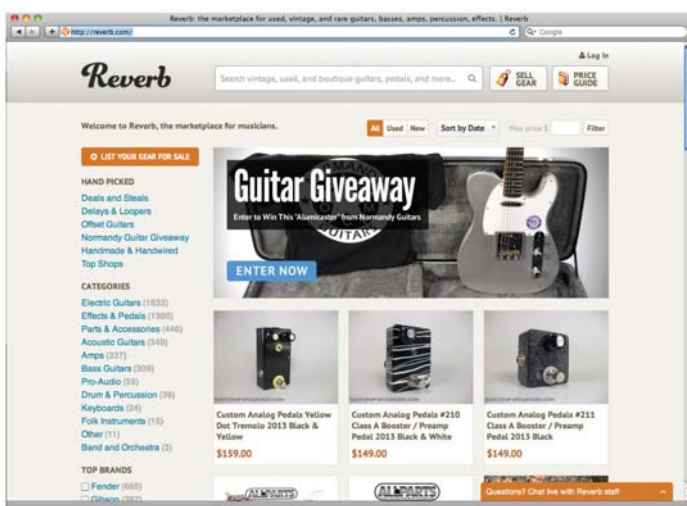


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»»» RETAIL



CHICAGO RETAILER LAUNCHES SITE FOR VINTAGE, USED GEAR

Seeking to provide musicians with an alternative to eBay and Craigslist, Chicago Music Exchange owner Dave Kalt recently announced the launch of Reverb.com, a website specializing in used, vintage and handmade guitars and gear.

"We believe there is an opportunity to build a robust marketplace to serve the millions of buyers and sellers of musical instruments," Kalt said in a release. "Currently musicians resort to platforms like eBay and Craigslist, which lack product expertise, user experience, and price transparency."

The enterprise should come as no surprise to those familiar with Kalt's career. Chicago Music Exchange was honored in December 2012 with a Retailing Excellence Award from *Music Inc.*, noting especially the company's prowess with online efforts and social media. A co-founder and former CEO of online broker optionsX-

press, which sold to Charles Schwab in 2008 for \$1 billion, Kalt seeded Reverb with an initial \$500,000 investment.

"Our goal with Reverb.com is not to be another eBay, but to be the preferred destination for all musicians and collectors looking for a fair price on used, vintage and handmade guitars and gear," Kalt said.

Reverb.com was in a beta period for several months before launch and reported hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales with 45 percent month-over-month growth. The platform showcases music stores, boutique, custom and handmade builders, and thousands of individuals looking to sell unplayed guitars, keyboards and drum kits.

Reverb.com charges a 3.5 percent transaction fee and offers tools to maximize exposure. For buyers, it offers an intuitive user experience, rich with pricing data, multimedia and the ability to make an offer on more than 90 percent of listings.

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Note From Joe

Crisis as a Blessing

During a recent road trip, I met with long-time NAMM Member Juan Grecos in Spain, where we discussed the rapidly changing face of our industry. His particular insight is, of course, driven by the euro crisis and its impact on the Spanish market. Their economy is under tremendous pressure with unemployment rates—especially in the prime music-making demographic—above 25 percent.

Here in the U.S., our future looks brighter. Headlines focus on lower unemployment and recovery in both the housing and stock markets. These key indicators make us hopeful that the “Great Recession” is in our rearview mirror. However, beyond the fluctuating economy, the music and sound products industry continues to be buffeted by forces, some within, and some beyond, our control.

The Internet has changed the way people shop forever—retail will never go back to the way it was. Much of the world is now connected through mobile devices; technology is making it cheaper and easier to make music; musical trends defy any predictability; and competition for the attention of our key demographic audience is unprecedented.

Sounds like a world in the midst of massive change. Is this the definition of a crisis? And, if so, the real question is, what are we going to do about it?

Juan shared with me some wise words from Albert Einstein:

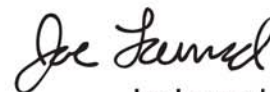
“A crisis can be a real blessing to any person, to any nation. For all crises bring progress. Creativity is born from anguish, just like the day is born from the dark night. It’s in crisis that inventiveness is born, as well as discoveries made and big strategies. He who overcomes crisis, overcomes himself,

without getting overcome. He who blames his failure to a crisis neglects his own talent and is more interested in problems than in solutions.

“It’s in the crisis where we can show the very best in us. To speak about a crisis is to promote it. Not to speak about it is to exalt conformism. Let us work hard instead. Let us stop, once and for all, the menacing crisis that represents the tragedy of not being willing to overcome it.”

This is a deeply personal challenge that each of us must address. To deny these changes are happening is to miss a huge opportunity. To embrace them is to be open to making progress and possibly going further than we ever have before. How we respond will shape our businesses, our industry and the world of music.

We must choose carefully and act boldly with so much at stake. It may turn out this really *is* a crisis—and that facing it is a blessing in disguise.



Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



NAME NAMM News August No. 2013

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the NAMM[®] show¹⁴

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SUPPLY

SWAN PERCUSSION | BY KATIE KAILUS

GRASSROOTS RHYTHM

When custom builder Eric Holland met touring percussionist Mike Meadows, inspiration struck in the form of Swan Percussion, a unique manufacturer that produces all of its products by hand in Texas. The duo first joined forces in 2009 to create the Black Swan — an instrument loosely based on the African gombe. Meadows was looking to add a gombe to his tour, but it was too delicate to travel with.

“Gombes have goat skin heads that are actually tacked onto the drum, so they’re not very feasible to travel with,” Meadows said. “If [the goat skin head] gets damaged, it’ll take about two days to fix. So, I wanted something that I could use a standard drumhead with. And that’s how we got the Black Swan.”

Four years later, Holland and Meadows have continued to expand Swan Percussion’s product offerings — the company now makes cajons, shakers and swangos — as well as its dealer network.

“Originally we were just trying to make one instrument,” Holland said. “We sort of became manufacturers by default. We started looking at other instru-



Mike Meadows (left) and Eric Holland

ments that we thought we could improve upon. That’s when we started creating new ones, such as cajons.”

GRASSROOTS GROWTH

In addition to adding to its own product line, the duo recently purchased Fat Congas, a percussion company originally founded in 1972 that had fallen into tough times and is now in the process of being revived by Swan.

“We intend to rebuild the Fat Congas brand in the same fashion we built Swan Percussion — [through] measured growth with an emphasis on quality,”

Holland said. “Our short term goal is to return the brand to its former standing. We intend to release each existing instrument within the line true to the integrity of the original designs.”

The co-founders plan to use Fat Congas to explore new products that don’t fit into the model of a Swan Percussion product, i.e. more traditional percussion instruments. Production is planned to start later this year.

Another area of growth has been in the company’s dealer base. Swan boasts 20 U.S. dealers and one in Mexico, while currently working on expanding

into Singapore.

Holland said he and Meadows have used a grassroots, guerilla-type sales strategy when finding new retailers and players.

“We will let people know when we are [visiting] a certain city and meet players at coffee shops to try out the instruments,” Holland said. “Eventually, other people will walk by and want to check them out as well.”

While on tour, Meadows said he regularly stops at the same drum shops to stock up, and now makes sure to mention Swan to store managers.

“We are looking for dealers that want to stay ahead of the curve,” Holland said. “We are working on next month’s news.”

One area where Swan has not grown as much — and maybe for the best — is when it comes to its staff. Holland started out making all the instruments himself, but now has help from a product manager and a product finisher. Keeping the staff small has helped the manufacturing stay in the United States, a characteristic that Holland believes has an impact on customers’ buying habits.

“We’ve seen great indicators that customers are willing to spend more for something quality-made in the United States,” he said. **MI**

SAMSON | DISTRIBUTION

Samson to Transfer Zoom Distribution

Samson Technologies will turn over the U.S. distribution of all Zoom products to the newly developed Zoom North America on December 31, 2013.

Zoom North America has been formed to distribute future product from the Zoom Corporation, which is based in Japan, in the United States, starting with the H6 Handy Recorder.

"I decided to establish Zoom North America in order to develop a stronger relationship with our U.S. customers," said Masahiro Iijima, Zoom Corporation founder and CEO. "Our goal is to stay in constant contact with Zoom dealers for feedback and advice, thus continually improving our products and service."

Samson and Zoom's 20-year distribution relationship will end on good terms. "Samson will work

hard to make sure the transition will go as smoothly as possible for our customers," said Jack Knight, president of Samson Technologies.

"Samson will now be able to focus all of its energy on global marketing and new product development for our world-renowned Samson and Hartke brands," said David Hakim, vice presi-

dent of Samson Technologies.

Also part of Zoom North America's transition is the appointment of Scott Hagen as vice president of sales and strategic planning.

Hagen brings more than 18 years of experience in retail sales to the company. Most recently, he served as a merchant director for Best Buy, where he was involved in business strategy



and development efforts.

"Scott brings incredible experience in both retail and business collaboration," said Zoom North America CEO Scott Goodman. "His strong background in CE [consumer electronics] and MI are exactly the qualities we were looking for."

{samsontech.com; zoom-na.com}



LICENSING

Fashion Forward Fender

Fender has signed a deal with Dragonfly Clothing to create a lifestyle fashion collection inspired by Fender's history. The line will feature dress shirts, work shirts, terry fleece hoodies, laser-print microfiber shirts, denim and leather outerwear and T-shirts. The line will sell to specialty apparel as well as department stores throughout North America and Europe this summer. {fender.com}

AGREEMENT

ModTone Adds Shopatron

E-commerce company Shopatron has entered into an agreement with ModTone Effects to streamline ModTone's online shopping experience. The deal will give ModTone customers the option to pick up their purchase at a nearby ModTone dealer.

ModTone Effects will be the first of several SHS International brand websites to strike a deal with Shopatron. SHS anticipates that the rest of the SHS product line will be integrated by the end of the summer. {shsint.net}

DISTRIBUTION

JHS Partners With Perri's Straps

John Hornby Skewes & Co. is the new exclusive U.K. and Eire distributor of Perri's Straps' products, including its range of instrument straps and plectrums.

The Canadian-made straps are used by such artists as AC/DC and Slash. Perri's also offer a range of straps for banjo, mandolin and saxophone players.

In other JHS news, the company has also partnered with Lewitt Microphones to distribute the Vienna-based company's products in the United Kingdom. {jhstrade.co.uk}

YORKVILLE | BY DAVID ZIVAN

NORTHERN LIGHT

On the upper level of the 175,000-square-foot facility that serves as headquarters for Yorkville Sound is a large but rather plain-looking machine that gets visited on every tour. It's technologically advanced, but it has nothing to do with pro audio or digital signal processing — rather, the contraption makes cardboard boxes of various shapes and sizes. It might be easy to miss, in the sprawl of the enormous place, but there may be no piece of equipment that better encapsulates the way Yorkville has operated for the past five decades.

The company proudly displays “Made in Canada” stickers on the vast majority of its products, and it continues to strive to bring outsourced products back under its own roof — even objects that few gearheads could get excited about, like packaging. For quality control — and adaptability, and inventory management — the leaders of Yorkville prefer to do things themselves.

“We never gave up on manufacturing in North America,” said Tim Marshall, Yorkville Sound’s marketing manager, who has been with the company since 1988. “We’re committed to it. We’re committed to the quality that we’ve been delivering and the quality of the engineering.”

CELEBRATING A HALF-CENTURY

Yorkville is marking its 50th anniversary this year, and this past spring hosted press and VIPs at a bash in downtown Toronto and also on a tour of the



Big Sugar rocks the stage at Yorkville's 50th bash.



headquarters, located in Pickering, Ontario, a suburb of Toronto. At the celebration, held in downtown Toronto, famous Canadian blues-rock band Big

Sugar, led by Gordie Johnson, rocked the house, along with other notables including Randy Bachman, founder of both The Guess Who and Bachmann

Turner Overdrive.

