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THE 2014

GEAR GUIDE

What's New, What's
Cool – and What's
Selling Right Now

page 47





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BY MICHAEL GALLANT

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Dealers give a mixed report — profits and margins were up slightly, but revenues were hard to find.



On the cover:

From left: P. Mauriat (p.96); FBT J Series (p.83); Yamaha Tyros5 (p.88); Majestic Prophonic (p.94); Gretsch Center-Block (p.64)

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PERSPECTIVE | BY DAVID ZIVAN

EXTENSION CHORDS

Red, red wine — N. DIAMOND

Saxophones, like large buckets of popcorn and miscellaneous office supplies, arrive in our offices with some regularity. They are meant for review in our flagship publication, *DownBeat*. But the arrival of a shipment of wine is far more rare. It earned me suspicious looks, and a whisper campaign.

Not a problem. I had always intended to share, and I did; last week, a number of our staff enjoyed an informal tasting in our break room. The fine communications folks at Fender had called my bluff. If they sent along their new branded bottlings, I had told them, I would review them in these pages.

Thus: both the Fender Cabernet Sauvignon (its label graced with a Strat) and the company's Pinot Noir (a Tele), produced in partnership with California's Armida Winery, are classic examples of their genre. The Cab is easy to drink, full of ripe fruit and a touch of oak. The Pinot has light strawberry and cola flavors. They are available (along with a Chardonnay we haven't tried yet) at Fender.com, if you poke around a bit, and we all recommend them both. I can say with confidence that both wines, especially the pinot, benefitted from being open an hour or so.

So why has Fender chosen this endeavor? The press materials say the wines will help musicians "experience the passion and quality of the Fender brand." It's not hard to be in favor of that — and of brand extension, in general. And it occurs to me that 2014, still fresh as I write this, presents all of us with opportunities to extend our brands in profitable ways — the only ways, if I may be frank, that really matter.

Last year our pages featured a number of examples worth reviewing. There was whipsmart Greg Billings, cultivating and producing a professional-quality talent show peopled by doctors and other medical professionals — a population of customers and potential customers for his Naples, Fla., Steinway gallery. In Haymarket, Va., Menzie Pittman opened up @4410, a performance space next door to one of his locations, giving his well-known Rock Camp participants and student customers a stunning place to play. The weekly open mic roster has a wait list. And down at Music Inc. of Louisiana, Brandt Bourque served award-winning jambalaya at a Taylor event.

All three efforts are smart, logical extensions of what made those stores strong in the first place. They drove traffic, and lead to more sales. And they leveraged what might be the best thing we all have going for us — that music is a powerful vehicle for many kinds of pleasures.

What are you doing this year to extend your brand, in the truest sense? How will you use your store's identity to help you be more profitable? **MI**



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LETTERS

Praise for NAMM's New Chairman

Just a quick note to express how delighted we are with *Music Inc.*'s January cover story "Heads in the Cloud," focusing on Hal Leonard President Larry Morton. I've had the pleasure of experiencing his savvy work ethic firsthand for more than two decades. This honor [of being named the new chairman of NAMM] is well deserved.

You really captured the essence of who we are at Hal Leonard and how we're constantly reinventing ourselves, and how we are poised for what the ever-evolving music industry will bring.

Both Hal Leonard and NAMM are extremely fortunate to have an exceptional leader

like Larry to guide them into the future. We couldn't be prouder of him.

Keith Mardak
Chairman & CEO
Hal Leonard

Kudos to Sislen

I would like to say that the November 2013 article "Instruments of Change," discussing retailer Myrna Sislen's donation of instruments to children in Paraguay really touched me. And to Myrna Sislen, you are an inspiration.

The recollection of the event encouraged me to look for avenues in which we could help others in need of music-making happiness.

Randy Luna
Owner
Guitars Boutique
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

Hohner Looks Ahead to NAMM Show

Thanks to all at *Music Inc.* for the great feature, "Harmonic Innovation," in the December 2013 issue, on Hohner's new AirBoard and Jimenez guitar line.

Hohner is looking forward to a great 2014, and we're kicking it off with an exciting NAMM Show. We will host appearances by Los Tucanes, Howard Levy of the Flektones, Steve Smith and more. Looking forward to seeing all at our booth 3240.

Scott Emmerman
Director of Marketing and Sales
Hohner

Correction:

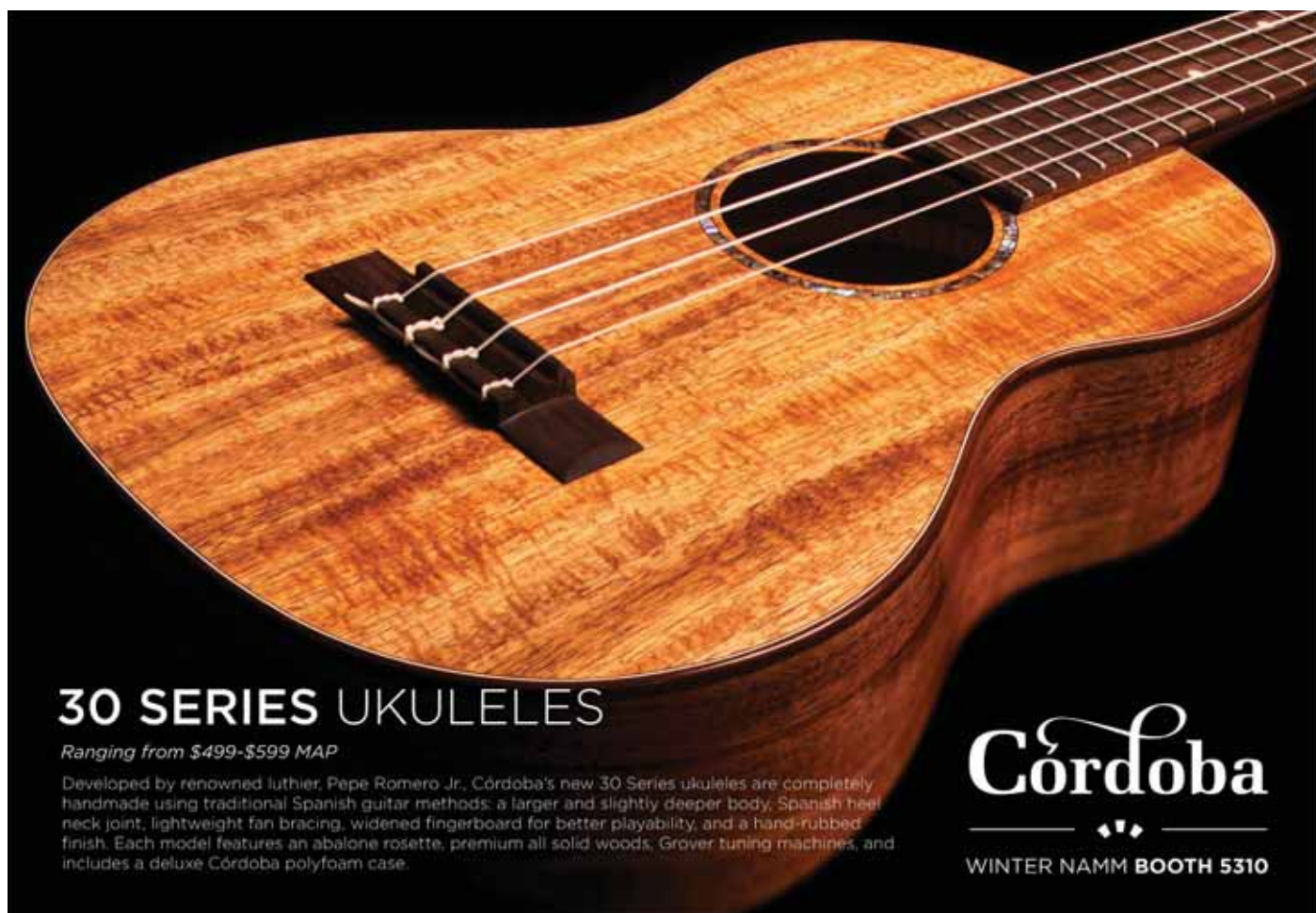
The profile in the January issue on The Piano Store in

Rocklin, Calif., misrepresented Joe DeFio's current position with Hailun, one of the store's suppliers.

Since December 2012, industry veteran DeFio (pictured) has been vice president of sales and marketing for Vienna International/Hailun USA. *Music Inc.* regrets the error.



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New leadership named at Full Compass and IMSO

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Sweetwater makes donation to performing arts foundation

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All Music on Long Island opens new acoustic room

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RETAIL

ALAMO MUSIC CENTER | BY JESSICA TOBACMAN

A FAMILY BUSINESS

There is perhaps no company more woven into the fabric of its community than Alamo Music Center in San Antonio, Texas. Begun in 1929 by Alfredo Flores Sr., the operation is now enjoying its fourth generation of family leadership, an astonishing longevity that is shared by few businesses anywhere in the U.S. The long list of family members running the operation has ensured roots and connections in the community that are unparalleled — indeed, there is a warmth that seems to travel in both directions.

But over the decades, those personal connections have evolved to become a key part of a clear-eyed strategy. “My father’s philosophy is to be involved in the community — and run the business in a common sense way,” said Alfredo Flores Jr., the founder’s son and Alamo Music Center’s current owner. “The main thing is that you have to make a profit.”

MODEST BEGINNINGS

Alfredo Flores is a spry 105 years old today. He still looks at daily sales reports.

Flores emigrated from Mexico to San Antonio as a child, and has spent his entire life there.



From left: Alfredo Flores Jr. and his wife, Tenchita Flores; Zach Marr; Alfredo Flores Sr.; Diana Boffa (daughter of the founder); Patrick Marr; Adriana Flores.

Growing up, he held various jobs, including one at the Thomas Goggan piano company. Experience in the industry gave him the contacts to start his own business and, despite the stock market crash, and the Great Depression that followed, Alamo Music Center survived its early years.

By the 1980s, the business had grown to comprise eight locations across southern Texas — though its focus on pianos proved challenging. For the past decade or so, it has been operating out of two locations in the

city where it was born. “[My grandfather] used to say, ‘I’m a San Antonian. This is my city and I want to support it,’” said Adriana Flores, the company’s vice president and office manager. “He truly believes that. It’s part of his spirit.”

NEW GENERATION

Alfredo Flores Jr., the founder’s son, retired at the beginning of 2013 after five decades in the operation. He still comes on-site about twice a week to advise and mentor employees though day-to-day operations and

key positions have become the responsibility of the next generation: Zach Marr, great grandson of the founder, serves as president and general manager, while his brother, Patrick, works as store manager and is also involved in financial planning.

The company’s current direction sounds nearly the same as it has always been. The goals, Patrick noted, are numerous: “Remaining profitable, having fun, enriching people’s lives through music, giving back to the community, taking care of our staff and helping them grow, as well.”

“We’re all in this together,” Zach added. “You have to take personal responsibility; to make sure you’re doing things that make money, and avoiding things that don’t. Connect with people; depend on people; help people. Relationships are what it’s about.”

Indeed, after this much time, those relationships add up to “a large number of people,” Adriana said.

Leaders of the business sit on boards for a variety of music organizations, including the San Antonio Symphony, Musical Bridges, Music in Schools, and Save the Music, which supplies instruments to students who cannot afford to pay for them. The

Flores family attends concerts and employs apprentice students at their music store to teach them about the music business. They also run events for songwriters, holding recitals and lending their recital hall to teachers, and offering ukulele and harmonica clubs.

“We try to touch the community in any way we can,” Patrick said. “We have an amazing foundation, and as time has progressed, we have wanted to refine it to something more. We are constantly in the process of reinvention, discarding things that don’t work and adding things that do.”

FOCUSING ON WHAT WORKS

While acknowledging the crucial role community connections have played in the company’s success, Flores Jr. offers a clear-eyed assessment. “The individual music merchant has to make money every year, or they will go broke,” he said. “It’s very simple.”

Part of making that happen has been the family’s willingness to leave less successful endeavors behind. For a time, the company’s school business depended on time-consuming and costly on-site presentations. They have let that go. “Now we do more in-house rentals, and service students and parents that way,” Patrick said.

Alamo ran a vinyl record shop in the 1950s, abandoning it when it became clear that success was not on the horizon.

Today Alamo Music Center still focuses its efforts on in-store sales rather than chasing incremental revenues elsewhere. Selling pianos, acoustic guitars and band instruments has been relatively successful from the outset. “Retail is 90 percent of our income. [And] 10 percent is lessons, repairs, rentals, and other miscellaneous things,” Zach said.

LONGTERM RELATIONSHIPS

Focusing on profit and family simultaneously has led to a network of connections which continue to benefit the store. Eric Langenhahn, district sales manager for Fender Musical Instruments Corporation in Texas, is a fine example. Langenhahn started at Alamo in 1983 as a volunteer, receiving compensation in bus fare and lunch money. Then they hired him as what he called a “runner,” and then as a salesman. Flores Jr. became his sales mentor.

“I respect him highly,” Langenhahn said. “I didn’t realize what I had until I left. The opportunity gave me the skill set I needed to call on other music retailers; the skill set I needed to be a good district sales manager and sales rep.” Now as DSM for Fender, his position includes acting as a representative to Alamo.

“The relationship is much more than factory representative. Part of me will always be there. Alfred asked me to be a mentor to his grandsons,” he said. “I felt like I was part of the family. I still do. It is incredible and humbling at the same time to still have a great relationship with them.” **MI**

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The advertisement features a black Hammond XK-1c organ with a white keyboard. The text is arranged in a clean, sans-serif font. The 80th anniversary logo is at the top left. The organ is shown from a three-quarter view on the right side.

APPOINTMENTS



Michelle Grabel-Komar

Grabel-Komar Named Full Compass V.P.

Full Compass Systems of Madison, Wis., recently added Michelle Grabel-Komar to its executive staff. Grabel-Komar joins the company as vice president of product planning and procurement. In this role, she will oversee the purchasing, product management, planning and merchandising departments.

Grabel-Komar has more than 20 years of experience in high-volume retail, manufacturing and business operations. She started her career working for Forbes-Meagher Music, a music dealer with locations in south central Wisconsin. She then accepted a position at Full Compass, where she worked as a national sales pro from

1996-2000. Grabel-Komar moved to Shure Incorporated as a regional sales manager and was elevated to senior manager, Western U.S. sales during her 13 year tenure. She remained with Shure until rejoining Full Compass in December.

“We’re extremely excited that Michelle is back with us,” said Mark Nash, company president. “She brings a wealth of product knowledge and a great understanding for maintaining relationships with manufacturers.”

“There’s such an atmosphere of family here, and I’m glad to be a part of it again,” Grabel-Komar said. “There are many facets to this position and I look forward to meeting the challenge.”



Don Tegeler

IMSO Names New Board Members

The Independent Music Store Owners group (IMSO) has announced new members of its volunteer board. The board officers are as follows: President Don Tegeler, Tegeler Music; Vice President Chris Basile, Clark’s Music Center; Secretary Allen McBroom, Backstage Music; Treasurer Jeff Nixon, Instrumental Music.

Board members are Rich Pires, Herreid Music; Charles Harris, Harris Band Instruments; Keith Morehead, ATD Guitar Repair; and Jim Nardi, Uptown Music.