While best known for its loudspeakers, P.A. systems and other pro audio equipment, Yorkville also has a full line of

microphones, headphones, and accessories, such as instrument cases and bags, cables, and stands. The Pickering facility houses around 225 employees, and the company does somewhere between \$60 and \$70 million in business per year. Its parent company is the Long & McQuade retail chain (for more on them, see page 50).

Even the company's origins have a do-it-yourself quality. While working as a repair technician in the first Long & McQuade retail store in downtown Toronto, Peter Traynor was attempting to create a road-worthy, rugged bass amplifier — something that would perform better and last longer than the rental equipment typical of that time. The result, in 1963, was the first “Dyna-Bass” amp, and the start of the Traynor bass amp cult. He partnered with store owner Jack Long to create Yorkville (Toronto was once known as York, in honor of an English duke), and soon the pair had created a guitar amp as well as a powered mixer.

The company saw steady growth over the years. It now owns Applied Research and Technology (ART), a manufacturer of signal processors, studio tools and microphones based in Rochester, N.Y., and manufactures the sound systems for IMAX theaters. Since 1984, Yorkville has served as Canadian distributor for Gibson and Epiphone Guitars, and today it also distributes Mapex and Beyerdynamic in Canada.

DOING WHAT THEY KNOW

Despite its fairly large size, Yorkville has tried to retain a sense of scale. Pride in the company is evident from the topline executives to the factory floor.

“We have not pursued the mass-market, big retailers in the United States, or in any market for our P.A. products,” Marshall said. “We have always preferred the smaller dealers that are rental-based, or cus-



Yorkville combines high-tech and low-tech under one roof.

tomerservice based. That's the kind of dealer we have always supported.”

In other words, the company employs an approach that promises another 50 years. **MI**

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BUFFET GROUP USA | BY FRANK ALKYER

BUFFET OPENS U.S. FACILITY

French Week in Jacksonville, Fla., this year kicked off with a distinct music industry flair.

To launch the April celebration, local and international dignitaries joined the music community for the grand opening of the new Buffet Group USA headquarters. The event served as a platform for everyone from Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown to French Ambassador to the United States François Delattre to French Consul General Gaël de Maisonneuve to discuss the numerous ties between France and the United States.

"It is a great honor that our company has been chosen for the opening of the second French Week Jacksonville," said Antoine Beussant, CEO of Buffet Group. "Buffet Group settled here in 2006. This new office is the headquarters for the North American market. The U.S. market is the largest musical instrument market in the world due to a lot of reasons, but especially the education model for music practice. We should try to copy what you are doing here in Europe."

Xavier Marin, president of Fondations Capital, the majority shareholder of Buffet Group, said Buffet is a mid-sized company with extraordinary global reach.

"More than three-fourths of the top orchestras in the world use Buffet/Crampon clarinets, and the relationships with the best artists in this music are very strong," he said. "I would like to make a comment about the challenge for mid-sized companies to be global. It's easier for large companies, the GE's of the world. They have the resources and the



From left: Paul Astelford, Visit Jacksonville Agency; Antoine Beussant, CEO Buffet Group; François Kloc, CEO Buffet Group USA; Alvin Brown, Jacksonville mayor; François Delattre, French ambassador to the U.S.; Gaël Maisonneuve, consul general of France in Florida; and Xavier Marin, managing partner of Fondations Capital.

Buffet's Al Maniscalco, right, with legendary jazz saxophonist and educator Bunky Green.

means to deploy. When you are a smaller company, it's not easy, but it's critical if you want to be competitive. What is unique about Buffet is its ability to be a global company and to have local presence. That's a big challenge. To to have this approach is not only a business benefit, but also a public, societal benefit."

MORE SPACE, MORE OPPORTUNITY

The need for more space came as a result of increased sales in North America as well as Buffet's recent purchase of B&S, the German-based manufacturer of brass winds.

"We have a total of 19,000 square feet, which is roughly double what we had before," said François Kloc, the newly promoted CEO of Buffet Group USA. "The warehouse space is the biggest addition, not only in size, but in height. At the other warehouse, we could only put

two levels on the racks. Now there are four. And very important for Florida, the other warehouse didn't have air conditioning, which made it very difficult to work in."

MORE TO COME?

In his new role, Kloc will be overseeing the company's North American business operations, as well as other projects such as looking for companies that might fit into Buffet's brand portfolio. "We have room for growth," he said. "It's in the strategy. We're looking for acquisitions still. We are missing some instruments, like the flute."

Two days before the Florida opening, Kloc had attended the grand opening of Buffet's new, 2,200-square-foot artist showroom in New York City on West 36th Street. With a full repair department on site, and a brass repair operation on an upper

floor, Kloc said, "it all clicks. That building is slowly becoming the music building."

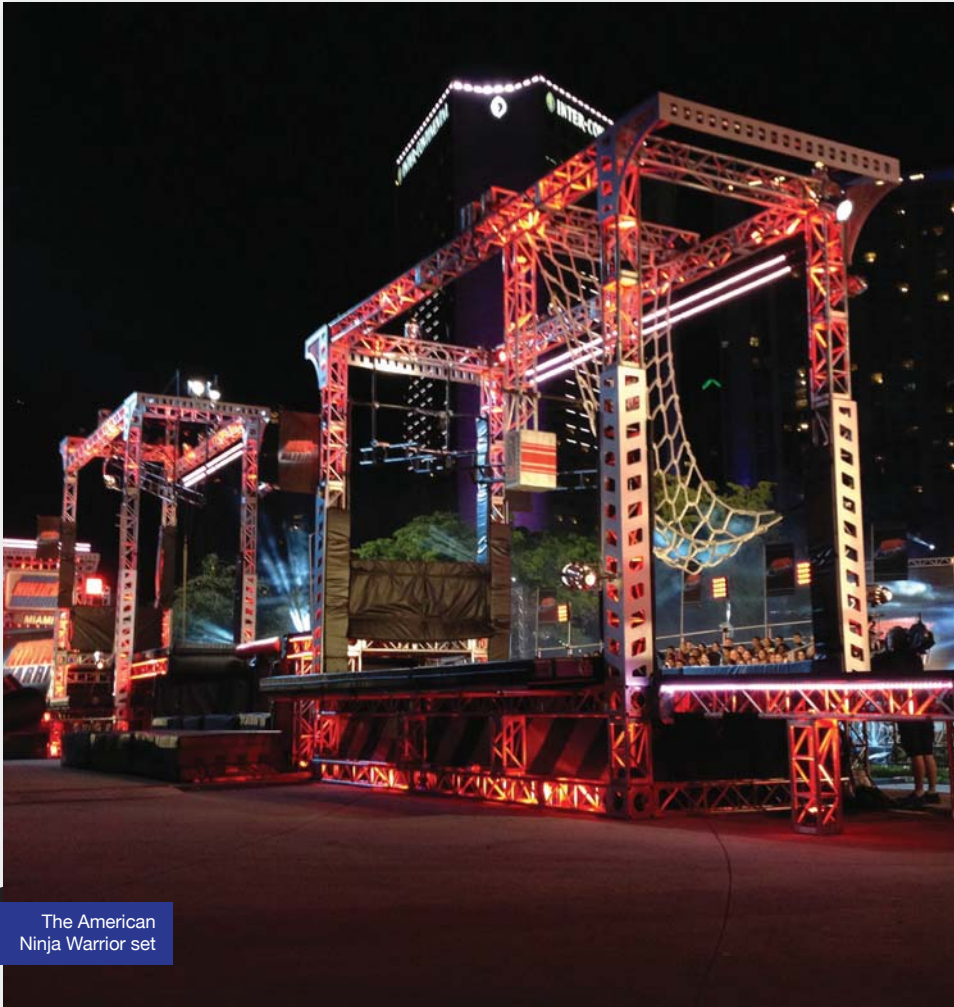
Kloc has promoted Al Maniscalco from Keilwerth product manager to Buffet USA's director of sales and marketing.

"We need to figure out how to best integrate our new brands with the brands we already have and grow the support for those brands amongst our dealer base," Maniscalco said. "And we need to grow our market share. The foundation of our company is in professional instruments. We're looking to increase our footprint in the [student product] field as well."

He said one pleasant surprise from the B&S deal has been the Hans Hoyer French horn line.

Noting dealer response, Maniscalco said he thought "the potential for what this brand has to offer the market is tremendous." **MI**

REAL-LIFE APPLICATIONS



The American
Ninja Warrior set

CHAUVET MAKES IT TO PRIMETIME

Nearly 500 Chauvet lighting fixtures have been featured in the NBC's TV show "American Ninja Warrior," a sports entertainment competition now shooting its fifth season.

Lighting Director Ed Motts and Lighting Designer Adam Biggs used 474 Chauvet fixtures to light the obstacle course, which is a series of truss sculptures set among a course of ramps, platforms, beams and more, all atop pools of water.

"We are delighted to have Chauvet lights [featured] on 'American Ninja Warrior' among other high-profile televised shows, such as NBC's 'The Voice' and the 2013 Billboard Music Awards," said Berenice Chauvet, vice president of Chauvet. "We're glad and thankful that they are being embraced by the best in the business and seen by such wide audiences." **{chauvet-lighting.com}**

SURF'S UP FOR MARTIN GUITARS

Martin guitars and other branded products will now be featured at the Turtle Bay Resort on the island of Oahu in Hawaii.

Martin's products will be integrated throughout the resort, including at the resort's bar, which will feature Martin-themed open-mic nights with guitarists playing Martin guitars. Also, a "History of Ukulele" wall display featured in the lobby will include a concierge service of Martin guitars and ukuleles available for Turtle Bay guests to take lessons with in the resort's lobby.

"Martin Guitar is a lifestyle brand, and the integration into the overall lifestyle experience at Turtle Bay is a key initiative for our brand in 2013," said Amani Duncan, vice president of brand marketing at Martin.

{martinguitar.com}



The Turtle
Bay Resort

ADJ | OPENING

ADJ TO OPEN SOUTH FLORIDA FACILITY

Los Angeles-based American DJ Group will be opening a new multi-functional facility in south Florida later this year. Located near airport and shipping facilities, the new complex will serve the company's customers east of the Mississippi River. ADJ customers in south Florida will be able to pick up orders from the facility on the same day they're placed. The facility will be used for warehousing, shipping, quality control and service, and will include a showroom and a training center. The new facility will serve all ADJ Group companies.

"Our new facility has been carefully designed to cover a wide range of needs," said Toby Velazquez, ADJ president. "The new facility will complement our Los Angeles headquarters, and will give us a strong presence on both coasts." americandj.com



Cordoba's Oxnard, Calif., workshop

CORDOBA | OPENING

Cordoba Opens SoCal Workshop

Cordoba Guitars has opened a workshop inside its Oxnard, Calif., facility. Cordoba's California workshop is a 2,500-square-foot manufacturing space chosen due to its mild, stable climate ideal for guitar making and its close proximity to Cordoba's Santa Monica, Calif., headquarters.

"Making guitars in California has always been a dream for us and we're excited to finally see it happen," said President Jonathan Thomas. cordobaguitars.com

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HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

Hal Leonard Befriends Chordbuddy

Hal Leonard is now the North American distributor of ChordBuddy. The ChordBuddy line will include the original ChordBuddy Guitar Learning System.