Each board member serves a two-year term, with four positions opening each year.

IMSO has grown to over 500 members. More information is available at musicstoreowners.com.

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Sweetwater Founder and President Chuck Surack recently presented a check for \$50,000 to help kick off the “Gold for the City Campaign” for the Unity Performing Arts Foundation (UPAF) of Fort Wayne, Ind. UPAF exists to empower and develop young people in the areas of character, artistry, and leadership.

More than 90 of its 130 alumni have graduated from college since 2007. In 2010 and 2012, UPAF’s Voices of Unity Chorus competed at the World Choir Games. This year the games will be in Latvia, and the chorus has also been invited to perform at Carnegie Hall this summer. The campaign will raise funds for both trips. Sweetwater and Surack have been supporters of UPAF since the organization was established in 2000.



From left: Fort Wayne Mayor Thomas Henry, TiErika Hunt (2010 Participant in the World Choir Games in China), Sweetwater Sound's Chuck Surack, and UPAF Founder and CEO Marshall White

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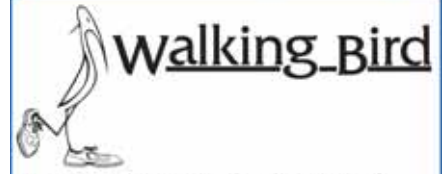
ALL MUSIC TUNES UP NEW ACOUSTIC ROOM

All Music, on Long Island in Plainview, N.Y., recently opened a climate-controlled guitar lounge. The store's management hopes that the space will be a comfortable environment for both the beginner and the accomplished acoustic player to play all types of acoustic guitars in a relaxed, inviting environment.

"As a lifelong player myself, I understand how important it is to actually physi-

cally play an instrument before buying it," said Guy Brogna, owner of the store. "Each guitar sounds different, feels different and has its own characteristics that can't be fully realized if you are purely shopping them online. So with that in mind, we have gone to great lengths to make sure that when [customers] make the trip to the store, it is really worth it and the experience is second to none."

Guitar & Musical Instrument Repair Tags



Two Repair Forms for the Musical Instrument Industry. The first form (Part# GRP) is designed for technicians working primarily on guitars and other string instruments. It has services pre-listed in an organized and concise format.

The 2nd Repair Form (Part# MINP) has none of the services pre-listed. This is perfect for those who prefer to write in the work-to-be-done. It can be used, as well, for instruments other than guitars as there is more room to specify work-to-be-done. Carbonless paper, 3 full parts and 2 Product ID Stubs are included.

Both forms are available WITH your store imprint or WITHOUT the store imprint.

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Note From Joe

Let's Hear It for the Entrepreneur!

Another NAMM Show is now behind us, catapulting the industry firmly into 2014. We would like to thank you for your support of this important gathering and sincerely hope that you met your objectives and then some.

I've been reading a lot about the huge shift going on in technology, trying to discern how this will impact our industry. One book in particular, *Knowledge and Power: The Information Theory of Capitalism* by George Gilder, was very interesting and relevant to our world. One of his main ideas was the enduring importance of the risk-taking entrepreneur. Having just experienced the energy that only happens when the global industry comes together in Anaheim, I was thinking of our own entrepreneurs and how critical they are to the future of our industry.

Gilder writes, "Through wars and depressions, through booms and benisons (blessings) of prosperity, the central failure of economics has been its inability to grasp the centrality of entrepreneurial creation in economic life. The key force of economic advance is the entrepreneur who on his own, without governmental cues or expert consultation or even a defined market, creates new goods, services, business plans and projects. Economic growth and progress, jobs and welfare, markets and demand all stem from the entrepreneur."

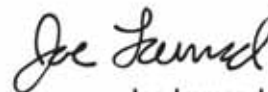
When I saw that paragraph I thought of the many NAMM Members who came to Anaheim with new innovative products, hoping to attract equally entrepreneurial retailers who saw the potential profits in carrying these products. Gilder explains it

this way: "These new profits have been called by Peter Drucker an 'upside surprise.' Drucker pointed out that most measured financial profits are not real in this sense, they merely covered the cost of capital—the return of interest. Innovation is the source of real profit, entropic profit, which derives from the upside surprise of entrepreneurial creativity."

There are many points to consider, but one stands out. While market growth and expansion are critical to the future of the music products industry, so are innovative new breakthroughs in products and processes. I believe that each and every one of us has a role here. Some are true entrepreneurs—we know many of them by name because they have become famous for their work. Others find different opportunities to apply this, creating better ways to market products or more efficient business practices that reduce cost. And some develop innovative market-building programs that promote music education and get more people playing. But for our industry to thrive in the new information and technology age ahead, I believe we must all do more.

Together, as the global force that brings music to the world, let's challenge ourselves in 2014 to increase our entrepreneurial spirit and support our own groundbreaking entrepreneurs when we see them on the NAMM Show floor!

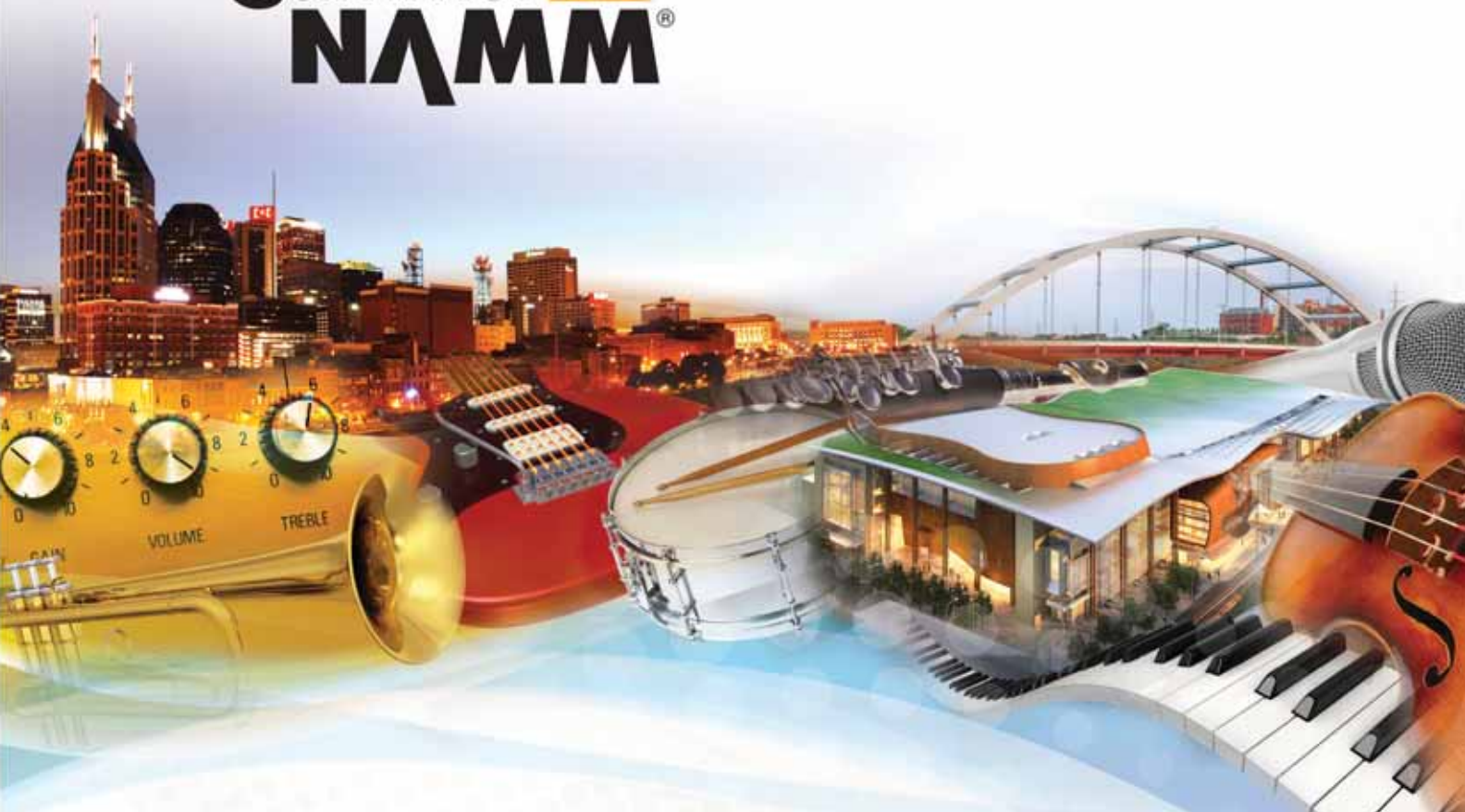
Sincerely,
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SUPPLY

ANTHEM BAND INSTRUMENTS | BY JOHN JANOWIAK

THE MARGIN BOOSTER

David Kilkenny's phone was ringing off the hook in early 2007. Music retailers were calling him with a recurring question: How could they boost margins and increase cash flow in the band instrument market? They thought he might be able to help, and he was confident that he could.

Kilkenny had just left his post as president of Sonaré Winds. He had a general idea about starting a new company, but he hadn't quite worked out the specifics. Fortunately, retailers pointed him in a clear direction.

"The dealers really determined it when they started calling me," Kilkenny said.

Based on their input, he soon established Anthem Musical Instruments. Incorporated in May 2007 and headquartered in North Billerica, Mass., near Boston, Anthem offers affordable student-model brass and woodwind instruments made in China.

In his conversations with retailers, some complained that manufacturers were making instruments overseas, but without passing on much of the savings to their dealers.

"Since these same manufacturers are completely saturating



Back row: Brent Beech, David Kilkenny and Lou Anderson; front row: Terry Anthony and Frank Garcia.

the market via the Internet, mail order and big box stores — and since MAP and MSP pricing models are often ineffective at protecting their faithful dealers — retailer profit margins seem to be shrinking to the point where dealers are no longer satisfied," he said. The retailers told him that one-year rental payoffs were becoming rare, and their cash flow was being stretched to two- or three-year payoffs. "They were

looking for something again that could be paid off around the end of the first year."

KEEPING IN CONTACT

Knowing Kilkenny had fostered relationships with suppliers in China during his tenures at Sonaré, its parent company, Powell Flutes, and other previous employers, they thought he might be able to offer a solution. Rather than importing instru-

ments directly, they could rely on Kilkenny's contacts and expertise. "I had the experience in China, and once I had the product, I knew all the customers — I had already done business with pretty much all the people I do business with now. So it's not like a brand new company with brand new people. People tend to like to buy from people they know."

Along with Kilkenny as presi-

dent, Anthem's staff includes Brent Beech, director of quality, and Frank Sarcia, director of sales. Each of them makes a trip to China at least once a year. Anthem also employs several part-time instrument testers, each of them established professional musicians, who ensure instrument quality. "Every instrument we bring in gets tested and adjusted before it gets sent out to the customer," Kilkenny said.

Anthem's mouthpieces, reeds and cases are all made in the United States, while the instruments themselves are manufactured by several Chinese companies.

The company now has nearly 40 exclusive dealers throughout the United States, with hopes to expand.

"We've been doing a pretty heavy marketing campaign to target 50 very specific dealers in the U.S. that we want to bring on," Kilkenny said. "In the marketing campaign, we mention that we only want to target one dealer in each area."

'We set the dealer net and let the dealers decide how much profit to make and how to position the line in their market.'

LET FREEDOM RING

Rather than enforcing a MAP or MSP pricing policy, Anthem offers what it calls "freedom pricing." Each dealer independently sets their own retail price based on their particular market. "Basically, we set the dealer net and let the dealers decide how much profit to make and how to position the line in their local market."

Freedom pricing goes hand-in-hand with the company's pledge of exclusivity. Having protected territories, retailers don't need to price match with the Internet or the dealer across town.

"Dealers have the choice," Kilkenny said. "They can sell them at just a little over cost and have a really good value for customers who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford being in band. Yet in other states, they can try to make maximum profit off of it. One dealer's decisions don't affect another because we don't allow them to ship out of territory or advertise on the Internet."

Kilkenny feels that Anthem's exclusivity is a benefit to retailers when they buy into the line. "They put the effort into building the brand name, and they reap the rewards from it — not the guy across the street, not the Internet dealer, but they do. So the exclusivity is what allows them to then determine the price."

Business has grown each year since Anthem started, Kilkenny said. "We're expecting this year to be a really good year based on some of the feedback we've received and some of the dealers that are signing on."

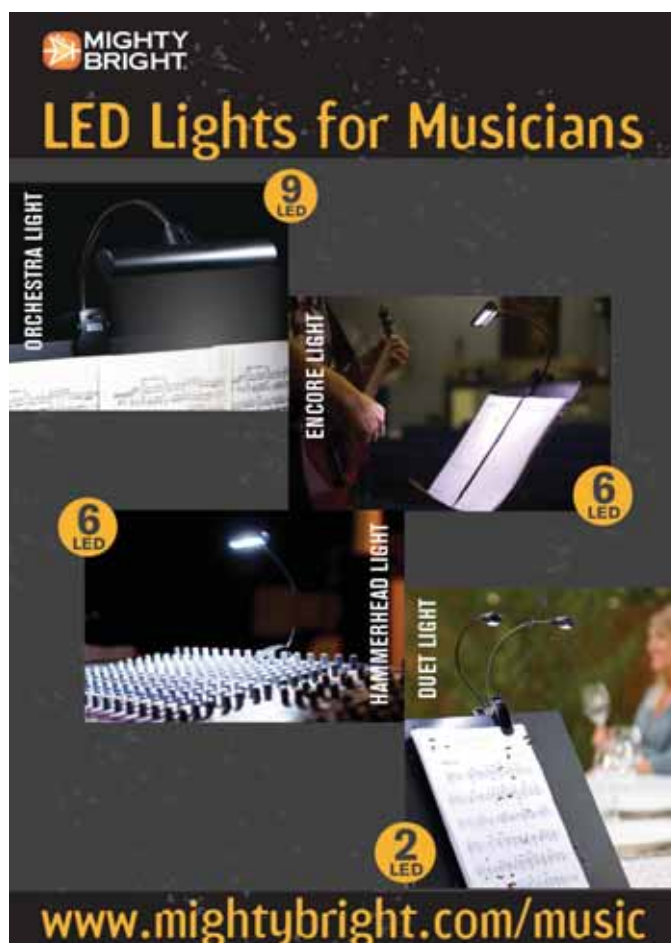
Moreover, he feels he's succeeded in helping the retailers who asked for his help back in 2007: "We're back to where instruments can get paid off in the first year." **MI**



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MEET THE NEW ZOOM

Music Inc.'s Frank Alkyer sat down with Zoom North America CEO Scott Goodman to talk about Zoom's new distribution setup, what lies ahead for the company and why only a few dealers are carrying the new H6. Here, in an edited transcript, are his thoughts.

MI: Zoom North America assumed complete distribution for the United States and Mexico on Jan. 1, correct?

SG: That's correct.

MI: Why is now the right time for Zoom to create its own distribution company in North America? Also, tell me about the team you've put together.

SG: It's not so much about it being the right time. Good companies are always evolving and seeking new ways to grow their business. In regard to the new team, it's been great watching it come together. We've got smart, passionate people who want to build Zoom North America into something special.