"ChordBuddy gives new guitar players instant success and helps them stick with it during those first two difficult teaching months," said Travis Perry, managing partner of ChordBuddy. "Hal Leonard will help us reach even more potential players through their network of outstanding retailers."

Hal Leonard will also coordinate songbooks and instructional content to support the ChordBuddy Guitar Learning System.

"The potential of this partnership to expand the market with new players of all ages will be really exciting for the industry," said Brad Smith, Hal Leonard's senior sales and marketing manager. halleonard.com



APPOINTMENTS

Alfred Names New CFO

Steven Raft recently joined Alfred Music as its new Chief Financial Officer.

Raft will lead Alfred Music's finance, IT and distribution departments. Raft was the former CFO for Cerwin-Vega where he was also interim president during his six-year tenure. He also has experience in the real estate industry.

"We are very particular about strong culture fit when adding talent within our executive team," said Ron Manus, CEO of Alfred Music. "I can't imagine anyone surpassing his kind of financial knowledge, while also having the right effective disposition needed within our organization to help advance Alfred Music."



Steven Raft

Global Truss America has promoted Kenneth Kahn to president. Kahn has been with the company since its inception in 2000 and has played a key role in building it into a major supplier of trussing and accessories.

DPA Microphones has appointed Niels Jørgen Øhrgaard as executive vice president of sales.

PRS Guitars has named Jim Cullen national sales manager.

Yamaha has promoted Dennis Webster to the position of manager of marketing, pro-audio and combo division.

Marsh Gooch has joined **Aphex** as a marketing manager.

Pierre Maillard has been named European sales specialist for **D'Addario**.

Fishman has appointed two new senior product managers, Charlie Russell and Paul Gallo, and named Matt Cadarette software quality assurance manager.

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John Gotski, Sound On Sound Magazine - Feb 2012

Choosing the right vocal, drum, and instrument microphones is an essential component in the quest for great stage sound. Audix takes all the guesswork out of this process with its BP7 PRO Band Pack, a collection of seven flagship dynamic microphones designed to work well together.

The OM series mics are best suited for lead and backing vocals, the i5 is extremely versatile (acoustic instruments, guitar cabs, drums, and percussion), and the D6 has the low end covered. Many bands solve their entire stage microphone needs with one BP7 Pro kit.

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IDEAS

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INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

KEEPING EMPLOYEES HONEST

We like to encourage all employees to be familiar with our wares.

We do this through product literature, sales training and store time allotted to online research. We also offer generous employee discounts on what we sell. It's crucial for them to, whenever affordable, enjoy personally through ownership, or, if nothing else, be intimately aware of the life-enriching benefit of what we sell. There's no substitute for hands-on access.

That said, we need to enlist concrete controls on trial privileges and/or purchases, and clear up the blurred line between employee "borrowing" and outright theft.

If you've been around retail long, you're probably acquainted with the lore and legend of employee theft. You may have witnessed it first hand: workers hiding merchandise under the guise of taking out the trash, only to return after hours to pick up carefully planted stolen goods. Or it could even be a clerk giving a pal a wink at the register that results in an unauthorized discount. It's a lot harder to get



'It's often honest folks who distort reality and justify theft.'

away with under 21st century point of purchase register technology, but let's address stealing that's far more subtle and common.

REMOVE ALL DOUBT

Music retail generally doesn't pay well, but the trade off is working around gear and people

that make us happy. Unfortunately, that combination also bakes up a recipe for employee entitlement. "I don't make that much, and I deserve the extra (unpaid) set of strings I'm slipping into my case." Or similarly, "That demo mic I took to show my bandmates sold a lot of other microphones. I deserve to keep this for free, and then the store doesn't have to pay me an extra commission."

Rationalize all they want, it's still theft. It's often honest folks who distort reality and justify this behavior. That's why we need store protocols to prevent it.

First rule — nothing leaves the store without a receipt. Written documentation needs to preclude anything going out the door. We need to track everything that leaves the perimeter. Honest folks forget, memories blur and if time gets by, it's easy to disregard store ownership. We are very serious about this protocol as a condition of employment, and if it goes unheeded, it is grounds for termination.

Pilfering can also happen on the sales floor. You probably have some kind of customer "hold" box or layaway section, and our

folks need to realize if they've physically put their own "wishes" in these areas, they diminish profit potential and store cash flow. Even there, some kind of store documentation is necessary. These areas need to be surveyed (and purged) regularly, too.

Periodic inventory checks are necessary to correct internal counts, but discrepancies must be accounted for by a handful of trusted individuals assigned to take the time to sort out the root cause of these errors.

Don't let staff ring up the sale of personal goods. Frankly, they shouldn't even get pop machine change for themselves. Hands in the register demand accountable witnesses.

This also includes the time clock. No one should be allowed to punch in another employee. Time is money, including personal trips to the car and errands on company time. This is not something every employee automatically understands.

As author Arnold Glasow said, "Temptation usually comes in through a door that has been deliberately left open." **MI**

Ted Eschliman is a 30-year veteran of music retail and co-owner of Dietze Music in Southeast Nebraska. Mel Bay published

FROM THE TRENCHES | BY MYRNA SISLEN

The Greeting Battle

I realized that something was terribly wrong when I placed an ad on Craigslist for a new employee. One of my current staffers asked if she could write it. I agreed and she wrote, “We are a very congenial group where everyone is a musician, and we all help each other ...” The word “work” did not appear anywhere in her version of the posting. Of course I changed it.

A day or so later, I arrived at my store, and, as I was parking my car, I noticed a man walk into the store with his son. I watched them, while I slowly gathered my stuff and walked our store dog, Mozart, before heading into the shop myself. There were five of my employees behind the counter, happily engrossed in “congenial” conversation, while the customer and his son wandered unnoticed in the aisles. I went immediately to them and asked if I could help. The father answered, “I would like to buy a guitar for my son.”

Well, I have watched “The Dog Whisperer” enough to know that if the dog misbehaves, it’s always the fault of the owner. Not that I see my staff as canines, of course, but what kind of culture had I created that would make their behavior acceptable? So acceptable that even my coming into the store didn’t embarrass them into helping the customer.

Something needed to be done immediately. But what? It’s not that I hadn’t mentioned greeting customers before. I had — about a million times. Obviously they hadn’t gotten the message.

THE FIX

I discussed the issue with several colleagues, who all had the same suggestion: Put them on commission and that will solve the problem. I decided to do the opposite.

First, I had “the talk” with each one. I explained how important customer service is to a store like ours, and that all I am asking is for them to do the following: When a customer enters the store (a bell actually rings when the door opens), I want to see all heads turn. I don’t care what you are doing: the customer takes precedence over everything. All you have to do is walk over and say, “Hello, if there is anything we

can do to help, let us know.” If they don’t have questions, go back to whatever you were doing.

But that meant they had to walk over to the customer, not shout from behind the counter.

I asked them, “How important is greeting the customer? Well, how long do you want us to be in business? How long do you want to keep getting paid?” If I am in the store, and I get to the customer before you do, you are not doing your job.”

I not only gave each of them the talk, I gave each of them a raise, too, contingent on their customer-response time.

I know this sounds crazy from a motivational standpoint. It was working for a while, but one day, when there were four employees busily working and a customer entered the store, not one head turned except mine. It broke my heart, but I realized that there needed to be a bit more tweaking. I added another component, which really has seemed to work.

After my old store manager left, I had not named another one. I corrected this as well as named an assistant store manager and department managers. Now we’re running like a well-oiled machine. The combination of monetary incentive and defined positions has resulted in customer service that pleases even me. **MI**

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



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MY TURN | BY FRED GRETSCH

All in the Family

My name is Fred Gretsch and my wife, Dinah, and I are proud members of an amazing club — the great American family business. As many *Music Inc.* readers know, our company, which is celebrating 130 remarkable years in business this year, is a maker of guitars and drums for such well-known artists as Chet Atkins, George Harrison, Charlie Watts, Chick Webb and Brian Setzer, among many others.



According to a recent study conducted by Family Enterprise USA, there are 5.5 million family businesses in the United States that contribute \$8.3 trillion (that's 57 percent) of the U.S. GDP, employ 63 percent of the workforce and are responsible for 78 percent of all new job creation.

But you really don't hear about family businesses very much in the media. In fact, the numbers above probably surprised you because you thought American family businesses were about as alive and well as buggy whip manufacturers. Maybe they aren't as exciting as the technology start-ups, or gadget makers that dominate the news media, but the good old-fashioned American business is quietly still getting things done in this country. And the music products industry is blessed with quite a few of them.

DEEP ROOTS

In 1883, Friedrich Gretsch, 27, who emigrated from Germany at the age of 16, opened a small music shop in Brooklyn, N.Y., making banjos, drums and tambourines. Six generations later, our family members remain active in the business. I know the old adage that says "business and family don't mix." But in my experience, quite the opposite has been true.

The Gretsch Company makes a creative product — musical instruments that we put into the hands of some of world's most amazing players as well as your podiatrist down the street. And creativity involves passion, which has positives and negatives. Channeled correctly, this passion can be passed down through the generations and transferred into the products a company produces.

Antonio Stradivarius, the famous Italian violin maker, also had

passion. And he led a prosperous life too, while creating some of the most amazing violin designs the world has ever known. But beyond his life, his family did not benefit from his name and designs. Passion and creativity are not always enough. It takes a mix of skills and talents to make a company that lasts. And families are a great source of differentiated skill sets.

Dinah has handled operations and finances for our company for 34 years. And she is one in a long line of strong Gretsch women who kept the company and the family together during good times and bad.

My great grandmother, Rosa Behman Gretsch, after learning of her husband's death while he was on a business trip to Germany in 1895, had to guide her then-teenage son Fred Sr., my grandfather, as he stepped into the daunting role of company president. The Gretsch Company would not be here today if not for her independence and foresight. And that's what you see in families. People doing extraordinary things for the ones they love.

I believe the American family business is an unsung hero with many great tales to tell. Not just stories about business, but those that really matter. Stories that connect us to something much larger than a paycheck. **MI**

Fred Gretsch is president of The Gretsch Company.

The good old-fashioned American business is quietly still getting things done in this country

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ON THE

WORDS & PHOTOS BY JEFF CAGLE

Ten years after he bought the business, dave helms brings muncie music center into the top 100 with a glittering new building and an unwavering commitment to the school market.

ERISE

Four years ago Dave Helms had almost had enough. His store, Muncie Music Center — a full-line shop in downtown Muncie, Ind., that specializes in school band rentals — was overstuffed with merchandise, customer parking was non-existent, the bustling repair shop was in a windowless basement and the location was becoming landlocked by the ever-expanding Indiana Vocational Technical College.

Helms, who had bought the business in 2003, had been making do at the 50-year-old location for years, adding slatwall here and there and putting in new lights. The last straw, however, came when customers started complaining.

"We had done everything we could, to the point you just couldn't do anything else to it," Helms said. "It got to the point where customers would say, 'I really love you guys, but I can't stand shopping here.' That was a big thing."

Always a hands-on kind of guy, Helms decided to take action. He started putting his ideas on paper. On vacations and work trips he popped into various stores around the country to look at layouts and window placements, and whether or not it had a stage. If his staff members took a trip, he'd have them take pictures of stores to send back. At trade shows he pressed other owners who had opened or remodeled stores about what worked and what didn't.

"Going to things like NASMD and NAMM — that's when you can really network with people and say, 'What did you do that sucked?' or 'What did you do that was cool?'" Helms said. "And it works. I had some people who said it was an absolute fiasco to try this method or do that, but [something else] had worked great. Incorporating other ideas was something I was after for a long time. That's how the design came about. I had it on paper several times."