MI: Obviously, Samson Technologies has distributed the Zoom brand for a long time in North America. Has the transition been smooth?

SG: Transitions of this size always have a few bumps, but if we stay focused on the long-term, everything will fall into place.

MI: What excites you most about the new company?

SG: Our product roadmap. Zoom has an incredible library of software, which we're about to leverage in several new directions. It's a perfect time for us when you



Scott Goodman

consider where music-making and, especially, young creators are headed.

MI: What are your biggest opportunities? What are your biggest challenges?

SG: Our biggest opportunities are our biggest challenges. We need to make sure we're spending our resources on product development that will positively affect how people create music and video. If we continue to design products that creators love, we'll succeed.

MI: Up to now, Zoom N.A. has been working solely with the H6. What has the reception been for that product?

SG: It's been great. It may be

the strongest product Zoom's introduced to date. We'll see.

MI: You have worked with this brand for a long time. With Zoom N.A., you have an opportunity to create a distribution channel from the ground up. And you've decided to start with a very small group of retailers. The last time I looked, I saw 17 retailers carrying the H6. What prompted this strategy? What kind of retail base do you foresee in the future for Zoom now that you're servicing the entire line?

SG: It's grown a little since you've last looked. I think we have about 30-something dealers now. Most brands are over-distributed, which dilutes sales for their best dealers, which in

turn devalues the brand. We want Zoom to be special, and a smaller dealer base will allow our dealers the sales results and the service they deserve.

MI: How does Amazon fit with your new distribution strategy?

SG: Amazon's a great distribution channel, but it's tricky to get it right. So, like the rest of our distribution decisions, we prefer to move slowly.

MI: While visiting over the summer, you gave me a great preview of some video that you'll be using to show buyers the features of the H6. How important is video and your website to marketing Zoom products today?

SG: High quality video, either instructional or simply entertaining, is a must today. A website, or a marketing campaign, without well-produced video is like watching a silent movie. It's a thing of the past.

MI: With Zoom, it's all about great products. What will you be displaying at NAMM? What do you have coming down the pipeline?

SG: We'll introduce some cool product at NAMM, but it's not our main purpose for attending. We go to NAMM to spend time with the music community and the artists. We also enjoy meeting with others who use our products.

MI: Anything else that you'd like to say about the opportunity you have with Zoom?

SG: We feel really positive about our industry. I think 2014 will be a breakout year for Zoom. **MI**

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NAMM | AWARD

LAMOND HONORED AT MIDWEST CLINIC

NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond recently received the Midwest Clinic's Music Industry Award for his support of music education. Among his accomplishments on behalf of music education, Lamond was honored for being instrumental in creating the NAMM Foundation, which serves as the philanthropic arm of the association, raising funds to support NAMM's mission.

Over the past 10 years, NAMM and the NAMM Foundation have reinvested nearly \$80 million in support of its mission to promote music making for people of all ages. The Music Industry Award was presented to Lamond in December 2013 in Chicago at the Midwest Clinic annual conference. namm.org



From left: VP of education for Conn Selmer Tim Lautzenheiser, Joe Lamond and President of Midwest Clinic Board of Directors Richard Crain.

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YAMAHA, LINE 6 | ACQUISITION

Yamaha Acquires Line 6

Yamaha and Line 6 have announced a definitive agreement for Yamaha to acquire Line 6. The acquisition will expand Yamaha's portfolio of modeling guitar processing products as well as pro-audio equipment, and will offer new opportunities for accelerated growth for both companies.

Under the terms of the agreement, Yamaha will operate Line 6 as a wholly owned subsidiary to fully realize the compelling opportunities for the two brands with Line 6's operations continuing as before and its

management team remaining in place. "I am very happy that Line 6, which has been creating innovative products and creat-



ing new market opportunities consistently over its history, will become a member of the Yamaha group," said Takuya Nakata, president of Yamaha Corporation. "We look forward to accelerating our growth strategy by pursuing the beneficial effects from both companies and by utilizing Line

6's core brand power centered on guitarists worldwide as well as its unique technology, planning and development capabilities."

"Yamaha's acquisition of Line 6 will help accelerate the realization of our vision to drive innovation for musicians across the globe," said Paul Foeckler, Line 6 CEO and president. "We're proud that Yamaha recognizes the innovation and value in our people, IP and processes, and we're excited about the opportunities ahead to expand our reach."

Yamaha will acquire all of the capital stock of Line 6 owned by the founders, venture funds and employees. The transaction is expected to be completed during January 2014 after receipt of customary regulatory approvals. yamaha.com; line6.com



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HIT LIKE A GIRL | CONTEST

It's a Hit

Entries for the 2014 the Hit Like A Girl contest will opened on Jan. 24. Since its inception in 2011, women from more than 42 countries, ages seven to 70, have participated in the program celebrating and supporting female drummers. The contest has grown into a major promotion of female drumming with more than 4,000,000 Web impressions, support from leading drum companies and judging by many of the top female drummers in the world.

This year's event is expanding with sponsorship from a larger, more diverse set of drum and percussion companies, as well with the participation of Hit Like a Girl spokesperson Jessica Bowen, the drummer for punk-pop band The Summer Set.

hitlikeagirlcontest.com



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D'Addario has equipped Studio Instrument Rentals. SIR's Solutions Network is comprised of 13 facilities stocked with the largest backline inventory of its kind, ranging from the latest items to sought-after vintage instruments. Many of its offices also provide production stages and rehearsal studios.

Each studio is set up with Planet Waves cables, sound systems, and hand-wired boutique guitar amps as well as keyboards and drum kits now outfitted with Evans drumheads. Musicians will also have access to D'Addario strings, Planet Waves accessories and ProMark drumsticks. daddario.com



PARTNERSHIP

**ClearTone Strings
Gibson USA Electrics**

Gibson USA electric guitars now come with factory-installed ClearTone strings. Gibson switched to ClearTone after extensive testing in a retail environment proved the strings on ClearTone-strung guitars remained new-sounding longer than uncoated strings. ClearTone's Gibson USA set includes the following string gauges: .009, .011, .016, .026, .036 and .046.

"Gibson has given my family so much joy over the years," said Phil Everly, ClearTone owner. "My dad's prized possession was his L-5. I'll never forget my years touring the world; first with my J-200 and later my Everly Brothers model J-185. We are very proud to supply Gibson USA with original factory strings. It's wonderful to keep the tradition going."

Phil's son, Jason, president of ClearTone, echoed his father's sentiments.

"My family and Gibson share a lot of history together," he said. "To bring things full circle like this is truly incredible. We are humbled and honored." cleartonestings.com



Actor and producer Kalpen Modi, NAMM's Mary Luehrsen and Larry Morton, and Inktel Direct's Ricky Arriola.

NAMM | OUTREACH

NAMM Foundation Supports Turnaround Arts Program

The NAMM Foundation has supported a research project in collaboration with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and its Turnaround Arts program, which expands music and arts education in low-performing schools with the goal to close the achievement gap.

The NAMM-funded research includes data-gathering and assessment

to test the hypothesis that high-quality music and arts education boosts academic success, motivates student learning and improves school culture. The NAMM Foundation's support helps Turnaround Arts provide music education and arts resources, including frequent coaching for principals and school arts leadership teams.

nammfoundation.org

APPOINTMENTS

Sennheiser Names New VP

Sennheiser has appointed Mark Posgay to the position of vice president, sales and marketing, professional systems.

Posgay has 20 years of audio industry experience.

"This is an exciting time of innovation in our professional systems segment," said Greg Beebe, Sennheiser USA president. "Mark brings an ideal mix of audio industry knowledge, customer insight and management expertise to lead our professional systems team as we implement our strategic growth initiatives into 2014 and beyond." sennheiser.com



Justin Morris has joined the Two Old Hippies team to lead and revolutionize the way Breedlove and Bedell Guitars deliver specific tonal properties in its instruments, as well as refine and optimize wood-yield management.

Don Click has been named educator and artist relations specialist for D'Addario.

Loud Technologies has named Mark Altekruse western regional sales manager for the Ampeg and Mackie brands.

DPA | GROWTH

DPA TEAMS WITH RIVERSIDE

DPA Microphones has joined forces with The Riverside Company, a global private equity firm that focuses on acquiring strong and growing businesses. The Riverside Company's investment in DPA Microphones will let DPA expand and grow the company faster.

"DPA is already a very successful and profitable company, which has been experiencing a 15 percent increase in sales, year after year, for the last five years," said Christian Hoff, CFO of DPA Microphones. "With Riverside involved, we anticipate even stronger sales growth in the next five years."

Riverside has extensive experience in the audio and electronics industry, having previously invested in German loudspeaker company Teufel, which was successfully divested in 2010. More re-

cently, Riverside acquired BLUE Microphones, a U.S. manufacturer of consumer and performance microphones and related products. dpamicrophones.com; riversidecompany.com



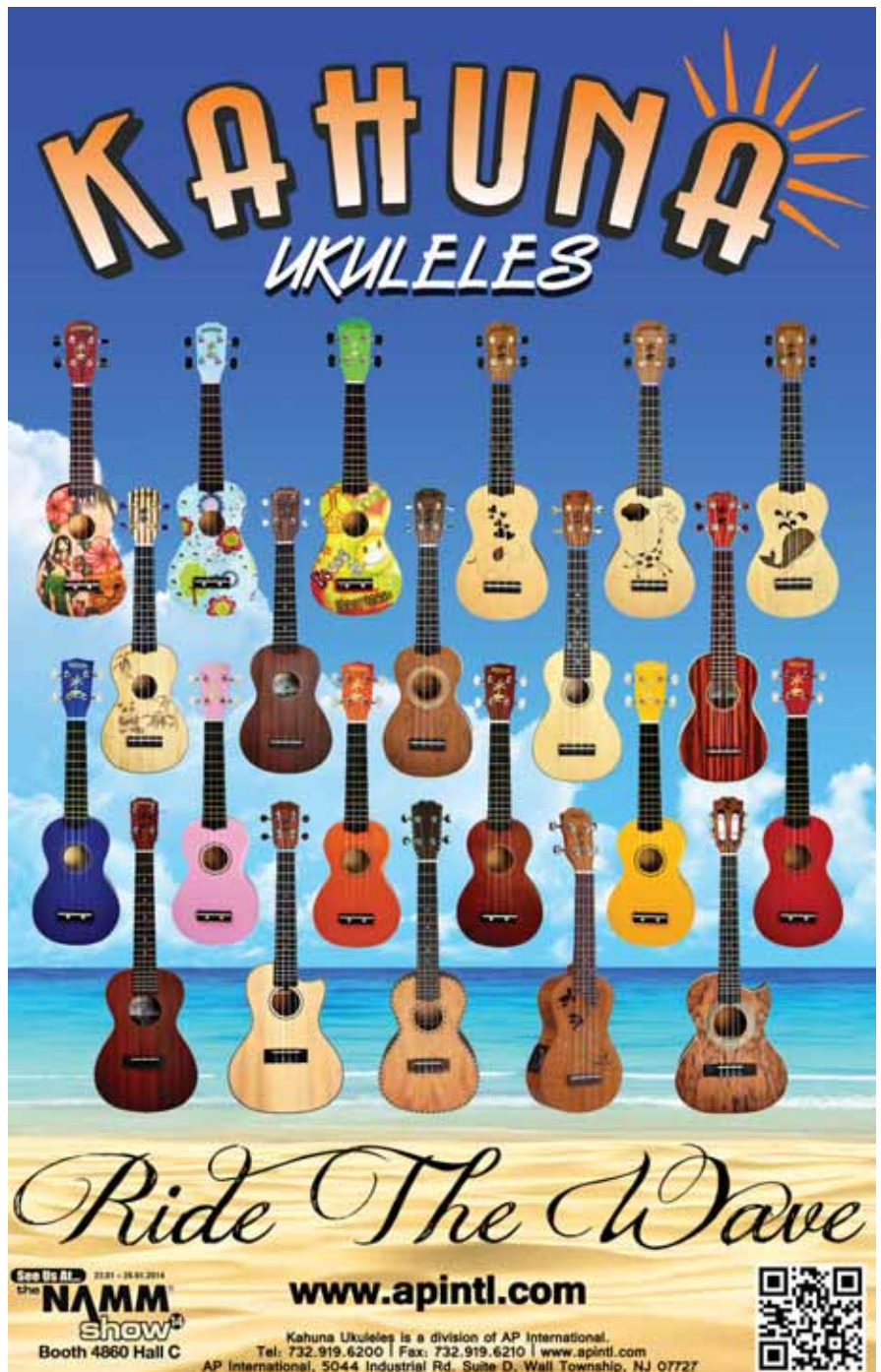
ARTIST APPROVED



Aguilar Wins Over Bassist Gwizdala

Aguilar Amplification recently added English jazz bassist Janek Gwizdala to its endorsing artist roster. Gwizdala is currently using the Tone Hammer 500 head, two SL 112 speaker cabinets and the DCB soapbar pickups.

"I put a pair of DCB pickups in my bass and heard the true range of the instrument for the first time after owning it for years," Gwizdala said. "The journey has now truly begun." aguilaramp.com



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HAMMOND | AWARD

Hammond Starts Own Hall of Fame

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Hammond Organ Company, Hammond USA and *Keyboard* magazine have announced the inaugural Hammond Hall of Fame inductees. The Freshman Class of 2014 recognizes the pioneers, innovators, and trailblazers who all have played Hammond instruments. The list of the 26 honorees includes: Al Kooper, Shirley Scott, Larry Young, Billy Preston, Booker T. Jones, Brian Auger, Milt Herth, Chester Thompson, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Ethel Smith, Thomas “Fats” Waller, Felix Cavaliere, Greg Allman, Gregg Rolie, Jesse Crawford, Jimmy McGriff, Jimmy Smith, Joey DeFrancesco, Jon Lord, Keith

Emerson, Barbara Dennerlein, Eddie Layton, Porter Heaps, Richard “Groove” Holmes, Steve Winwood and Twinkie Clark.

The list was a team effort, with the selection committee comprised of Hammond executives, top Hammond artists, and prominent music journalists. To act

as an advisory board, a fan-based campaign on Facebook was mounted. Listeners’ opinions helped the team to select the first-ever Hall of Fame and provided a benchmark for future nominees. Going forward, up to 10 artists will be added each year. hammondorganco.com



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DISTRIBUTION NEWS

Hal Leonard Partners With PreSonus

Hal Leonard has become a distributor of PreSonus products to music stores throughout the United States. This distribution agreement provides another convenient channel for connecting retailers and consumers with PreSonus products and solutions.



"PreSonus creates cool products that not only cater to established professionals but also help grow the market of new players, especially in education and praise and worship," said David Jahnke, vice president of national sales for Hal Leonard. "Their commitment to education, along with their high-quality audio products and easy-to-use software solutions, make PreSonus one of the strongest audio production lines out there." halleonard.com; presonus.com

AP Joins Forces With Babicz

AP International is now the distributor of Babicz Full Contact Hardware. Babicz is designed to maximize and keep consistent contact between the vibrating guitar string and the guitar body as a resonator. It lets musicians adjust their action as high or low as desired without ever reducing contact of the string to the body, for maximum tone and resonance.