Once he had assembled his dream scrapbook of a store — and once the business had retired the debt incurred from the purchase — Helms again wasted no time taking action.

"After paying that debt off there was the thought that, if we're going to think strategically

about the next 15 or 20 years, if we're going to do it, let's do it right," he said. "It wasn't just for the simple fact of building a new building to be cool."

He cold-called an architect in

of space to move, handicap accessibility, soundproof electric and acoustic guitar rooms, a performance stage, warehouse area, and a large repair shop. The repair shop is a particular point

WHILE NOT EVERY REPAIR CAN BE MADE ON THE ROAD, HELMS BELIEVES HIS PRICING MODEL BUILDS TRUST AND LOYALTY

town and after a couple of meetings to go over his plans, he hired them in May 2012. A contractor was hired soon after, and they broke ground in June. This past January, barely six months after the first shovel pierced the earth, the new Muncie Music Center opened for business.

Situated on the south end of Muncie's downtown business district, at 9,300 square feet, the single-level new store is nearly twice the size of the old location. It has seven private lessons studios, a group teaching classroom, a vastly improved showroom with lots

of pride, and Helms will go out of his way to point out that it includes a same-level, walk-up customer window and another with access to the outside world and daylight, a vast improvement over their previous quarters.

Helms and his new store have already made a splash: at the end of May, Muncie Music Center received word that it was designated one of NAMM's Top 100 Dealers and was in the running for Best Exterior Presentation and/or Merchandising Display, Best Emerging Dealer "Rookie of the Year," and the overall Dealer of the Year awards.

BIG BANDS — AND BEYOND

Muncie Music Center was founded in 1941 by Adiel Hofherr — a trombonist who played in a number of big bands including those of Johnny Hamp, Tommy Dorsey and Henry Busse — and his wife, Olive. The store has long been a fixture in downtown Muncie, and earned a reputation as the place to go for band and orchestral instruments. Over the decades, the business has grown to serve more than 60 school systems in 26 counties across Indiana and Ohio, and has picked up guitars, amplifiers, percussion, lighting and pro audio, while pianos and organs have come and gone.

A native of Muncie, Helms said while he was in high school he hounded road rep Jeff Shrieve for a job, but it wasn't until 1984, when he enrolled at Ball State University — where he would go on to earn a music performance degree

and an MBA — that he finally started working at Muncie Music Center. Adiel Hofherr died only a few weeks after Helms started, and Olive a decade later; though ownership changed hands a couple of times before Helms bought the company in August 2003, a key core of employees has stayed relatively intact.

On top of Helms' 29 years, Scott Twibell has been with the company 19 years, Jerry Kuhn 15 years. Shrieve started in 1969. But Joan White is by far the longest-serving employee. She started with the company as a teenager in 1947, took eight

A LOOK AT THE NEW MUNCIE MUSIC CENTER

BASS ROOM



ACOUSTIC ROOM



STORE FRONT



REPAIR SHOP



MAIN FLOOR



Helms (center)
surrounded by
his staff



years off to raise children before returning, and still comes in a couple days a week at 83 years old. Helms has nine full-time and five part-time employees, and all of their tenures are measured in years rather than months.

Key to the longevity? Helms is quick to credit the Hofherrs with nurturing a community centered around music. It's a commitment he continues to pass along to his staff and the various customers his store serves.

"It came down to a family who cared," Helms said. "He gave away a lot of horns and helped out kids. One thing I try to instill in all my guys is, you better have passion doing this. Anyone can go down to Walmart and sell trash bags. But if you're selling an oboe or a print music book or a cool guitar strap, you better know what you're talking

about and it better be something that you're passionate about. That's the type of people we get and why they stay so long."

DRIVING THROUGH ECONOMIC STORMS

Though Muncie Music Center has become a full-line retailer (with the exception of pianos and organs), the largest portion of its business remains school band rentals and sales. Helms said about 40 percent of the store's business comes through school rentals, with another 10 to 15 percent through school sales, despite serving demographic areas that have taken significant economic hits.

"Our demographics are pretty rough; I can take you five blocks from the store to crack houses or out to a farmland where people

don't have two pennies to rub together, or there's a meth lab down the road," Helms said. "Twenty-five years ago, part of our service area would have had 15 UAW-based auto companies like ACDelco, GM and Chevrolet hiring 40-, 50-, 60,000 employees in just a three- or four-county area. They're gone. So we've had a big hit socioeconomically. But band still seems to be an important thing."

While Indiana's overall fiscal health is better than most states, music education has suffered as it has everywhere else.

"Did a lot of our schools have orchestras 20 years ago? Yeah. We're down to three or four out of our 60 school systems. So that's where they've cut. They've cut general music out of the elementary level, but they're still trying to have a be-

ginning band."

Tradition, he thinks, plays a big part in why parents and students are still interested in band.

"Ultimately, when a parent goes to a football game they want to hear the school song," he said. "They couldn't care less about some Mozart piece, but they better hear the school song and the 'Star Spangled Banner,' and they better be played well. There's still that need to do that."

To meet that need, Helms is often on the road up to five days a week, along with his two other road reps. And being on the road is where Helms' hands-on approach to running his business becomes literal.

"We try to fix as many things as we can on the road — free of charge — which is old-school," he said. "If it takes a part or two we may charge \$5 or \$10, but if I can go into a school that's 58 miles away and they're not going to see me for another week, how much more value are we giving them by fixing three horns?"

At a recent stop, Helms said, a director approached him with a tuba that needed to be repaired, expecting it would take up to a week, even though he needed it back the next day for a graduation ceremony. Helms said he tinkered around with it a bit, gave it a new valve guide and handed it back a few minutes later to the director, who was stunned.

While not every repair can be made on the road, Helms said he believes his pricing model is what builds trust and loyalty, and is why he's lost only one or two accounts in the nearly 30 years he's been with Muncie

Music Center.

"If I have to take it in, we take it in and charge," he said. "We have to make sure everyone's mortgage is paid. But some stores have profit centers that are kind of skewed and they'll charge 10 times what we would charge for stuff. Should we charge more? Maybe. But I look at [what we do] as a value-added item.

IT HAS A MODERN, UP-TO-DATE LOOK. PEOPLE GET A GOOD VIBE WHEN THEY WALK INTO A PLACE LIKE THAT."

"I've won a couple accounts because X company will charge \$400 for something that I literally would have quoted them \$58. Those are the things that help maintain loyalty and build it with new customers. I'm really proud of the fact that we've lost very few schools and have gained a whole lot."

Another part of that equation, according to Helms, is that his directors are dealing directly with him and other decision-makers.

"I don't have to go to my district manager or vice president or owner to make sure I can sell something for 10 percent off what I normally would," he said. "If I need to make a sale, I'm gonna make it. There aren't layers of bureaucracy."

THE HAZARDS OF BEING HANDS-ON

But with all the positives, Helms said he realizes something is going to eventually have to give so he can focus more of his attention on managing the whole company, especially now that it's in the new location.

"It's gonna have to change," he said. "It kills me to not be around the store. The windshield time kills me because I'm driv-

ing and thinking about everything else I have to do. Or there's windshield time and I missed a couple good sales or managing some things. You still have to manage. And it hurts my relationship with my family because there's times that I'm working 60, 70, 80 hours a week."

Helms said he's already handed off about a quarter of his route, but ideally he'd like to keep one day to get out, see the students and keep in touch with his best accounts.



"I love meeting with the kids," he said. "I have a music performance degree [and], I still love teaching. I love walking into a room and a kid is messing around with a clarinet and I ask if they need some help,

go fix some notes and work on tone quality. I still like the feeling of walking in and being like Norm from 'Cheers,' with everyone saying 'Dave!' or 'The music guy!' or 'Mr. Helms!' That's kind of cool. It's nice to

keep a relationship out there so next year when I'm hopefully on the road only one day a week I can get my fix, if you will."

Though Helms is looking to cut down on his road time, he's not exactly looking to ease off the gas pedal. He'll still be the same hands-on business owner he always has been, just concentrated closer to home.

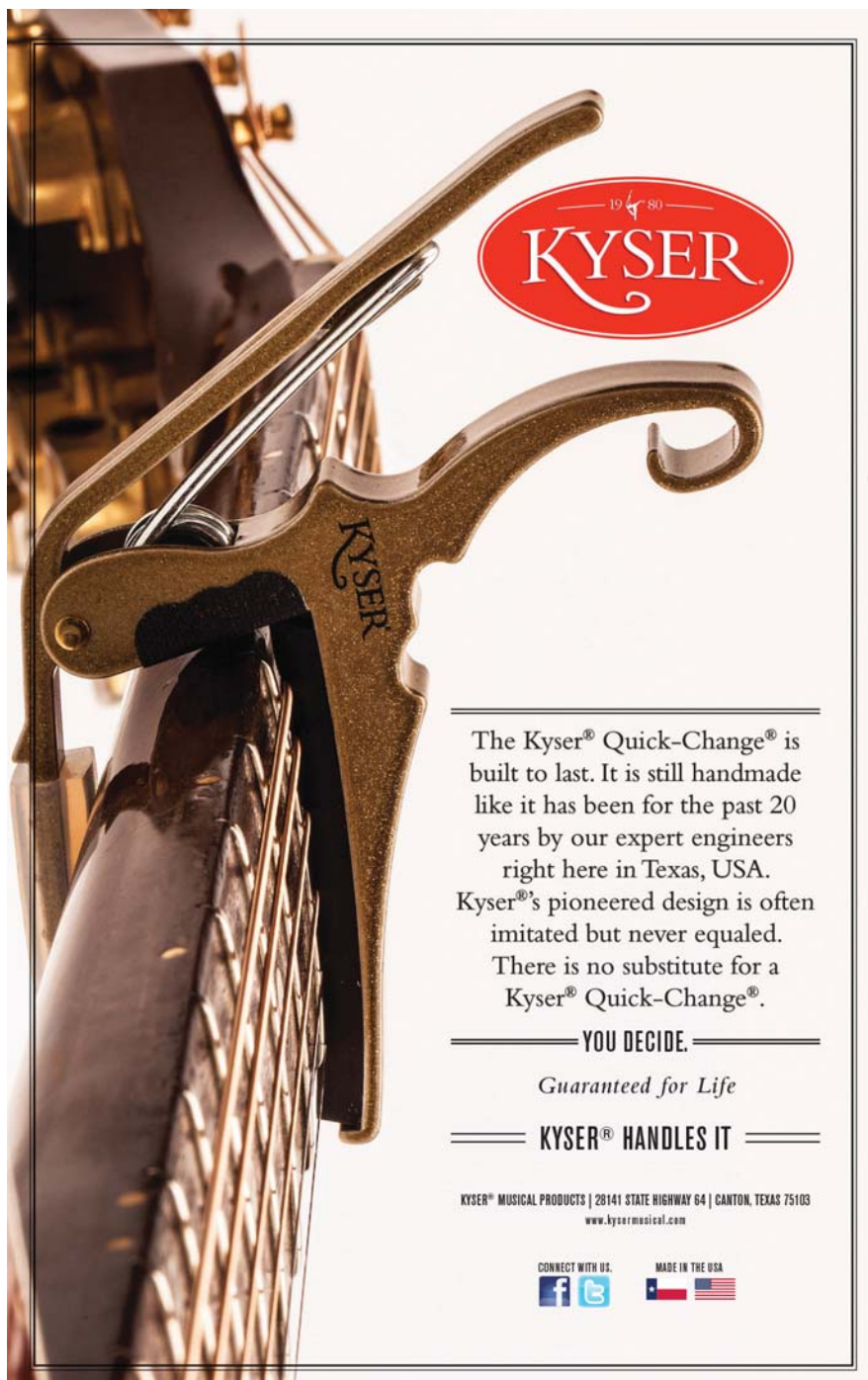
The advanced college student might not be the typical customer of Muncie Music Center, but Helms still gets plenty of business from Ball State University, his alma mater, which is located in town, and his continued presence on campus has other, potentially longer-lasting benefits than a repair or sale.

"Most of the kids at that level have their horns," Helms said. "We cater to sixth grade through 12th grade. But those college students are also the kids who will be my directors in two years when they graduate. I can easily name a dozen kids who are 25 to 40 years old who all came out of Ball State. It's great to put my name and face in front of 30 potential band directors."

COMMUNITY VISIBILITY — LIKE A WALK IN THE PARK

The Muncie Music Center name will also be highly visible, literally, from Canan Commons, an urban park that opened in late 2011 that features a permanent outdoor stage, which is situated directly across the street from where Muncie Music Center broke ground. The park will play host to a series of free concerts this summer — produced by the Muncie Downtown Development Partnership, Muncie Arts and Culture Council, and the city itself — with performances by the Otis Taylor Band, Iris DeMent and the Rebirth Brass Band, among other local bands. Helms and his staff will convert the store's group learning classroom into a green room for the larger performances, giving artists a place to prepare before and unwind after performances.

"They'll be able to get set up, change clothes, and if it's 95 degrees and humid they'll have a nice cool place to relax," Helms



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ON THE RISE



said. "After the show they can come on back and if there happens to be a signing we can hold it in the store."

Though rain forced a venue change for the first performance of the season, Helms is optimistic about the potential long-term return from in-kind donations like P.A. equipment and mic stands, as well as simple visibility.

"More than 1,000 people are going to be sitting in that grass jamming and [when] they look across the street and see cool guitars and a neat store, we're top-of-mind," he said. "Tons of people have come in and been like, 'Wow.' It has a modern, up-to-date look in good ol' Muncie. It has gone from the traditional little Muncie Music Center to being a pretty cool store. People get a good vibe when they walk into a place like that."

Helms is the first to admit that it takes more than good vibes and a cool store to make a business work. He'd like to see his lesson program double in the next year, which could nearly pay the mortgage for the store, and more rentals come through online, including the guaranteed autopsys that come with that. And while familiar

questions from 10 years ago when he took on debt and first bought the business may occasionally creep back into his head, if the recent industry recognition can serve as any confirmation, Helms seems to be a man with a plan.

"When I bought the store I sat down and pored over the math," he said. "I wasn't sure about it, but you know what? You only live once. Had I not bought it, who would have? And where would I have had a job? Is there still a risk? Sure. Am I looking at hitting my line of credit here in the next week to get through June? Yes. But I also spent one-time costs that the store needed like blinds, computers and a security system. Once I get past the one year of cash flow killing me, we'll be back to where the math works. We have autonomy here and everyone's pretty relaxed. I'm not sitting here with pages and pages of spreadsheets and thousands of SKUs. Should I? Probably. But nothing but numbers, frankly, grosses me out because I come from an organic point of view. I figure if we do everything right, the numbers are gonna work." **MI**

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Photo by
Arielle Kohn

MIKE UPTON OF KALA

Mike Upton is the founder of Kala Brand Music Company in northern California. Established in 2005, Kala builds 120-plus models of ukulele, including travel and bass variations.

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

I crack open the Bible and read Proverbs. I get a lot of business wisdom out of that book. “A soft answer turns away wrath” — there’s one. Then I grab my two VPs, we pray, and then we launch into our day, which usually involves a lot of coffee.

WHERE DID THE NAME KALA COME FROM?

Kala means several things in Hawaiian. It’s the name of a unicorn fish, and slang for money, but it also has a historical component to it. Tribes of the various islands would fight, but when they came to a truce, they would have something called the kala where they would forgive each other, make peace and move on. I liked the diversity of meanings, and the idea of coming together in peace.

HOW DOES THE NAME ALIGN WITH YOUR BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY?

There’s this duality when you’re in business. You want to make money, but it’s balanced with wanting to live a peaceful life with yourself, God, and your customers and vendors. We love our customers. If the people who end up with our instruments are happy, that’s the best marketing we can do. That goes for the stores that we sell through as well. They’re our customers as much as the end user.

YOUR FATHER INTRODUCED YOU TO THE UKULELE.

He’s in his 80s, and he still plays. He formed a ukulele club at his retirement center. He played a lot of music when I was young, guitar and harmonica, but he pulled out the ukulele especially, so the instrument was always around.

ARE YOU OF HAWAIIAN DESCENT?

I am not. My family is from England. But I did live in Hawaii from 1989 to 1994 and I have family there, so there was certainly a connection before I started the company.

YOU PRONOUNCE THE NAME OF THE INSTRUMENT DIFFERENTLY THAN I’VE HEARD BEFORE.

That’s the Hawaiian pronunciation. Ooh-ku-LE-le, without the YU.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO START AN UKULELE COMPANY?

I started working for Hohner in 1995 and had migrated from the warehouse into sales in Hawaii. In 1998, we started developing a line of ukuleles, and that’s where I really got interested in the instrument. When they relocated in 2005, I chose not to go with them. I started Kala. I was already in that business and wanted to do it for myself and use my own ideas. I saw an opportunity, even back in the early 2000s. There weren’t that many people interested then — just enough to see the beginning of a real trend.

IS THE UKULELE COOL?

It’s not cool, but the fact that it’s not cool is cool. You see it everywhere because it’s so easy to play, portable, fairly inexpensive, and so much fun. It’s easy to get a group of people playing together around the ukulele and there seems to be a community aspect around it. It’s an inclusive instrument.

DO YOU SEE THE TREND CONTINUING?

Yes, and I think we’ll see some evolution, like with the resurgence of acoustic guitar in the ’90s. Because of the sheer numbers of people playing, there will be new products coming out — maybe more interest in steel-stringed ukes, different tunings, maybe different body shapes. Ukuleles will be around because so many people have come into music through them and consider themselves ukulele players. It has essentially created another category of stringed instrument.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO MAKE THE U-BASS?

That happened by chance. Owen Holt came up with the concept. I met him in 2007, and he had his ukulele bass, which was the predecessor of the U-BASS. I tried it and flipped out, because I play bass myself. I was excited. Owen wanted to work with someone who could build the instruments a little less expensively and get them introduced into a great market, so that’s how we began.

“The uke has created another category of stringed instrument.”

WAS IT WELL-RECEIVED?

Over the next several years, it got some notoriety because it got into the hands of great players like Abraham Laboriel. Hector Maldonado from Train started playing one on stage. Jim Mayer from Jimmy Buffet’s band plays one quite a bit. Then it started getting into recording studios and just took off. That’s been a big part of our success in the last three to four years.

CAN YOU QUANTIFY?

We hit about \$14.8 million in sales last year between ukuleles and the U-BASS. Unit-wise, I think we approached 300,000 sold. This year in particular is interesting, because a lot of people have jumped on the bandwagon. Almost every stringed instrument company now offers ukuleles and new companies are starting to offer the instruments as well. It’s gotten a bit more competitive, but we have a strong brand and that lends itself to solid business.

IF NOT THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

I’ve been in the music industry my whole life, starting with playing bass in bands. If not that, I’d probably just be out in the garden. I love growing stuff. **MI**

WALK-THROUGH LONG & MCQUADE

The unusual three-door storefront of the flagship location, and (below) a street-level entrance just for rentals



BIG IN CANADA

BY DAVID ZIVAN

With more than 60 stores across Canada, Long & McQuade is that nation's largest MI retailer. But it had a modest beginning. In 1956, Jack Long, a Toronto-based trumpet player, became a band instrument dealer, opening in an old house that had been converted to music studios. He taught lessons on the side — and under the same roof he met Jack McQuade, a drum teacher. The operation grew (for more on that, see page 24) and today the company has more than 1,200 employees.

The Toronto flagship location shown here has an unusual, three-storefront footprint (one neighboring owner would not sell his building, when Long & McQuade wanted to expand) and a storied history; the corner building housing pro audio and drums once was the Concord Tavern, a venue that saw early performances from The Band's Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm, among others. Here's a look at an exemplary urban location with music at its very foundation.





AUDIO & RECORDING

Headphones (top left) and recording gear (below) are “wired up and ready to go,” says department manager Michael Puntis — while a wall of Yorkville P.A. equipment (top right) speaks to the store’s roots.



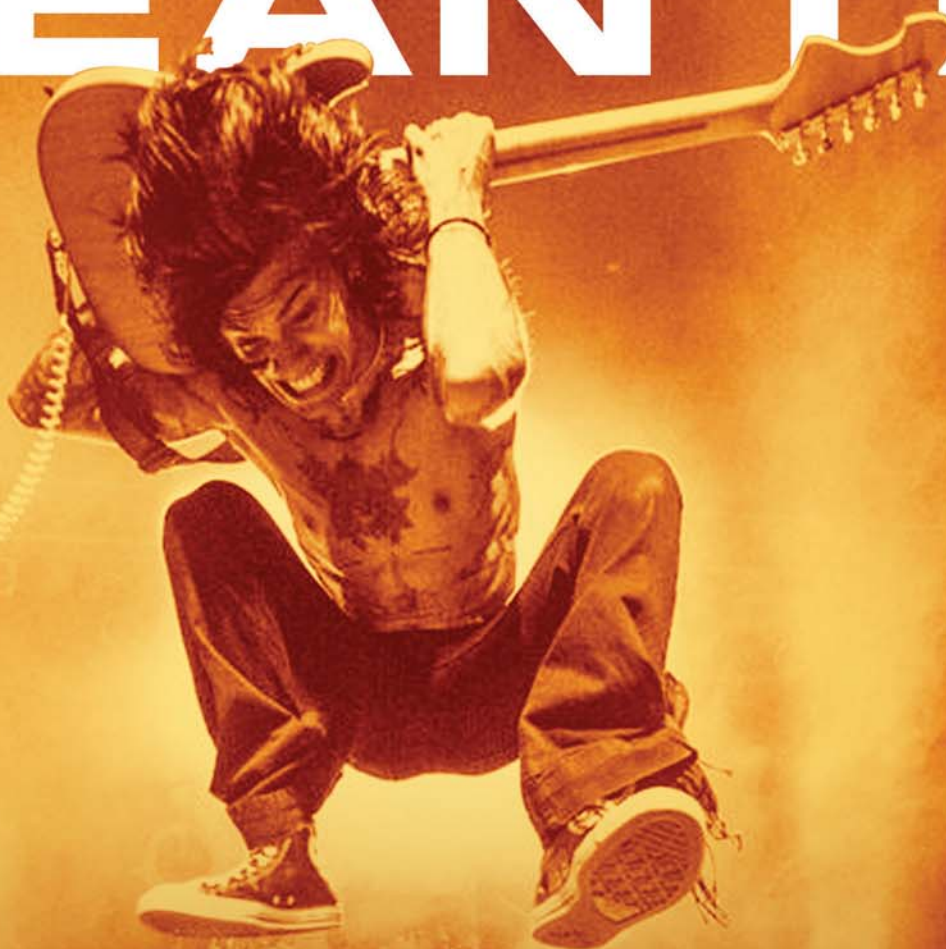


B&O, KEYBOARDS

The strings and band sections (not to mention accordions) are densely merchandised and expertly staffed. In the keyboard area (below left), customers can also find controllers and interfaces.