Its patented eCam, or encapsulated cam saddle design, has increased string-to-body contact over 50 times compared to conventional hardware and allows for precise adjustments to action that will stay locked in whatever position the player leaves them in. apintl.com

Kelley Percussion Distributes Schlagwerk in the U.S.

Kelley Percussion is now the exclusive U.S. distributor for Schlagwerk Percussion.

Founded in 1982, Schlagwerk is a leader in the cajon market, and has expanded its line to include nearly a dozen series that feature a variety of woods, sounds and finishes. It offers affordable, junior-sized kids models, DIY "my" cajons and the field-ready "move box." kelleypercussion.com



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IDEAS

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GOOD PRACTICE | BY GRANT BILLINGS

STAYING ON TRACK

For a time, I managed two offices of one of the nation's largest travel agencies. Once a month, they would sponsor destination-themed open houses. The idea, I thought, was to increase revenue by booking trips to that destination.

Shortly after I started working there, I asked my peers how successful these events had been in the past. "Oh, they're great," replied one seasoned manager. "Every time we do them, we give away a lot of brochures!"

Sure, I said, that makes sense. People like free stuff. But how much revenue do the events generate? What percentage of attendees book a trip?

The blank stare I received told me that no one had ever asked these questions before. For decades, our well-meaning managers had held open houses without establishing any goals. The only metric they had in the end was a shorter stack of brochures.

In my last column, I suggested organizing your past marketing efforts into three categories: I think it works, I know it works, and I hope it works. The difference between knowing, thinking, and hoping comes down to effective



evaluation of what you've done in the past. The steps to being able to successfully evaluate results are simple and few, but they are a discipline not taught to most small business owners. Just how important it is to set, write down, and communicate expectations cannot be overstated.

One of the first changes I made at that travel agency was to clear off the cluttered and basically useless break room whiteboard. It sat blank for about a week — a 4 by 6-foot sea of white. Anything that got posted, I removed. At least once each day, an employee would

ask me what I was going to do.

Interest peaked the day that I shut myself in the room — its door was rarely ever closed. Armed with a ruler and permanent markers, I drew out a table for our monthly goals: Revenue Goal, Month-to-Date Revenue, Percent to Goal, Percent to Previous Year, and Pace to Year Goal. These numbers I would update weekly using dry erase markers. If I didn't update the chart before lunchtime on Mondays, my staff would be quick to remind me.

Then, an amazing thing happened. The office that was secretly scheduled to be closed in a few months began to exceed its goals. More accurately, they began to blow their goals out of the water. The other office, which had performed well in the past, also saw impressive increases.

In addition to sharing the numbers that previous management had kept secret, I implemented a system for tracking potential sales ("ups"), the number of closed potentials (closing percentage), and revenue. This eliminated what I like to call "confusing activity with productivity." In the past, the staff believed if they were helping customers they were doing their

job. Now, they understood how productive they actually were and everybody could see how their efforts were contributing to our common goal.

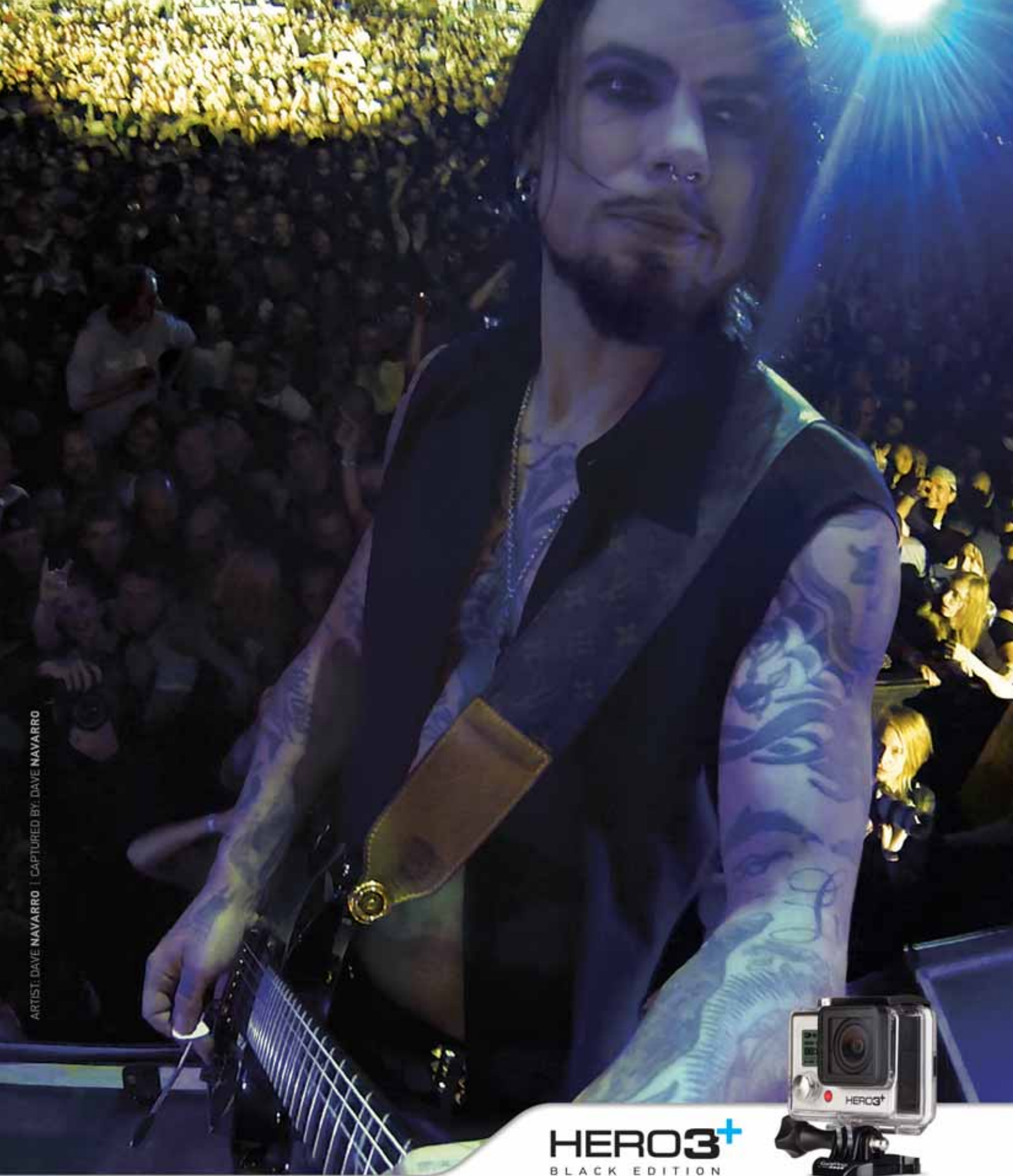
Part of tracking "ups" included tracking where they came from. We quickly discovered how many sales were coming from our open houses. The first realization was that the open houses were not working — but the staff believed they should. Focus shifted to making a better effort to book the trip the night of the event and to follow up on leads over the following week.

It turned out that the staff was right: the events did work. All that was needed was a shift in focus from handing out brochures to following up, but we needed to have good information to analyze to figure that out.

In today's data-driven world, there is more benefit than ever to putting good systems in place to collect reliable, unbiased information to evaluate the productivity of your business. Your solutions can be high tech or as simple as paper and pen; the power is in the knowledge you gain. **MI**

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

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MY TURN | BY TERRY LEWIS

Changing Channels

Not such a long time ago, I regarded eBay as not much more than a useful place to auction off the items that my garage produced after a thorough cleaning. It also had my professional attention, though. As a senior executive in the musical products business, I had placed eBay in the “threats” box in my latest SWOT analysis. But today there is plenty of compelling evidence that has made me change my mind about the entire enterprise.



BOOTING UP

Like many young dot.com firms, eBay was an instant success in spite of its unlikely origins. Only later did it have to work harder, tighten operations, compete more effectively and reinvent itself. Launched in 1995 as “AuctionWeb” by Pierre Omidyar, a 28-year-old software developer consultant, the little enterprise quickly hijacked his entire consulting business domain, Echo Bay (hence ebay.com). In just a little over a year, it began to attract skilled marketing and brand management talent from top U.S. business schools.

The breathtaking growth enabled the company to go public in 1998, just three years after its conceptualization (Twitter took more than seven; Facebook took nine) and the online juggernaut has continued to roll ever since.

The eBay story is an evolving one, moving through phases of growth, reorganization and maturity that more conventional companies can take decades to traverse. As it built its business, it also built a community, loyal to such an extent that it has almost become a social network in its own right. On eBay, members share interests, exchange product information and post reviews.

In the area of music and sound products, the story is not only about growth but also about some of the more fundamental changes that eBay has undergone. The company has transitioned from being reviled, to receiving limited (and sometimes reluctant) participation, and finally now becoming a place where many music suppliers and retailers actually want to be. If you are not

participating, it might be time for a second look.

COMMITTED RESOURCES

Five years ago, the majority of eBay MI listings were for used merchandise from private sellers, auctioned to the highest bidder. Today it is nearly the opposite. Close to 70 percent of the merchandise being sold on eBay now is new product, offered at a fixed price. And most of those listings now belong to commercial sellers.

Sellers like you.

In January 2013, eBay placed a dedicated general manager in charge of musical products for the first time ever. Jason Rubottom is a capable young general manager who has demonstrated an understanding and sensitivity toward the needs and concerns of music and sound suppliers and retailers not often seen outside of our industry.

Brand management support, channel conflict, service concerns and supplier policies are now getting more attention — and suppliers and dealers have begun to take notice, partnering with eBay in ever-increasing numbers. Further, commercial MI and gear sellers are being presented with persuasive evidence that they are getting incremental sales through the channel instead of just trading sales that would have happened elsewhere anyway.

John Anning, executive direc-

Suppliers and dealers have begun to partner with eBay in ever-increasing numbers. It might be time for a second look



Jason Rubottom

tor of The Alliance of Independent Music Merchants (AIMM), now an eBay Partner, has taken notice.

“We have been impressed with the interest eBay has taken in the music industry, and specifically in AIMM,” Anning said. “They see our growth potential and have been eager to help us improve our utilization of their services. They are also receptive to our suggestions.” Some new sellers have chosen to ramp up slowly, listing end-of-life products, “B” and “C” stock, refurbished and other similarly dispositioned inventory. Others are expanding their participation much more quickly.

Successful selling on eBay is significantly affected by the online marketing, customer service and operational skills of the seller. Acquiring these skills takes time and hard work, but the rewards are there. Still, in an often understaffed business many are unwilling to invest the time, people and resources to excel in this environment.

Seeking to grow the category, and to help enable qualifying suppliers and dealers to take advantage of its channel, eBay has partnered with a third party. The outside company can do the heavy lifting for MI sellers.

This new approach has been successful thus far, with sellers consistently enjoying several times the sell-through rate that

average listings achieve.

The fees are surprisingly modest (about the same as eBay’s 7 percent), especially when considering the results. Sellers need only to supply adequate visual

In 2012 the channel produced \$1.4 billion in global musical instrument sales. eBay is, by far, the largest online shopping community in the world for musical products

content and product information and the partner service does the rest, including fulfillment.

A WIDE CHANNEL

This turnkey solution makes it realistic for any seller to quickly get online at a very high level of competency, instantly gaining access to eBay’s vast, dynamic market with far less effort than going it alone.

Indeed, it is the size of eBay’s total available market that is most compelling. eBay sees more than 260 million searches per day and has 350 million listings. Over 190 million people have downloaded its mobile app.

For musical products alone, presently a small part of its to-

tal business, the numbers are staggering. In 2012 the channel produced \$1.4 billion in global musical instrument sales. eBay is, by far, the largest online shopping community in the world for musical products.

As suppliers become more comfortable with the “new” eBay, it is anticipated that distribution policies will gradually be modified to make it easier for dealers to participate.

“eBay doesn’t compete with retailers,” Rubottom said. “We don’t take on inventory. We are a channel partner that every retailer can take advantage of to

reach new customers.”

EBay is no longer the online “wild frontier” that many still may perceive it to be. To be sure, there will always be some channel conflict in our industry and a few rogue sellers, but these were around long before eBay was even an idea.

“They aren’t competing against us, but truly helping us improve our ability to serve consumers,” added Anning.

DOING IT ALL

One of the most significant benefits of selling through eBay is the channel’s effectiveness in countering the phenomenon of “showrooming.” Probably every retailer has witnessed

prospective purchasers shopping a brick-and-mortar store’s inventory and then buying elsewhere online. To add insult to injury, some shoppers do their research and their transactions on mobile devices before they even leave the store.

There are, of course, many ways that a physical location can compete with online sellers, if the retailer is willing to take the necessary steps. But one key solution, often neglected, is to put one’s merchandise online as well. Walking both sides of the fence with equal store and online merchandising skills is in itself a powerful weapon. But battling showrooming without an effective online presence is a fight with one hand tied behind the back.

“Brands and sellers can differentiate themselves more on eBay than anywhere else online,” Rubottom said. “There’s so much contact between consumers and sellers. Some eBay sellers get 500 customer messages per day. That is unique to eBay — and most of the questions that consumers ask are directly related to the product. This is the ultimate opportunity to differentiate and the best sellers take advantage of it. Every listing and every store offers an opportunity to differentiate.”

One thing is certain: eBay’s online music and sound marketplace, and its vast community of buyers, will not go away soon. Your own presence there may not have seemed feasible, or desirable, even just a few years ago. But certainly it’s time to take another look. **MI**

Terry Lewis is president of International Business Resources, Ltd., the consulting firm he launched in 2008 after 26 years with Yamaha Corp. of America. He currently has several clients in the music business (including eBay, Inc.). He also serves as chairman of the Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute.

ON THE BEAT | BY JEN LOWE

Social Studies

I am on my laptop. Several windows are open in my browser. Facebook. TweetDeck. My eBay page. Email. Pinterest and Instagram icons stand ready to launch on my desktop. To say that I am slightly distracted on this stormy winter Saturday in Connecticut is both accurate and inaccurate.

Yes, I am distracted from writing some new songs, and my dog needs a walk. But I am intensely focused on communicating and sharing with my online community. Between my iPhone, my iPad and my laptop, I am always dialed in. Some call it an obsession. My parents think it is rude. I explain that I have started a conversation, and I am trying to keep up my end. That I am staying relevant. That what I am doing is selling.



To make social media translate into sales, you will have to build online relationships

THE NEW REALITIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

For many of us, social media marketing has become a part of our fabric. It can be a grind, yes, and it's a lot of work. And yet it is a handy tool, especially for music retailers.

It has allowed many of us to create and have a voice for our own brand. We can now advertise and promote in spaces that, in the past, may have been financially out of our league. Instead of reaching a handful of local people, we now have the potential to reach and have meaningful interactions with millions.

Yes, millions.

And yet, even with this new leverage, it's still really tough to make a sale. We all know it can be hard in our stores, and it is probably even harder on the Web. I should know: BoomBoom Percussion, my small business, is an entirely online operation, and its income derives almost entirely from my activities on social media.