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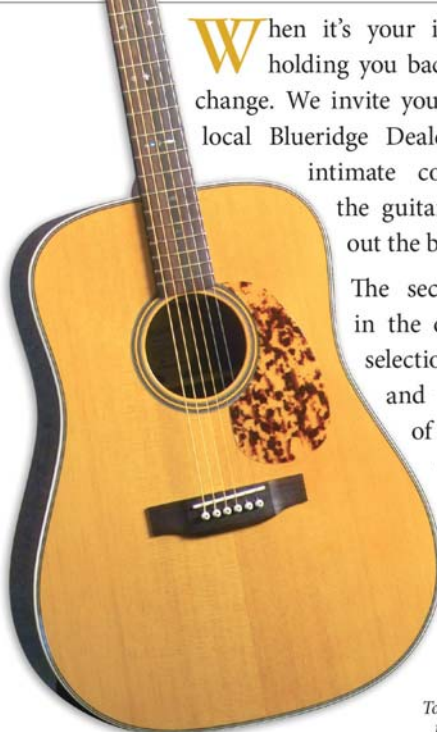




DRUMS & PERCUSSION

The jam-packed drum department is in the basement of the main building. "They do a lot of business down here," Puntis said. "This is where drummers want to go when they die. There's no shortage of shiny things."





BR-160 Dreadnaught

When it's your instrument that's holding you back, it's time for a change. We invite you to stop by your local Blueridge Dealer and have an intimate conversation with the guitar that will bring out the best in you.

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WALK-THROUGH LONG & MCQUADE



PRINT

"Beautifully laid out, and not too stuffy — it's welcoming," Puntis said. "Customers can do their own thing. This is probably the biggest selection we've ever had."



THE LEGACY STARTS HERE

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Same powerful ZBT alloy. New features & models in 2013.

All ZBT models now feature extensive lathing, a traditional finish, and a newly redesigned ZBT logo. Larger models have been added to the line including a 22" ZBT Ride and 17" and 19" ZBT Crashes. New box set assortments now feature our new models and a value added 10" Trashformer.

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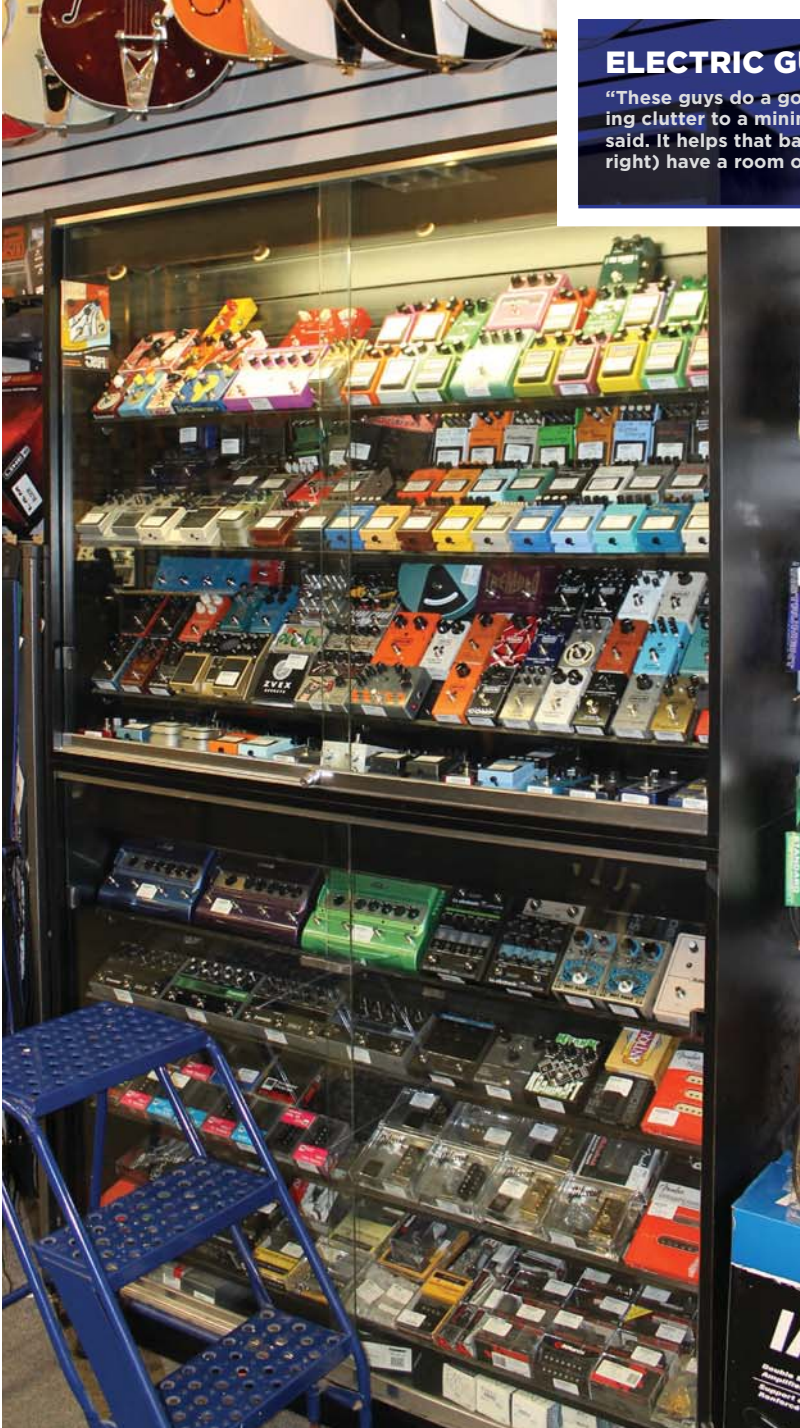
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Zildjian
SOUND LEGACY



ELECTRIC GUITAR & BASS

"These guys do a good job of keeping clutter to a minimum," Puntis said. It helps that basses (bottom right) have a room of their own.





ACOUSTIC GUITARS

"When you come in here in the winter, you get fogged glasses," Puntis said. "It's all humidity and heat controlled."



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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES PAGE 62

AUDIO & RECORDING PAGE 66

DRUMS & PERCUSSION PAGE 70

PIANO & KEYBOARDS PAGE 72

BAND & ORCHESTRA PAGE 74

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DJ & LIGHTING PAGE 78

► MOKU SELECT MAHOGANY SERIES

The series' ukes are handmade and constructed from select tone woods. All models feature East Indian rosewood fingerboards and abalone inlaid sound holes. mokuukes.com

► KALA TRAVEL-POCKET UKE

Kala has morphed two of its models into this portable uke. Measuring 16 inches from top to bottom, the uke comes complete with a padded bag. kalabrand.com

► KOHALA AKAMAI SERIES

The Akamai series includes nine new models featuring mahogany construction, rosewood fingerboard and bridge, and genuine Aquila strings. kohalaukes.com

► EASTMAN MD305 A-STYLE MANDOLIN

This model boasts "Old World" craftsmanship, a solid spruce top, solid maple neck, back and sides, and white mother-of-pearl inlays. eastmanguitars.com

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New
stringed
instruments
that will be
surefire
sellers this
holiday



► **CORDOBA C9 DOLCE**

The C9 Dolce is a 7/8 sized version of the C9. With a slightly reduced body size and scale length, the C9 Dolce is ideal for the player looking for the feel and comfort of a smaller instrument. {cordobaguitars.com}

► **YAMAHA APXT2**

The three-quarter size APXT2 guitar is a smaller version of the company's APX500II. The new model features Yamaha's Acoustic Resonance Transducer (A.R.T.) System68 pickup system with built-in tuner and a spruce top. {yamaha.com}

► **THE LOAR LH-280**

The new LH-280 features an archtop cutaway with dual humbuckers and a 16-inch lower bout. Based on a classic Florentine cutaway design, the model offers players classic archtop style in an electric guitar. {theloar.com}

HOLIDAY PREP FROM THE PROS



RANDY LUNA
GUITARS BOUTIQUE GUAYNABO, PUERTO RICO

START STOCKIN' UP NOW

"In preparation for Christmas, every order that we send to suppliers from August to November includes extras of the items we know we sell regularly. For example, we might normally order two of a particular model of a guitar or amp, but then August comes and we double the amount we order for the next few months prior to the holidays. That way, we keep replenishing our regular stock, while getting stock levels ready for the upcoming season.

"We also do our predictions: Our staff figures out what the trends are for the year, what the hot items have been and what we know we can push easily. Of course accessories are important so we stock up on straps, gig bags, stands and tuners, which are an easy add-on to any sale.

"Additionally, we look for novelty items that we could show to those who don't play an instrument, but are looking for something to give their family. Last year our top choices were the Vox AmPhone and the Intellitouch Freedom One."

MEISEL | COM-250
METROTUNER

Tune Up

The new Meisel COM-250 Metrotuner features a special clip designed to fit violin and viola scrolls. Due to the clip's design and extra wide opening, the COM-250 will fit virtually any instrument and can even be clamped to a violin or viola body. It offers a color display and built-in mic transducer. meisellaccessories.com



BLACK DIAMOND STRINGS | NEW PACKAGING

New Models

Black Diamond Strings recently debuted a new package design for eight of its best-selling models. The new art reflects vintage Black Diamond packaging and features a different female model for each set. Getting the new look are Black Diamond's 477 series electric sets, 600 series acoustic sets and 400 series bass sets. blackdiamondstrings.com



SHUBB | SATIN BRUSHED CAPO

Smooth as Satin

Shubb's latest capo offers a smooth satin-brushed nickel finish. The capo has updated features, including the roller wheel mechanism and rounded smooth edges. MSRP: \$26.95. shubb.com



LEVY'S LEATHERS | HENDRIX LINE

Handwritten Hendrix

Levy's Leathers' new Jimi Hendrix handwritten lyrics guitar straps feature his images and handwritten song lyrics. Each sublimation-printed polyester strap features an original design, song title and lyric excerpt on the front with the full song lyrics printed on the back. levysleathers.com



SKB CASES | ATA CASES

Just in Case

SKB's recently added Watertight Injection Molded ATA guitar and bass cases to its lineup. The cases are made of ultra-high strength polypropylene copolymer resin, with a gasketed, water- and dust-proof seal, stainless steel hinge pins, patented "trigger release" latches, two TSA locks, and snap-down rubber-over molded cushion grip handles. skbcases.com



OPTION KNOB | VKNOB

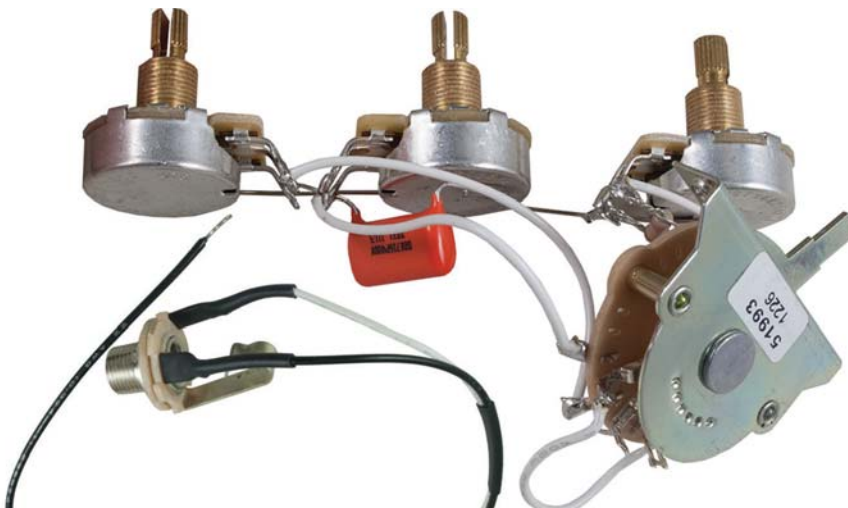
Volume Control

The VKnob is a replacement for the volume knob on electric guitars that enables players to instantly execute volume control and fast volume swells with ease. The VKnob's "arm" design extends volume control closer to the strumming area, allowing for quicker and easier volume adjustment on the fly. MSRP: \$12.95. vknob.com

MOD KITS | PRE-WIRED ASSEMBLIES

Get Wired

MOD Kits DIY has introduced its new line for guitar modification, Pre-Wired Assemblies. Used to upgrade existing guitar electronics, MOD pre-wired assemblies enhances overall tone and playing experience. Each MOD pre-wired assembly has a treble bleed volume pot mod helping retain clarity when a player rolls back on their volume knob. modkitsdiy.com



SOUND OFF

The latest pro audio additions to make registers jingle



► **AVID S3L**
Avid's new S3L delivers the sound quality, performance and features of Avid live systems in a new modular, networked design. avid.com

► **ROLAND INTEGRA-7**

The plug-in editor provides visual control of the INTEGRA-7 parameters, which includes 6,000 sounds and independent SuperNATURAL acoustic, synth and drum sounds. rolandus.com



► **ASHLY AUDIO NX AMPLIFIERS**

These amplifiers deliver up to 12,000 watts of power and are offered in four- or two-channel versions with selectable high-Z or low-Z output on each channel. ashly.com



► **TK AUDIO DP1MK3**

The DP1mk3 is an update on the DP1 preamp. The unit's design includes both vintage and modern circuits. tkaudio.se

► **YAMAHA MGP32X, MGP24X**

The new mixing consoles add three new digital features: USB device recording and playback, graphic EQ and a multi-band compressor. They are ideal for small to mid-sized venues and touring bands. yamaha.com



SWIRLYGIG | SWIRLYHOOK

Get Hooked

SwirlyGig recently launched the SwirlyHook – a new way to store headphones, tambourines and cables right where you need them. The SwirlyHook is easy to install and features no moving parts and no assembly. Just slip the hook on to a mic stand or any 5/8-inch tube. It stays in place using friction and gravity. {swirlygig.com}



CAD AUDIO | MH510GD

CAD Gets Colorful

CAD has expanded its Sessions series of headphones with new custom color additions. The new Sessions MH510GD phones in gold/white are now available, and will be followed by custom colors, such as chrome/white, high-tech grey/white and pink/white. MSRP: \$159. {cadaudio.com}



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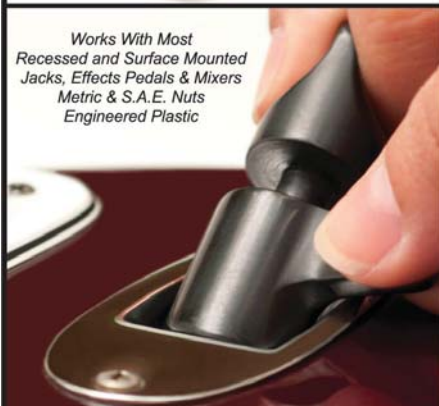
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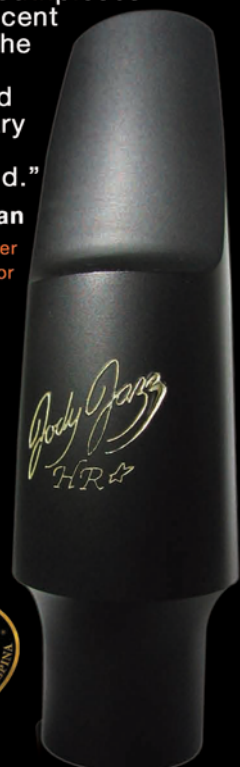
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Caleb Chapman

Crescent Super
Band Director



JodyJazz.com

ALTO PROFESSIONAL | TS115

Good Vibes

Alto Professional's TS115 Vibe is the latest addition to the Truesonic lineup. As an active loudspeaker, the TS115 Vibe supplies 800 watts of Class D digital power. The two-way speaker system features a 15-inch low-frequency driver matched to a 1-inch neodymium high-frequency transducer, delivering a balanced sound across the entire spectrum. The TS115 Vibe also boasts an onboard solid-state media player. altoproaudio.com



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B&C SPEAKERS | 75MM DRIVERS

Full Speed

B&C Speakers' has released an updated range of 75mm (3-inch) voice coil high-frequency drivers. The drivers feature a titanium diaphragm that incorporates next-generation surround geometry with a brand new, optimized phase plug. bcspeakers.com

ON-STAGE STANDS | MS7201QTR

'Round & 'Round

On-Stage-Stands has launched the MS7201QTR Quarter-Turn Round Base microphone stand. Adopting the same technology found on the MS7625B and the MS7625PG, the MS7201QTR was designed to aid in set up and tear down. The stand has a 10-inch round base that is constructed from sand-cast steel for strength. MAP: \$29.95. onstagesstands.com



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DW, SABIAN | LIMITED EDITION CYMBAL

On the Edge

Drum Workshop and Sabian have joined forces to develop a snare drum combining features from both Sabian cymbals and DW Collector's series Edge snare drums. The result is a drum that combines musical Sabian Cymbal Alloy with carefully-selected Lake Birch wood. The Vault Edge rings are made of Sabian's B20 bell bronze.

dwdrums.com



EVANS | CUSTOM GRAPHIC MARCHING BASS DRUMHEADS

Show Your Spirit

Evans has expanded inkedbyevans.com to offer options for marching bands. Evans' Custom Graphic Marching Bass Drumheads are offered in sizes from 14 to 32 inches. Players can choose between Evans' MX (adjustable muffling design) and MS (non-muffled design) configurations, and the heads can be personalized with the drumline or school logo. evansdrumheads.com



REMO | POWERSTROKE 3 SERIES

All That Power

Remo is now applying a Black Dot to its line of Powerstroke 3 series bass drumheads. Offered in clear, coated and smooth white, Powerstroke 3 Black Dot drumheads provide deeper low tones for bass drums with a focused attack. Inspired by legendary drummer Steve Smith, the P3 Black Dot allows for a more focused lower note fundamental on all bass drum sizes and shell types. remo.com



PAOLO DE GREGORIO | DG "DRUMBOX" CAJON

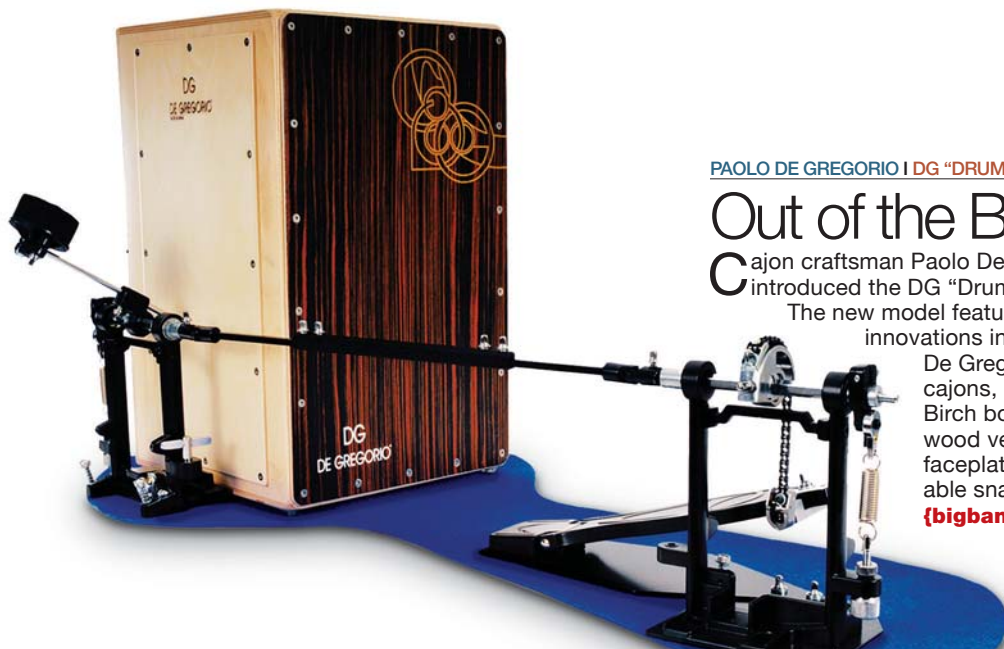
Out of the Box

Cajon craftsman Paolo De Gregorio has introduced the DG "DrumBox" Cajon.

The new model features many of the innovations incorporated into

De Gregorio's range of cajons, including Baltic Birch bodies, exotic wood veneers, removable faceplates and adjustable snare mechanisms.

{bigbangdist.com}



YAMAHA | DTX502

Revamped & Redesigned

Yamaha's revamped DTX502 electronic drums feature redesigned tom pads, a lighter-weight steel rack and a new drum trigger module. The DTX502 has almost twice the wave ROM and more than 250 additional sounds than the previous model. **{yamaha.com}**

HOLIDAY PREP FROM THE PROS



BRANDT BOURQUE
MUSIC INC. GONZALEZ, LA.

BEAT THE BIG BOX

"This year my goal is to beat the 'big box' Black Friday rush. In order to do that, we will start a special three-month, low-money-down layaway in early October along with special deals that the customer can lock in for shopping early. Also, we will really push '12 months no-interest financing,' which we provide in conjunction with a local financing company. I think being ahead of the big money marketing is the key for us."

KAWAI | CLASSIC SERIES

True Classic

Kawai recently updated versions of its Classic series of digital pianos. The Kawai CS7 and CS4 models offer enhanced digital features, while retaining the classic ebony polished cabinetry. The CS4 features the new RHII action, which has triple sensor key detection. The CS7 features real wooden keys and a mechanical design. **{kawai-us.com}**



KORG | KING KONG

No Monkey Business

Korg has debuted the King Kong analog modeling synth. Focused on live performance, it features Korg's new XMT engine, with a wide array of oscillators and filters that can model vintage analog synths. A 3-oscillator, 2-timbre design lets players generate thick and rich sounds. **{korg.com}**



HOLIDAY PREP
FROM THE PROS



JAMES HARDING
GIST PIANO CENTER, LOUISVILLE, KY.

SUCCESSFUL PROMOTION PLANNING

"We spend most of November contacting our prospects and building excitement for our largest annual piano sale, which we conduct a week or two before Thanksgiving. Immediately after that sale, we issue our Holiday Buyer's Guide in a PDF form to the members of our Partners In Education program, and we distribute printed copies to holiday recital attendees. We even take time before each recital to demonstrate some of our new holiday gift items, such as Christmas ornaments, wrapping paper or music boxes. Finally, we run a free promotion from Thanksgiving through the second week of December that invites members of our Partners In Education program to visit our store and record their own holiday CD.

"We promote all of these events on social media. The holidays are a busy time for everyone, but this schedule is fairly manageable, and it has succeeded in extending our reach from mid-September through Christmas. We plan our promotional calendar at least one year in advance so we have enough time to put all of this together and make it successful."