I can tell you that nearly every sale I have ever made online has been the result of a blossoming, Internet-based relationship. Before you think I am talking about something a little racy, let me explain.

What I mean to tell you is that social media selling is relationship selling. To make social media translate into sales, you will have to build online relationships. And those connections are built one at a time.

BRINGING THE LOVE

There are a few Casanovas out there who are knocking these online relationships out of the park. On the top of my list is Mike Johnston. Mike is the founder, owner and teacher of mikeslessons.com. It is my opinion that Mike's success in the social media/online arena stems from both his generosity and his understanding of his audience. When Mike teaches, drummers listen. Because they feel like they know Mike, and because they feel that he supports their craft, they buy his goods.

Mike does not stop at simply posting a video. He posts high-tech, great-looking content that is technologically as well as personally enticing. Mike recognizes that giving away content and information makes for great sales. You can get a lot of free lessons from him, but once you sample the goods, you will also want to sign up for his subscription-based lesson site as well. Give an addict a little taste of the goods, and they will likely want more.

Mike has more than 6,300 subscribers on his website and over 67,000 subscribers (and more than 7.2 million views) on his YouTube channel. He sells out every drum camp he hosts, and packs the house at his national and international clinics. He is a cutting-edge gent and someone to keep an eye on and learn from.

STAY CONSISTENT

Consistency and availability in any relationship are also key. And those are crucial elements of what makes Pro Guitar Shop (proguitarshop.com), located in Tigard, Ore., such a winning operation. I am mainly a drummer, and I think these guys have it going on. The site is easy to navigate, has a sexy vibe, and oozes professionalism and knowledge. Land on the home page, and in less than 10 seconds you know you are in for a great experience.

Three features that stand out are the demo videos done by Andy, the free Tone Report Weekly app, and their free Demo It Live app. These features give customers the ability to check out effect pedals from the comfort of their own laptop, iPad or iPhone as well as stay in touch with current trends in the guitar and bass world. Andy walks you through all the features of the pedal in his videos, the magazine app keeps you current, and the Demo It Live app gives you the ability to hear the pedal through your own amp. What?!? Seriously: Pro Guitar Shop ain't no one-and-done kissing booth. These guys put the relation in relationship.

They have more than 135,000 subscribers on their YouTube page and over 96,000,000 views. Yes: I said they have more than 96 million views. I would love to see what their AdSense report looks like. Good old-fashioned mailbox money never hurt anyone.

LET'S TALK ABOUT ME

Lastly, I'll tell you a little about BoomBoom Percussion. I am a tiny little retailer with an online store, an eBay account and a lot of time invested in trial and error. I spend my days interacting with my tribe, writing blogs,

recording and posting videos and sending out positive commentary of all sorts. I started my company in part because so many people would come up to me after a performance and profess that they wanted to play drums or guitar or whatever. I would say, "Do it!"

As a result, I have had the honor of selling a lot of non-musicians their very first cajon. Just last month an attorney from Pennsylvania got a cajon from me. His wife reached out on Facebook just asking questions. She said her husband was obsessed with the cajon after seeing me play one. Could I recommend one to her? We spent a little time going back and forth with options, and she bought the cajon from BoomBoom. The prize was a photo of him sitting on his new cajon, in his kitchen, on his birthday, ready to rock the box. The reward is knowing that I have earned their trust and now have two more peeps in my BoomBoom tribe.

RELATIONSHIPS HELP YOU GROW

Since they found me on social media, odds are that those new customers will yield more leads down the road. That's how it works. It's word-of-mouth on steroids.

Finally, it's worth keeping in mind that social media relationships need to be tended to like any others. As you market to your online audience, ask yourself: Are you actively listening? Are you engaging and trustworthy? Are you rewarding fans of your brand with some love and attention? Take the plunge, name the relationship number one and see how far it can boost your sales. **MI**

Jen Lowe is the owner of Boom Boom percussion, and the marketing director of the Friedman Kannenberg accounting firm.

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLIOM

The Cost of Cutting Costs

In a macro sense, the economy is a series of cycles. The fact that there will be ups and downs on some sort of cyclic basis is irrefutable. When, how, why — and how deep or high — is anyone's best guess. As business people, we must attempt to counteract the effects of a down economy and minimize their impact on our businesses. How we react to a tough economy is the subject of this month's column.



'If your primary strategy is cutting costs, you are relegating your business to a defensive position where the goal is to survive not thrive.'

But let me first introduce one other phenomenon: Have you ever noticed how similar music stores are? As I have traveled around the country I have seen it all: the same displays, the same brand focus, everyone cutting the same corners during the recent recession. Reactions to tough times appear so universal that they seem instinctive. I have observed store after store with insufficient help, half their lights turned off, meager inventories, and in need of repairs. And lest it seem that I'm throwing stones, I did all the same stuff when times got tough in my own business.

A SECOND LOOK

During the Great Recession, did you look at some companies (such as Apple, Chipotle and Walmart) and wonder how they got so lucky as to avoid the downturn? What they all have in common is that they chose to not participate. Rather than making their focus on cutting costs (although there was some of that), their guiding principle was to grow revenues and expand business.

The concept is actually simple; cutting costs virtually assures a particular set of outcomes. If your primary strategy is cutting costs, you are relegating your business to a defensive position where the goal is to survive, not thrive. Some of you may still be doing that, despite a recovering economy. Stop right now and ask yourself if that has been your modus operandi since 2008. I'll wait.

Rather than focusing on costs, the Apples and Walmarts of the world aggressively expanded. Rather than let themselves be another statistic, they elected to take advantage of the softer field of play, stepping over companies that made a decision to shrink during that same period. It's a classic game of the hunter and the hunted.

So ask yourself ... do you prefer being prey or attacker? Taking the defensive approach of cutting costs nearly assures that some

aggressive competitors will take advantage of your weakness and use it to their own advantage. I'm not advocating that you miss opportunities to trim needless spending, but cutting costs as a sole means of survival does a disservice to your customers, to your employees, and to your position in the market.

LISTEN, SERIOUSLY.

When my business stumbled back in 2008, I took a purely defensive stance. I cut inventory and personnel, stopped investing in my physical plant, stopped advertising, and, frankly, stopped being creative. I followed the instinctive impulse to dive into a trench and hope I could survive.

What was my alternative? I could have tried something new, something bold, something that upset the status quo. I could have decided to focus on a single product category or swap existing expenditures with an investment in the online space. I could have marketed better or built a more compelling destination.

I closed my business at the end of 2008. If I had been bold and refused to cave to the cost-cutting defense, I might have actually found the formula for survival. **MI**

Gerson Rosenbloom is the Vice President of Strategic Management at Sweetwater Sound, the former president of Medley Music, and a past NAMM chairman. Email him at: gersonmusicinc@gmail.com

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FROM THE TOP

TABOR STAMPER | KHS AMERICA

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

The very first thing I do is review the figures from the end of the previous day — our system compiles the results of each day's activity and emails me a summary report late that night. We apply metrics to most everything we do, and I like to stay on top of our performance, relative to the budget and the prior year.

Then, because our parent company is several time zones ahead of us here in the U.S., there's typically a lot of late night or early morning email traffic. We often have early morning videoconferences with members of our team in Taiwan.

AND YOUR ON-SITE COLLEAGUES?

My morning routine will usually end with a walk around the building. I try to get through all of the areas — the warehouse, custom drum shop, quality control, the office. I usually walk around the outside of the building as well. It's a great way for me to collect my thoughts for the day and squeeze in a morning cigar. I do enjoy a good cigar.

I also try to spend at least a few minutes with each of the senior managers. We have one of the best teams in the industry and part of my job is to simply clear the path so they can do what they do best. I can't do that if I'm not on top of things.

IN ADDITION TO CLEARING THE PATH — WHAT ARE YOUR PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES?

I'm ultimately responsible for financial stability and growth. The stockholders have entrusted me with safeguarding and growing their very substantial investment, and I take that responsibility very seriously. I've learned that the greatest value I can provide to the company is to establish the overall direction and corporate vision for the future. I'm fortunate that the talent we've assembled affords me the opportunity to do that. It's critical that I stand back, look at the future, and then collaborate with the other team members about how we, together, can create that future.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH THAT COLLABORATION?

First and foremost, I believe in group intelligence and that, with the right people, we can do anything. We're much smarter as a group than we are as individuals. I also think it's crazy to hire talented people and then handcuff them. They have to be allowed to do what they were hired to do.

ONCE YOU HIRE THE RIGHT PEOPLE, WHAT'S NEXT?

It's critical that we create alignment among those team members, each and every day. And that alignment begins when everyone understands our corporate vision and the outcomes we are trying

to achieve. What do we want to be? What will we look like five years from now? When everyone understands that, strategies and supporting actions become very clear.

HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE EVERYONE "GETS IT"?

Every one of our team members carries a card with our mission statement and core values. Every new employee, on their very first day, has to sit through a meeting with me. I try to bring them up to speed on how we approach the business — our vision, mission statement, core values and the outcomes we desire.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THOSE CORE VALUES?

Although it's important to find ways to improve, it's not enough to do the same things better. We use words like "create" and "different" a lot. We try to get out of problem-solving mode and into creating something that doesn't exist today. Easy to say, hard to do, but very important. Also, everything I've mentioned doesn't mean much if we forget why we're here. We absolutely must focus on the customer experience for our retail partners, as well as the end consumer. When we start with the customer and work backwards, the decisions we make are typically good for everyone.

DO YOU EVER HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING ALL OF THE KHS' BRANDS STRAIGHT?

The short answer is yes. It's a challenge to manage all of our brands. Each one is important in its own right, and we have to guard against one being swallowed up by another. KHS America, as a brand, is important only to our dealers, but has little importance to the end consumer — for the end consumer, including the educator, it's our instruments that are most important.

WHAT'S THE DYNAMIC LIKE BETWEEN YOU AND TAIWAN?

KHS America is a U.S. corporation, but also a member of the KHS group of companies, so we work very closely with our Taiwan team and consider ourselves to be part of the family. As I mentioned before, we communicate regularly via video and Web conferencing to help coordinate our efforts across the globe.

WHAT SORTS OF THINGS DO YOU TALK ABOUT?

Simply put, we brand globally, but market locally. We also understand that anything we do here in the States has an impact on our global presence, so we are careful to make sure that our marketing efforts here have a positive impact worldwide. The lines of communication go far beyond just U.S. to Taiwan. We are in constant contact with key international distributors to ensure alignment throughout the world.



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THE DETAILS

TABOR STAMPER

President

HQ: Mt. Juliet, Tenn.

FOUNDED: 1985 as Jupiter Band Instruments; name changed to KHS America, Inc. in 2011

EMPLOYEES: 75

BEST-SELLING PRODUCT: Jupiter Wind Instruments, XO Professional Brass Instruments, Altus Professional Flutes, Mapex Drums, Majestic Concert Percussion, Walden Guitars

FUN FACT: "As a band director, I was fortunate to have taught at all levels, from elementary through university bands. That experience helps me today in better understanding the needs of today's band directors and their students."

WHAT'S YOUR OWN MUSICAL BACKGROUND?

I have a Masters degree in performance and my undergrad degree is in Music Education from Indiana University. At Indiana, I was surrounded by some of the best teachers and players in the world. That influence is a big part of what I am today. People like Ray Cramer are my heroes, as were Fred Ebbs and Lewis Van Haney and I can't begin to measure what they did for me. Their influence has affected and continues to affect my career in the music industry.

DO YOU PLAY MUSIC YOURSELF THESE DAYS?

My playing days are over, at least for now. When someone asks me what I play, I tell them I used to play trombone, but now I'm just a trombone carrier. I can still do that.

ARE THE CHALLENGES OF THE STUDENT MARKET SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE PRO MARKET?

In many ways they're the same. In both cases, it's our responsibility to build instruments that meet the needs of the player. It's important to provide students with an instrument that doesn't get in the way of their learning. Students won't realize how important the instrument is as they struggle to produce those first few notes. If they fail, they naturally think it's their fault, that they weren't good enough. They can't know and won't consider the possibility that their instrument was actually holding them back. That's a real shame. On the other hand, pros know exactly what they want and will absolutely recognize the role the instrument plays. The pro will achieve the sound he or she is after, no matter how good or bad the instrument is — the sound already exists in the pro's head. Our job here is to provide an instrument that allows pros to achieve that sound with the least amount of effort.

WHAT'S THE MOST FUN ASPECT OF YOUR JOB?

It may sound corny, but what I really love is being around musicians. We are part of an industry that provides the means for musicians of all levels to do what they love doing. We could make a living in many different ways, but we choose music, a medium that does so much good for so many people. What a great job to have!

AND WHAT DO YOU FIND THE MOST CHALLENGING?

Dealing with those elements that we can't control. The economy, for instance, is a challenge for us all. Consumers have more options than ever and have to make hard choices about how to spend what

little they have available. That's why we work so hard to provide quality instruments at a price the average consumer can afford. Labor, cost of materials, health insurance, all continue to go up in cost. It's a constant challenge to control the costs we can while maintaining the quality level both we and our customers expect.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PRODUCT THAT'S BEEN DEVELOPED AND MARKETED UNDER YOUR WATCH?

Probably the Quantum Series Marching Brass and Percussion. We came from nowhere, just a few short years ago, and now we're recognized as one of the industry leaders. Then of course, there's the MyDentity custom drum set project. We introduced MyDentity at the 2012 Winter NAMM so, relatively speaking, the line is brand new. We received a "Best in Show" award, and the line has met with great success.

'We try to get out of problem-solving mode and into creating something that doesn't exist today. **Easy to say. Hard to do.'**

SPEAKING OF THE SHOW — THE DRUM AND BRASS AREAS CAN GET PRETTY RAUCOUS. IS VOLUME EVER AN ISSUE FOR YOU OR YOUR EMPLOYEES?

Sorry, I couldn't hear you. What was that you said?

WHAT DO YOU WANT KHS TO SELL THAT IT HAS NOT CREATED YET?

We've got a number of projects in the works, but I'm not ready to share those plans at this point. I can tell you that we consider product development to be an integral part

of what we do. We can't continue on our current growth trend without the right instruments for today's musician. In my view, we either continue to develop or we die.

WHAT'S AN EXAMPLE?

For years we stood on the sideline, forcing our dealers to go somewhere else to purchase the accessories they need to serve their customers. I'm happy to say that's changing, and starting in January we'll be offering several lines of accessories specific to the products we offer, so our dealers will be able to purchase most of what they need in accessories from KHS America. Some names will be familiar to everyone and some will be new to the market. The early response has been quite good, and it will only get better.

IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

I enjoy boating and could see myself involved in that industry. Every chance I get — which isn't often enough — I try to get out on my boat, even if just for a short cruise. Luckily my wife Susie enjoys boating as well so it's a good opportunity for us to spend time together. **MI**



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CHECK OUT THIS YEAR'S HOTTEST PRODUCTS

48 GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

JBE flashes back to the '50s with new pickup

70 AUDIO & RECORDING

Hosa gets an edge with new cables

86 PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

Kurzweil's new MPG200 keeps it compact

90 DRUMS & PERCUSSION

Sabian leaves drummers flipping for new stick accessory

96 BAND & ORCHESTRA

D'Addario adds to Reserve line

100 PRINT, MULTIMEDIA & GIFTS

Hal Leonard caters to beginners with new series

108 DJ & LIGHTING

Denon DJ ushers in new generation

THE GEAR GUIDE

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

PEDAL TO THE METAL



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. SEYMOUR DUNCAN DIRTY DEED

Seymour Duncan's Dirty Deed pedal is designed to capture the character and responsiveness of a classic overdriven tube amplifier with elements of distortion, fuzz and overdrive combined into a single wide-range pedal. seymourduncan.com

2. AMPTWEAKER BIGROCK PRO

Amptweaker's BigRock Pro includes two boost knobs, one before and one after the distortion, making it easy to boost the gain and volume for the ideal solo tone. Users can patch their favorite delay into the boost effects loop, giving them one-stop control of their rock rhythm and lead. amptweaker.com

3. MOOER NOISE KILLER

The new Mooer Noise Killer is designed for rig configurations that buzz or hiss when certain pedals are added in or certain amps are used. It eliminates unwanted noise and feedback without impacting sustain, attack or shortening notes. It has two working modes for hard or soft effect of noise threshold. MSRP: \$99. mooreaudio.com

4. GODLYKE TWA FLY BOYS

Godlyke has debuted its TWA Fly Boys mini pedals for guitar. The pedals feature a light-weight, extruded aluminum chassis that's an ideal size for crowded pedalboards or long-distance travel gigs. Quality components and a bullet-proof construction assure reliable performance. godlyke.com



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The Horizon series mixers offer 12 or 20 input configurations. All feature twin effects DSP, dynamics processors and two way active cross-over, with the powered versions packing a colossal 2000 watts, flexibly assignable to FOH and / or stage monitoring. The new form factor features light aluminium panels and sustainable bamboo end cheeks that create a modern, elegant design with the emphasis on portability and minimum weight.



part of the touring range

S3

active & passive speaker cabinets

The S3 series offer high performance and premium components in rugged plywood cabinets. The S3 range comprises models from 10" to 18" in both active and passive variants.



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GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

FARGEN | CUSTOM SHOP ONE-OFFS

One-of-a-Kind

Fargen Amplification has expanded its Custom Shop to include unique one-off and limited edition amplifiers and pedals. These circuits are based on

founder Ben Fargen's personal experience building amps over the last 15 years. Fargen designed these amps working with master craftsman Jeff Earl to hand-select woods for the cabinets, which are hand-built to optimize tone.

{fargenamps.com}



AXL GUITARS | BEL AIR

So Fresh

AXL USA has added the USA BelAir, a hand-assembled TV Jones and Bigsby-equipped model that covers tons of tonal ground from surf to country. The AXL USA BelAir extends the theme of the AXL single cutaway Bulldog platform. Each model is assembled by hand in Hayward, Calif., and goes through a setup process from hand-pressing and gluing the frets to hand-soldering the electronics. {axlguitars.com}

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What's Selling?



Anthony Mantova
Mantova's Two
Street Music
Eureka, Calif.

LAST YEAR

"I've thought highly of Electro-Harmonix, specifically its 45000 looping pedal. We've recently seen weekly

restock orders as its pedals find local homes. The EHX secret is offering what customers want at the right price points. Customers can buy a single effect for a low expense with the nano series, or they can invest in a more dynamic pedal that will grow with their career in life. Also, our strongest alliance will always be with Yamaha. Its best-seller has been the CG172SF flamenco guitar. Nine out of 10 students in our lesson program start on that guitar. It's the best student nylon on the market due to the incredible sustaining rumble of the Cyprus wood."

THIS YEAR

"The new products we carry in 2014 will have one thing in common: big profit margins. With the current economy, vendors had better get serious about sharing profit opportunities."



CORDOBA | C10 PARLOR

Spanish Beaut

Córdoba's C10 Parlor features a solid Canadian cedar or European spruce top and solid Indian rosewood back and sides. The C10 has a slightly reduced body size and scale length and is handmade using traditional Spanish construction techniques. It boasts a mahogany neck, ebony fingerboard, natural high gloss PU finish, 50mm nut width, 630mm scale length, and Savarez Cristal Corum strings. It also includes a deluxe Córdoba humidified archtop wood case.

{cordobaguitars.com}

90

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PRS | MARTY FRIEDMAN SE

Marty's Own

Paul Reed Smith has rolled out the Marty Friedman SE signature artist model. The guitar features a beveled maple top with mahogany back, a 25-inch scale length, a 22-fret mahogany neck with a rosewood fretboard and star inlays. Other features include PRS-designed SE locking tuners and PRS's adjustable stoptail bridge. prsguitars.com





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OZZTOSH | LUMA

Lightweight Line

OZZtosh's first model in its line of lightweight guitars is machined and handcrafted from a solid aluminum block. The LUMA's classic shape is enhanced by OZZtosh's proprietary state-of-the-art surface contouring methods and internally placed acoustical chambers. This establishes a richer sound than previous generations of hollow aluminum guitars. ozztosh.com

LANIKAI | UKE5B

Techie Ukes

LANikai Ukuleles has added to the technology-friendly Uke5B collection. The new LMU series models are USB compatible with both standard instrument cable and micro-USB outputs. The new models feature all mahogany construction, die-cast chrome tuners, pearl neck inlays, genuine Aquila strings, and a pearloid Uke5B headstock logo. lanikaiukes.com

FENDER | AVRIL LAVIGNE NEWPORTER

Sk8er Boi's Pick

Fender's Avril Lavigne Newporter acoustic guitar is based on the singer's signature Squier Telecaster guitar with distinctive punk-pop charm. The guitar is concert-size boasting an all black finish, binding and tuners, and featuring a specially designed star rosette, 12th-fret skull and crossbones inlay, and Lavigne's signature on the Telecaster headstock. fender.com

MXR

40



GOOD VIBES.

Dunlop

jimdunlop.com | Booth #4568



KOLL GUITAR COMPANY |
TROUBADOUR ST

SoCal Sound

The new Troubadour ST from Koll Guitar Company features three custom TV Jones single coil pickups made specifically for this model. The series captures master builder Saul Koll's perspective on classic SoCal design and the sound coming out of Fullerton from the mid-1950's on. kollforpbg.com

H. JIMENEZ | LATIN MODELS

Latino Flavor

H. Jimenez, owned and distributed by Hohner, has debuted a new series of Latin stringed instruments that offer luthier expertise. They were created as the result of a direct collaboration with bajo quinto and guitar luthier Hilario "Layo" Jimenez. H. Jimenez offers a range of products that are ideal for the beginning Mariachi student or for gigging musicians who are part of the Norteno or Tex-Mex music scene. hohnerusa.com



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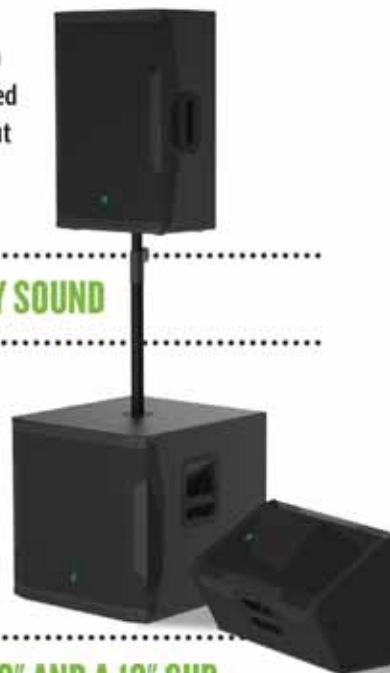


Now featuring our flagship Onyx™ mic preamps, the brand-new VLZ4™ line delivers the proven feature set, high-headroom/low-noise design and “BUILT-LIKE-A-TANK” construction that created an industry more than 20 years ago – all at the same price of the prior version. From every input to every output, VLZ4 is optimized to deliver professional-quality results each and every time.

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

ON-STAGE GEAR | GA300

Classic Capo

On-Stage Gear's GA300 classical guitar capo lets musicians play open strings and chords in whatever key they want. The GA300 features an elongated handle that fits comfortably in the player's hand. The quick-squeeze trigger design lets players squeeze and remove instantly. Thus, classical guitar players can reposition the capo mid-measure for key changes with ease. MAP: \$13.95. onstagestands.com



BLIPSONIC | MEEBLIP

Digital Analog

Blipsonic and CDM have collaborated to debut the MeeBlip anode. The unit is part analog, part digital, capable of producing a range of uniquely aggressive, bass-heavy sounds. Plug the anode into a keyboard, computer, iPad (via adapter), or controller via the MIDI port to play notes. Then, adjust sounds via knobs and switches. meeblip.com



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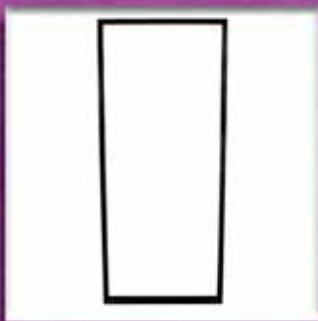
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GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



JBE | '50S P-STYLE BASS PICKUP

Fifties Flashback

JBE Pickups has debuted the 1950s J-P-Style Bass pickup, which reproduces the bold round tone that was characteristic of the era's Precision Bass, but without noise or hum. JBE has incorporated its dual blade design on this pickup. joebarden.com

CROSSROCK | IMPROVED 06 SERIES

New & Improved

Crossrock's new Improved 06 series of gig bags feature four levels of padding. Offering five, 10, 20 or 30 millimeters of high-density foam, players can choose how much protection they want. Each tier adds useful features, such as additional pockets, security reflective strip and a neck block at the 306 level. kingstarintl.com



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Power Pins give players the option of installing the last bridge pins they'll need. After a quick, easy and non-invasive installation, players will find an ease of string replacement found only on electric guitars, leading the string right through the pin. apintl.com



BOURGEOIS | AGED TONE SOUND UPGRADE

Better With Age

Bourgeois Guitars' Aged ToneSound Upgrade is now available on most Bourgeois guitar models. Previously available only on the Aged Tone models, this package includes all features sound-related from the Aged Tone series guitars, including proprietary thin finish, hide glue, Bourgeois bracing and Torried tops. pantheon guitars.com

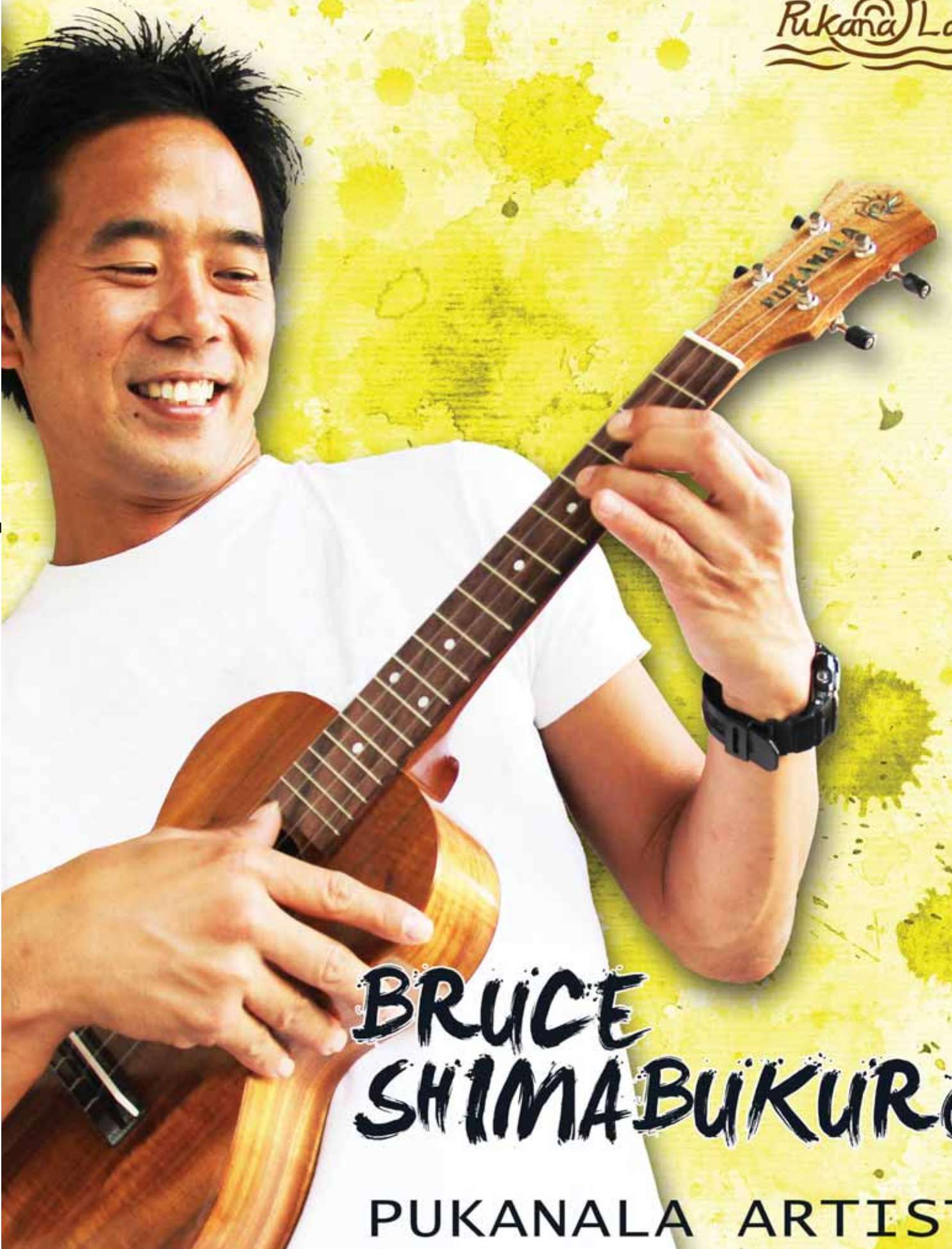


KALA | STAND OUT

A Real Stand Out

Kala has expanded the Stand Out line of instrument display accessories with a new series of wall hangers that are manufactured and assembled at Kala headquarters in Petaluma, Calif. Kala's new Stand Outs are available in two sizes, one that fits ukulele and mandolins and another for guitar and bass instruments, including the U-BASS. Kala's hangers are made with reclaimed wood that is hand-selected from a local salvage facility. kalabrand.com





**BRUCE
SHIMABUKURO**

PUKANALA ARTIST

BELCAT | MERIT-10

Happy 25th

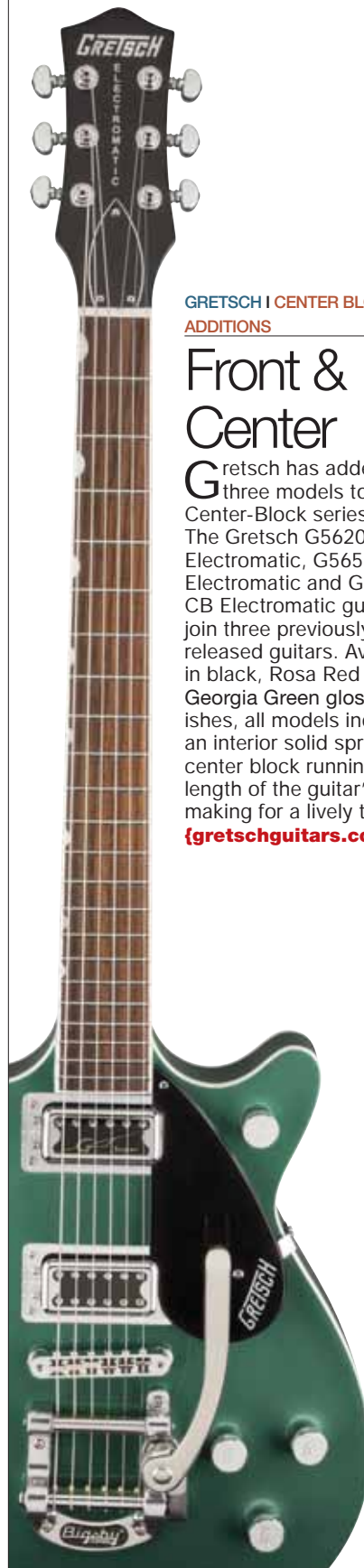
Belcat celebrates its 25th anniversary with the release of the Merit-10 amplifier. This amplifier features various drive functions and 10W output through a 6.5-inch custom driver. Boasting an SD card and USB link, the Merit-10 Amplifier gives users the freedom to use universal MP3 and recording systems. **{belcat.com}**



PALMER | FAB 5

So Fab

The new Palmer FAB 5 Combo is a classic single-ended amplifier with an output of 5 watts which, in conjunction with the built-in 10 Eminence Ragin Cajun speaker, provides for plenty of power and punch. The cabinet boasts its own retro chic look. **{palmer-germany.com}**



GRETSCH | CENTER BLOCK ADDITIONS

Front & Center

Gretsch has added three models to its Center-Block series. The Gretsch G5620T-CB Electromatic, G5655T-CB Electromatic and G5622T-CB Electromatic guitars join three previously released guitars. Available in black, Rosa Red and Georgia Green gloss finishes, all models include an interior solid spruce center block running the length of the guitar's body making for a lively tone. **{gretschguitars.com}**

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



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CHORD | TRADITIONAL 5-STRING BANJO

Tried & Traditional

Chord's new traditional 5-string banjo boasts a high G string for bluegrass and fingerpicking styles. Body and neck are mahogany with a rosewood fingerboard. A coated drumhead forms the sound board, supporting a floating bridge. Tuning is served by four open-gear tuners at the headstock and a closed geared tuner for the high G. **{avsl.com}**

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Stone Cold Tone

Stone Tone Rock Block's sustain blocks are made of granite and are designed to enhance and strengthen the sound of a tremolo-equipped instrument across the entire audio spectrum. After installing a Stone Tone block, the guitar's clarity, sustain and overall tone is improved equally in all ranges of the fretboard. **{floydrose.com}**



The new **S2** Series from PRS Guitars



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Manufactured with new processes and specs in the same Maryland factory as all US-made PRS instruments, the new S2 Series brings classic PRS playability and reliability to a new price point. With a simple, straightforward design these guitars have serious style and expressive tone. Check one out at a PRS dealer near you and see for yourself. www.prguitars.com/s2series

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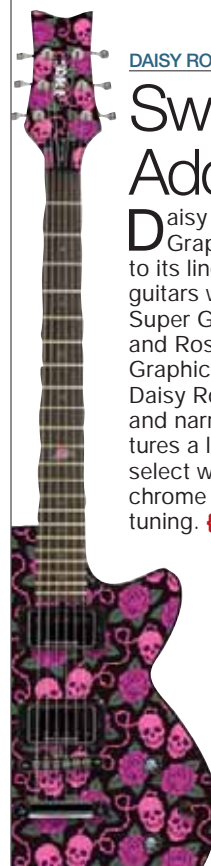
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Oxygen Amps' Ozone series includes the Ozone 18W Head which boasts 18 watts of power, two channels and power, standby, and impedance switches. The OA212 EXT Cab includes 2- by 12-inch scumbacks M75 and H75 50W speakers. The Ozone 18W Combos are available in 1- by 12-inch and 2- by 12-inch versions, and the OA412 EXT Cab includes 4- by 12-inch scumbacks M75 and H75 100W speakers. oxygenamps.com



DAISY ROCK I CANDY GRAPHIC

Sweet Additions

Daisy Rock's Rock Candy Graphic guitars has added to its lineup of female-friendly guitars with the release of Super Guitar Girl and Skulls and Roses. The Rock Candy Graphic is constructed with Daisy Rock's trademark slim and narrow neck, and features a lightweight design, select wood, and die-cast chrome tuners to ensure solid tuning. daisyrock.com

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THE GEAR GUIDE

AUDIO & RECORDING



1.

1. NEUMANN TLM 107
Neumann's TLM 107 large diaphragm microphone features switch functions that are controlled through a wear-resistant navigation switch. The operating concept includes an illuminated pattern display in the chrome ring, with the pad and low cut status LEDs positioned to the left and right. neumannusa.com

2.

2. CAD AUDIO AS22, AS16
CAD Audio has introduced the AS22 and AS16 to its line of Acousti-shield stand mounted acoustic enclosures. The AS22 Acousti-shield is a foldable stand mounted acoustic enclosure that provides added portability to the Acousti-shield line. cadaudio.com

3.

3. MXL CR77
MXL Microphones recently launched the CR77 live stage dynamic vocal microphone. The CR77's design emphasizes clear, vibrant sound. The grill has smaller holes to eliminate feedback onstage. Behind the grill, a foam windscreen is built in to filter out plosives and background noise. mxlmics.com

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PROROCKGEAR | RGMPTC01

Rock Solid

ProRockGear recently released the new waterproof and fully customizable microphone case. The RGMPTC01 features a molded hard-plastic outer shell and handle with a non-slip rubber grip, heavy-duty plastic latches, and tough rubber seal for an airtight fit. Inside, the case includes removable diced foam on the bottom to create a custom snug fit for microphones as well as convoluted foam on the top to keep them from moving during transit. (prorockgear.com)





AUDIOFLY | AF140, AF140I

Dynamic Drivers

Audiofly's AF140 hybrid in-ear monitor features one dynamic and two balanced armature drivers and is equipped with a 64-inch Audioflex SL cable. The AF140I is a hybrid triple driver in-ear monitor with the Audioflex CT Cable. audiofly.com

What's Selling?



Raegan Michelle Medeiros
John Michael's Music
Muskogee, Okla.

LAST YEAR

"Without a doubt the SI Expression Digital Mixer from Soundcraft sold great for us last year. It takes the need for outboard gear out of the equation. No more charting for venue or bands. And it's easy for churches to set 'scenes' for weddings, funerals, Sunday mornings and Sunday nights."

THIS YEAR

"The hottest trends are going to continue to be Apple-related pieces that make your iPhone and iPad easier to record with as well as digital mixers and acoustic guitars."

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SOURCE AUDIO | HOT HAND USB

Hot Commodity

Source Audio has debuted the Hot Hand USB wireless MIDI controller. Bypassing traditional knobs and faders, the Hot Hand USB integrates seamlessly with music production and recording software, such as Ableton Live, Logic Pro, ProTools, Traktor Pro and Reason. Hot Hand USB lets musicians manipulate software parameters with wireless motion-control, engaging their audience by controlling and manipulating sound through physical performance. sourceaudio.net



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NEUTRIK

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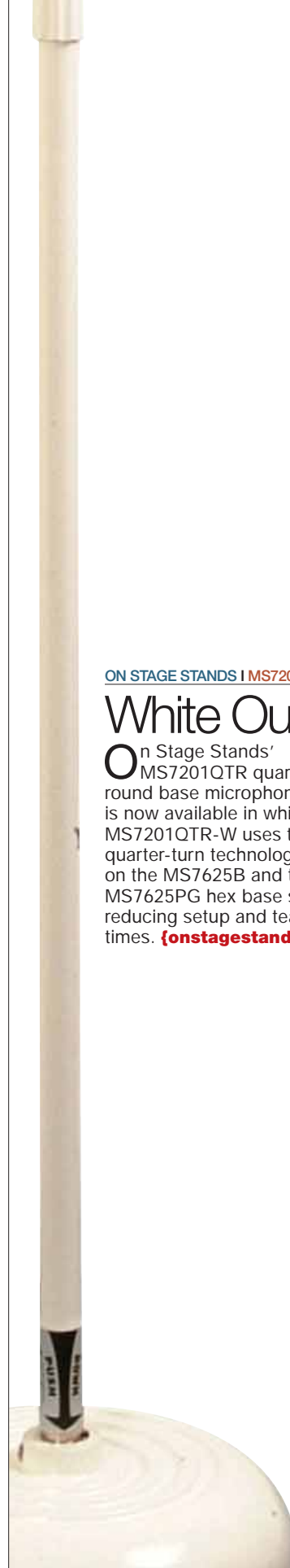
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ON STAGE STANDS | MS7201QTR

White Out

On Stage Stands' MS7201QTR quarter-turn round base microphone stand is now available in white. The MS7201QTR-W uses the same quarter-turn technology found on the MS7625B and the MS7625PG hex base stands, reducing setup and tear down times. onstagestands.com



CHARTEROAK | K500

Wide Appeal

CharterOak's K500 Ultra Parametric Equalizer features high headroom and low distortion on three ultra wide bands. Appealing to a wide audience of audio professionals, the K500 will fit into any 500 series powered rack. The unit features bell and shelf selection switch in high and low bands.

charteroakacoustics.com



GEAR >

AUDIO & RECORDING

FOSTEX | PX-5, 6

Speak Up!

The Fostex PX-5 professional monitor speaker consists of a new 5.2-inch LF driver and 1-inch HF tweeters. The new PX-6 includes a 6.5-inch LF driver and 1-inch HF tweeters. The DSP is programmable via a back panel knob and memory system.

{americanmusicsound.com}



SUPERLUX | WIRELESSPAL 40

First Things First

Superlux recently unveiled the Wirelesspal 40, the first v-mount battery-powered 4-channel wireless portable P.A. system. A built-in battery power tester for monitoring the battery power keeps everything in control. The Wirelesspal 40 can be used as a sub-mixer, a 4-channel wireless system or as a floor monitor. {superlux.com.tw}



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ULTRASONIC | EDITION 5

Ultra Comfort

Ultrasonics's Edition 5 headphones feature special wood grain making each model unique. Ultrasonics headphones were developed around three central aspects: sound, design and wearing comfort. The Edition 5 ear cups are dimensioned so that they can be worn comfortably around the ear and the ear pads are covered with leather. ultrasonics.com

ODYSSEY | COMPLETE CONTROL SERIES

Total Control

Odyssey's Complete Control series consists of two DJ controller cases designed to accommodate all DJ controllers on the market, from small to large formats. The series features Odyssey's patented Glide Style, a sliding laptop platform design that mechanically slides out from within the case to serve as a surface to support music equipment such as a laptop or interface. odysseycases.com



KALTMAN CREATIONS | RF-VUE

For Review

The RF-Vue is integrated into a 10-inch touch tablet with the full Windows 8 operating system. The RF-Vue T10 covers the standard wireless microphone and IEM frequency range of 470MHz to 700MHz. Additional models are available offering greater frequency ranges. kaltmancreationsllc.com



FBT | J SERIES

Multi-Functional Speakers

FBT has launched its J series. Replacing the Jolly range, the new J series features 6- by 2-way active speakers and 4- by 2-way passive speakers. The range is aimed at a multitude of applications from portable DJ/band use to permanent installation and sound reinforcement. Featuring new amplification and DSP circuits, the J series also boasts durable polypropylene cabinets with integrated handles for easy transport. fbt.it



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www.dpamicrophones.com/dvote



K-RIG | KV2

Plug & Play

The new K-RIG from KV2 is a plug-and-play system that is aimed at the small to medium production market and DJ sector. The K-RIG consists of the KT2.0, a dedicated mid high cabinet with a horn-loaded 12-inch speaker and a large diaphragm 2.5-inch compression driver on an 80 by 60 horn. The system is powered by the K-PAK, which delivers 1.8KW to the bass speakers, 600W to the mid-range and 200W to the high-frequency horn. kv2audio.com

HOSA TECHNOLOGY | EDGE SERIES

On the Edge

Hosa Technology has debuted its Edge series cable products. Featuring genuine Neutrik connectors and Oxygen-Free Copper (OFC) conductors, the Edge series consists of microphone, guitar and speaker cables. The microphone cables are manufactured with gold-plated contacts for corrosion resistance and a Zinc die-cast housing for reliability. New speaker cables use 12 AWG Oxygen-Free Copper (OFC) conductors that reduce resistance and provide maximum signal transfer. hosatech.com



A man with dark, wavy hair and a light beard is smiling. He is wearing a light blue and white striped button-down shirt over a white t-shirt. He is holding a large, black, circular speaker component in front of him. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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James Thompson

JAMES THOMPSON

Lead Systems Engineer

THE GEAR GUIDE



PIANOS & KEYBOARDS



KURZWEIL | MPG200

A Compact Grand

Young Chang/Kurzweil has announced the new MPG200 Digital Grand Piano. The Kurzweil MPG200 combines a compact-grand piano design with the sound technology of Kurzweil. The piano is further enhanced with an all-new 88-note, fully weighted and graded hammer action keyboard. kurzweil.com

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More than just a piano, the Privia Pro PX-5S has everything you need. A great feeling 88 note scaled hammer action keyboard, 4 layer stereo grand piano sounds, vintage electric pianos and clavs, powerful controller capabilities and a synthesizer that blows away most dedicated products. Not to mention it's affordable weighs only 24 lbs, so it won't break your back or your bank.

www.casiomusicgear.com



GO BEYOND SOUND

CASIO





HOHNER | AIRBOARD

Get Major Air

Hohner recently release the AirBoard, a portable, air-powered, keyboard instrument. With a new appearance and redesigned BlowFlow mouthpiece, the AirBoard is designed for a new generation of musicians. The AirBoard will be available in 32 and 37 key versions. us.playhohner.com

YAMAHA | TYROS5

All-in-One

Yamaha's Tyros5 Arranger Workstation keyboard offers musicians an outlet for composing, arranging and performing music with +Audio Styles, vivid instrument voices, and the choice of 76-note or 61-note models. Additionally, there are 40 new drum and percussion-based +Audio Styles. yamaha.com



What's Selling?



Cathy McReynolds
Lacefield Music
St. Louis

LAST YEAR

"Kawai digitals sold well as always, but the CA series was a big surprise for us last year. We sold more than we had expected of the CA65, 95 and CS6. Our Kawai CP209 digital grand was up. We saw a slight increase in acoustic grands. Plus Lowrey organs rebounded from a sluggish 2012."

THIS YEAR

"We are very excited about the new Kawai CP series digital pianos that are supposed to show in January, and we predict a great year with these products."

Dave Smith
Instrument Designer
Co-Creator of MIDI
Grammy® Winner

Over the past 40 years, Dave Smith has designed more groundbreaking synthesizers than anyone, ever. Dave Smith Instruments has the largest line of analog and digital/analog hybrid synths in the world. Top to bottom, Dave Smith Instruments' award-winning, American-made product line includes a synthesizer for every need and budget, from the flagship Prophet 12 to the affordable and ultra-portable Mopho product family.