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D'ADDARIO | KAPLAN VIOLA STRING SET

All Set Up

D'Addario's Kaplan viola string set features D, G and C strings. They offer a rich tonal palette and superb bowing response as well as durability. The Kaplan viola set is available in long scale (for instruments with a 16-inch body length and over), in medium and heavy tensions. A light tension A string is also available in long scale. daddariobowed.com



BAM | NEW TREKKING

A New Trek

BAM has released new editions to its Trekking line. The shaped ultra compact backpack cases are built for extreme transportation. BAM designed the cases slimmer and smaller and rearranged and optimized the inner order of the cases. A hard shell relief was added to better protect against accidental shocks to the case and the instrument. bamcases.com



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AIM GIFTS | TUMBLERS

Drink Up

AIM Gifts has unveiled new 16 oz. travel tumblers. The tumblers are double insulated and made from plastic. With five different musical designs, the tumblers are ideal for both on the go or staying at home. aimgifts.com



ALFRED | 'PREMIER PIANO COURSE'

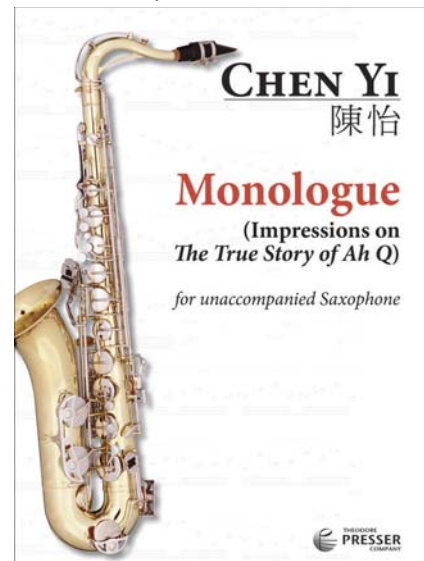
Three-Course Lessons

Alfred's new *Premier Piano Course* includes *Great Music & Musicians*, *Jazz, Rags & Blues*, and *Masterworks* titles. These books are released as supplementary materials to be used in conjunction with the *Premier Piano Course* lesson books. *Great Music & Musicians* provides a foundation for understanding the major cultural periods. *Jazz, Rags & Blues* Books 1A and 1B include original pieces that reinforce concepts introduced in the curriculum-matching lesson books. alfred.com

THEODORE PRESSER | 'CHEN YI'S MONOLOGUE'

True Story

Theodore Presser has released *Chen Yi's Monologue (Impressions on The True Story of Ah Q)* in a new arrangement for unaccompanied saxophone. Written in 1993 for solo Bb clarinet and published in 2000, contemporary music advocate and saxophonist Jeffrey Heisler has made the piece available for his own instrument. presser.com





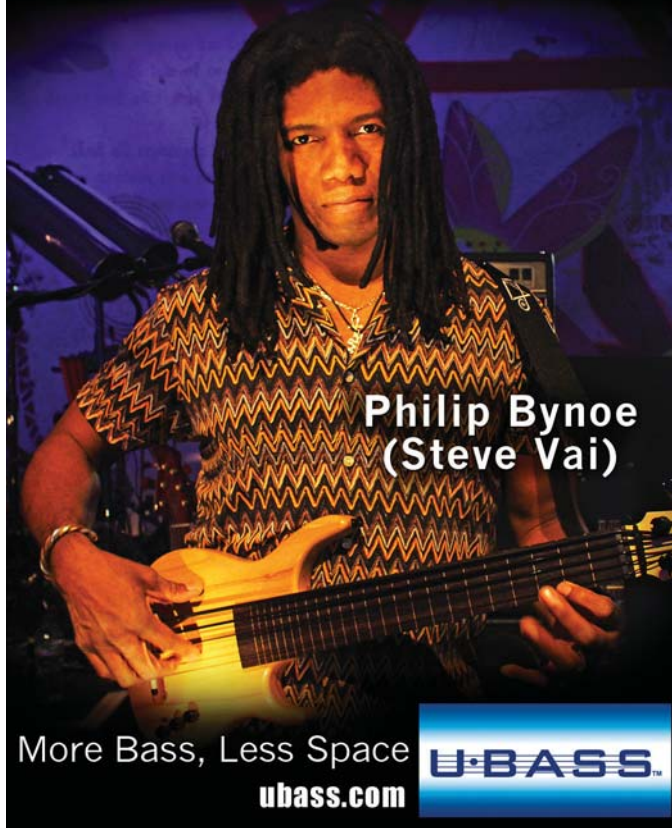
HAL LEONARD | 'BACH FOR BANJO'

Bach Goes Country

Hal Leonard has debuted *Bach for Banjo*, which offers 20 arrangements of his masterpieces tailored specifically for the banjo. The pieces in the book are in tablature only with chord symbols, arranged at the beginning to intermediate level for five-string banjo players. As in classical guitar arrangements, the melody and harmony are combined. Most pieces are on facing pages with no page turns required, and beginners can pick through the selections at a slow pace. {hal-leonard.com}



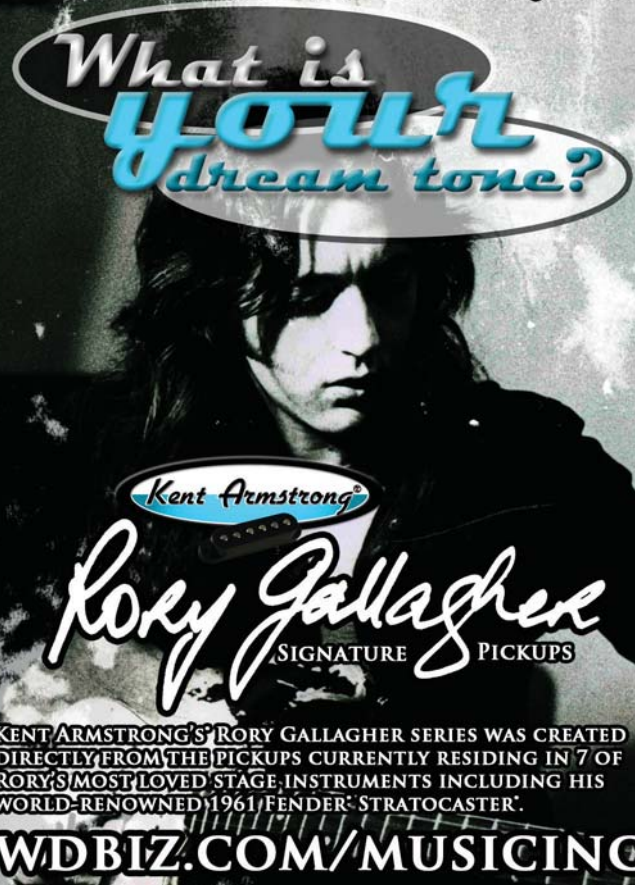
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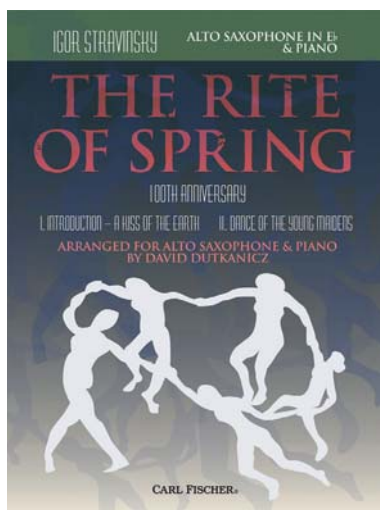


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Rory Gallagher
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CARL FISCHER | 'THE RITE OF SPRING'

Spring Solos

Carl Fischer recently introduced these new arrangements of the first two movements of Stravinsky's revolutionary work, *The Rite of Spring*, for solo instruments. This edition is presented in honor of the centennial of the ballet's premiere, and is intended to give soloists and accompanists a chance to perform two movements from this work. The movements can be performed separately, and the first movement can be played as a solo without piano accompaniment. The book is ideal for advanced players. {carlfischer.com}

PIONEER | XDJ-R1

Wireless Wonder

Pioneer has unveiled the XDJ-R1, which features wireless direct so it can enable wireless connectivity with an iOS device, even when a WiFi network is not available. The "remotebox" app lets the XDJ-R1 be remotely controlled, giving DJs the ability to continue their music mixing even when they move away from the system.

{pioneerdjusa.com}



AMERICAN DJ | MICRO LED SERIES

Lightweight Light Show

American DJ has unveiled the Micro LED series, a collection of three colorful high-energy LED-powered moonflower-type effects. The models include the Micro Phase, Micro Burst and Micro Moon. {adj.com}

AMERICAN AUDIO | ETR 1000

Color 'Phones

American Audio's new ETR 1000 headphones are available in Bold Blue and Racy Red. They feature 2500mW of power, a 40 mm driver and a dynamic range for great highs and lows. {americanaudio.us}



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CHAUVET | EZ SERIES

Easy to Use

Chauvet has debuted its simple-to-use, battery-powered EZ series. The new compact and lightweight series, which includes the EZrail RGBA and EZpar 64 RGBA, eliminates the hassle of running cables, speeds up the set-up process and can be controlled wirelessly using the included IRC remote. The EZrail RGBA and EZpar 64 RGBA emit pastels as well as rich colors. chauvetlighting.com



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>>>

Lori Supinie

Senseney Music
Wichita, Kan.

I think it's like anything else — building personal relationships is really important. Meeting as much as you can at NAMM, NASMD or RPMDA. Those social settings are important. Trade shows are one way, and January's NAMM Show is pretty busy. You try to make as much as you can there.

Looking at [vendors] as partners as much as you can, especially your important ones, is critical in working together. Sometimes all you have to do is ask, and they'll say, "Sure." Looking at the relationship as a partnership is very helpful.

The best example I can share is our relationship with Hal Leonard. We partner with them on promotions and workshops, not only the ones that we hold, but we help co-sponsor their clinicians. They try to visit once a year, and that's great. Once a year used to be kind of the norm, and it's expensive for them to do that, so we appreciate when they take the time to visit our store, whether it's a rep or one of the managers. It's not only about product and promotion, but also about co-marketing ideas that we do together.

>>>

Tony Colwell

Buddy Rogers Music
Cincinnati

We do many promotions with our suppliers, such as the Taylor Road Show. A lot of our reps have been our reps for a long time, so they are friends. Some of them I've been with for more than 20 years. We're not constantly looking for new vendors anymore.

Our longtime vendors are the ones we maintain real relationships with. I keep most of our [vendor] reps' numbers in my cell phone. If I've got a problem, they take care of it. If I need something, they help me out. It's a partnership, so it's give and take.

In a lot of cases, there's no one there to necessarily reach out to. I have vendors that the only way they want to contact you is through fax or email. Things have changed a lot. There aren't constant promotions out there that vendors used to offer to you all the time.



>>>

Sean Drysdale
Mid Michigan Music
Midland, Mich.

How do you maintain good supplier relationships?

Our vendors actually come and visit us quite a bit. Because of that, you have a great ability to build a rapport and a relationship with them. You talk about their products, and they'll tell you if they have something new coming down the pipeline. We are more of a mom-and-pop shop. For us, we try to bring in products and brands that evoke some type of feeling from us.

It's always something that we get excited about. And because of that, vendors like us. We're quirky. We have personality. We're not always 100-percent business, business, business. Having an open relationship with our vendors

has been most important.

Even if it's not something that we necessarily like or want to be a part of, being open to new things shows a positive attitude. Because of that, people always come to us and say, "You guys are really cool because you know products."

Summertime, for example, is really good for acoustics, and it's important to have a really good acoustic selection. We brought back Takamine, and it has already been very good for us. We also picked up Lâg Guitars, which was a new brand for us.

I proactively call my vendors and ask what's new. Usually, you see them every three to

six months, and for me, it's better to have more knowledge.

I am in communications with U.S. Music Corp., for example. They have 15 brands under their name. Why not have their rep feel like he can send me an email personally?

Having that kind of relationship with your vendors is very important. I can call some of our reps that normally we're not a vendor for because we have a really good working relationship.

If somebody came in and said, "Do you guys deal American Gretsches?" I'd say, "No, but I know a guy I can get it from."

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