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THE GEAR GUIDE

DRUMS & PERCUSSION



1. PROMARK SELECT BALANCE
ProMark's Select Balance line of drumsticks lets drummers choose forward or rebound balance from five diameters to fit all playing styles. Select Balanced sticks use quarter-sawn hickory for straightest grain, most consistency and durability. promark.com/selectbalance

2. LOS CABOS JAZZ STICKS
Los Cabos has added two sticks. The Swing model features an elongated oval or olive tip delivering depth and tone. The Jive model features a ball tip for high response. loscabosdrumsticks.com

3. VIC FIRTH M231H, M232
Vic Firth recently introduced two new models to its series of Andrew Markworth Corpsmaster Signature keyboard mallets. The M231H medium hard stick is a blend of warmth and articulation in all registers. The M232L hard stick is ideal for those who appreciate the M232, but wish for a little more agility and warmer tone at all dynamic levels. vicfirth.com

4. SABIAN STICK FLIP
The Sabian Stick Flip is a versatile drumstick bag/holder that starts as a drumstick bag and can be unzipped, flipped, and used as a drumstick holder. The transformation is quick and smooth with no snaps or special connections. sabian.com

STICK 'EM UP



LOGJAM | STOMPERS

Stomp on This

Logjam's Stompers are ideal for cajon players and hand percussionists as well as vocalists, guitarists and bassists. The Logjam modules are not effects pedals; instead they feature an internal sound chamber that creates the sound of an acoustic bass drum when plugged into a P.A. or bass amp. **{bigbangdist.com}**



LP | CAJON THRONE

Have a Seat

Latin Percussion has introduced a comfortable option for extended playing on any cajon with its new cajon throne. Designed to support up to 300 pounds, the 10-inch-diameter LP cajon throne mounts quickly to the top of any cajon. The cajon throne rotates a full 360 degrees. MSRP: \$29.99.

{lpmusic.com}

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SONOR | NEBULA SQ2

Out of This World

Sonor has rolled out its limited edition Nebula SQ2 kit, boasting high-density North American Maple and a custom finish featuring a human rendering of a digital image sent back from the Hubble telescope of the Eagle Nebula. Handmade in Germany, the maple shells offer evenly accentuated lows with balanced mids and highs. sonor.com



What's Selling?



Jim Rupp
Columbus Pro Percussion
Columbus, Ohio

LAST YEAR

"As far as 2013, we did well with electronic sets. They continue to be strong, both with Roland and Yamaha. I think that area will continue to grow for us. Also, we did very well with the flat base and lightweight hardware. Guys my age are looking for light but quality hardware, and younger players like that vintage look."

THIS YEAR

"The Mapex Saturn series really came on in 2013, and I think that will grow for us [in 2014]."



DRUMFIRE | DHB6500

Carry On

Drumfire's new hardware bag, the DHB6500, can handle hardware from a standard 5-piece kit. Up to eight stands or mounts fit into its large foam-lined main compartment, which features a collapsible divider to help organize and protect hardware. onstagestands.com

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MAJESTIC | PROPHONIC 50TH ANNIVERSARY SNARE

Limited Beauty

Majestic Percussion has commissioned a 12-drum reissue of the Prophonic 50th Anniversary Snare Drum exclusively for the U.S. market. The drum features a thick maple shell and rounded top bearing edge. majesticpercussion.com

MAPEX | MARS SERIES

Alien Approved

Mapex's The Mars series is designed for aspiring players ready to replace their beginner kits or for younger players in search of a mid-priced drum set. The Mars series shell packs offer 100-percent Birch shells complete with the new SONIClear Bearing Edge, increasing the contact between the drumhead and shell letting the head sit flat on the edge. usa.mapexdrums.com



DE GREGORIO | COMPASS CAJON

All Directions

The new Compass Cajon by De Gregorio is hand-crafted, Spanish-made and features a 3-ply Baltic Birch front plate. The body is made of medium density wood-fibre composite. cajondg.com





TRX CYMBALS | THUNDER, LIGHTING LINES

Stormy Weather

TRX Cymbal Co. has expanded its series of vented cymbals with new 10-inch splashes, 18-inch chinas and 14-inch hi-hats in both its Thunder and Lighting lines. Thunder cymbals are based on TRX's warm, dark DRK Series, while the Lightning cymbals are based on the company's powerful, bright BRT series. trxcymbals.com



EVANS | EMAD

Heavy Duty

Evans has launched the EMAD Heavyweight bass drum head and the Heavyweight snare batter head, two durable film-based drumheads. Both the EMAD Heavyweight bass drum head and Heavyweight snare batter feature the new Level 360 Technology, which ensures better fit, easier tuning, and a wider tonal range. evansdrumheads.com

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GEAR GUIDE



BAND & ORCHESTRA



P. MAURIAT | GREG OSBY SAXOPHONES

Marquis Mauriats

P. Mauriat has unveiled a marquis series of saxophones developed with master jazz musician, Greg Osby. Specs include two neck options, redesigned C/Eb right pinky keys and a stronger 4-point body to bell brace. pmauriatmusic.com

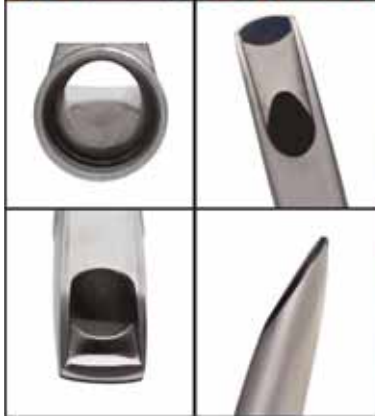


KNILLING | SANDNER VIOLINS

Master Gems

Knilling has introduced two new violins. The Franz Sandner #45F Concerto Model 4/4 features highly flamed European maple back and sides, and select European spruce tops. The Franz Sandner #46F Symphony Model 4/4 has a flamed maple back and sides with a select, seasoned top. knilling.com

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MOUTHPIECES FOR ALL CLARINETS AND SAXOPHONES



SCHILKE | S23, S33

Double Time

Schilke has expanded its Bb trumpet offerings with the addition of two new HD trumpets, the S23HD .463-inch large bore and S33HD .460-inch medium-large Bb models. Both combine design concepts from the new HD series and traditional Schilke models. schilkemusic.com

D'ADDARIO | X10E MOUTHPIECE

X Factor

D'Addario has added the X10E mouthpiece. This new model features added resistance, but does so without sacrificing ease of response, functionality or flexibility of color, dynamic or pitch. daddario.com/reserve



PROTEC | WOODWIND MOUTHPIECE CUSHIONS

Chew on This

Protec's new woodwind mouthpiece cushions offer a universal fit and provide mouthpiece protection and comfort from annoying vibrations, while also improving ligature grip. Available in two sizes, the small cushions accommodate soprano clarinets and larger. Large cushions accommodate most Bb clarinets and larger. protestyle.com



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Designed by and for musicians, the new ProRecord Optical Key Sensor System turns your piano into a digital/acoustic hybrid with USB, MIDI, and Silent Piano functions. Learn to play, compose, create sheet music, or capture your own performances.

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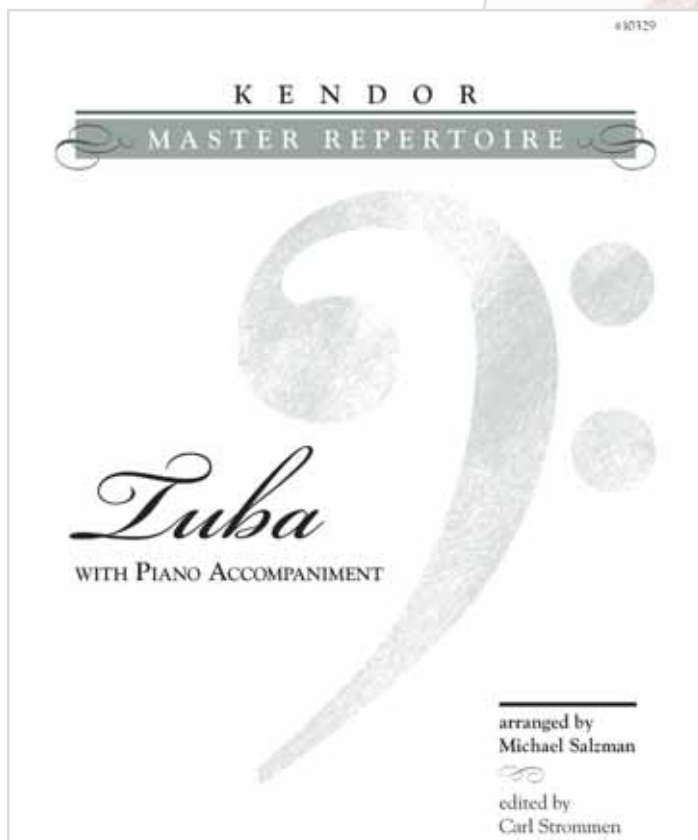
THE GEAR GUIDE

PRINT, MULTIMEDIA & GIFTS

KENDOR | MASTER REPERTOIRE SERIES

True Masters

Kendor Music recently debuted the *Kendor Master Repertoire*. Each solo-with-piano book in this series contains eight highly idiomatic grade four solos, selected and arranged by a performing artist/educator on that specific instrument, in collaboration with editor Carl Strommen. kendormusic.com





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What's Selling?



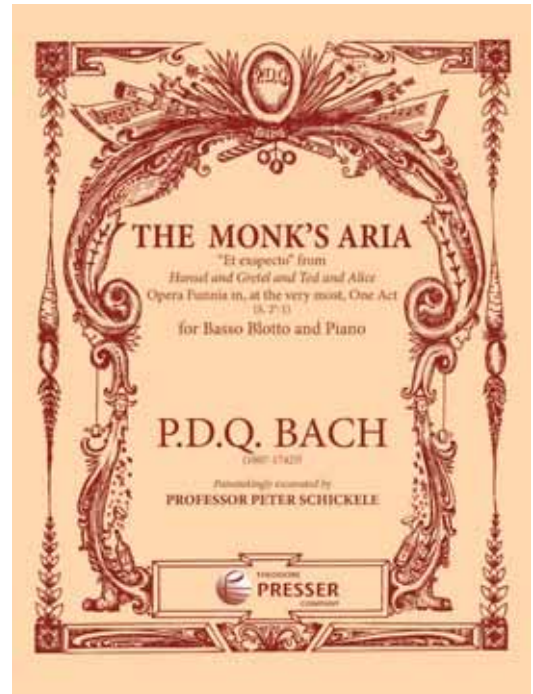
Bob Kohl
Long & McQuade
Vancouver

LAST YEAR
"Traditional [titles] have continued to do well for us, such as soundtracks for movies. *Les Miserables* was a huge seller. We also had a real gift with *Glee* titles. And there is a new fad

for video game music. Alfred released *Minecraft* this year. Video game music has been really strong."

THIS YEAR

"For 2014, I would like to hopefully see more of the same — big soundtracks. It's always great for us when there are great movies out there. Kids who just want to play or who are auditioning for things — that's huge."



THEODORE PRESSER | 'THE MONK'S ARIA'

A Buried Treasure

Theodore Presser has introduced *The Monk's Aria*. Professor Peter Schickele has uncovered this piece from the buried library of P.D.Q. Bach. *The Monk's Aria*, for intermediate to advanced bass singers, appears to be an attempt at Gregorian chant, but is filled with linguistic lapses throughout the Latin text. presser.com

HAL LEONARD | EASY INSTRUMENTAL
PLAY-ALONG SERIES

Mickey Mouse Approved

Hal Leonard has unveiled its first three *Easy Instrumental Play-Along* titles. Ideal for beginning players, songs in the series have been edited to include only the notes and rhythms that students learn in the first months of playing their instrument. One of the titles in the series is *Disney* featuring ten classic songs, including "The Ballad Of Davy Crockett," "Part Of Your World," and "Whistle While You Work." halleonard.com



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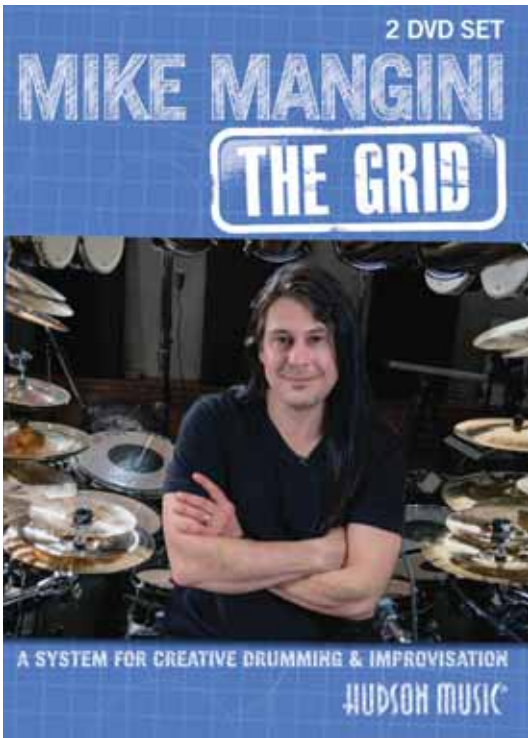


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HUDSON MUSIC | 'MIKE MANGINI THE GRID' DVD

Improv Teacher

Filmed in two different studios on two different drum kits, Hudson Music's *Mike Mangini The Grid* DVD offers a system for creative drumming and improvisation. It includes Mangini's signature Dream Theater setup during the recording of the band's latest album. This DVD teaches users to use polyrhythms, play in odd time signatures, develop a deeper understanding of the basics of rhythm and become a more creative player. hudsonmusic.com

ALFRED | 'JONI MITCHELL COMPLETE SO FAR'

Coveted Collection

Alfred Music has released *Joni Mitchell Complete So Far*, Mitchell's first fully complete and artist approved song collection. This collectible hardcover 512-page book features 167 songs drawn from Joni's 18 studio albums. The songs and lyrics are transcribed accurately and include Joni's critical guitar tunings with more than 40 cataloged in the book. alfred.com



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Bart Breber
Breber Music
Elkhorn, WI



THE GEAR GUIDE



DJ & LIGHTING



HERCULES | HDP DJ LIGHT-SHOW

Funky 'Phones

Hercules is expanding its range of DJ equipment with advanced headphones. The HDP DJ Light-Show Adv include backlighting in the earpieces that pulsates to the rhythm of the music. MSRP: \$99.99. hercules.com



ADJ | WIFLY

On the Fly

American DJ's WiFLY Wash Bar is a battery-powered linear RGB LED fixture with wireless DMX capabilities. This compact, portable unit is ideal for creating massive washes of saturated color on walls and stages without having to worry about the restrictions imposed by power cords or DMX cables. adj.com

DENON DJ | MC6000MK2

Next Gen Controller

Building on its flagship controller and digital mixer, Denon DJ has debuted the new generation MC6000MK2. Changed, improved and now supplied with Serato DJ Intro software, the MC6000MK2 combines a steel chassis build quality and reliability with total Serato compatibility. denondj.com



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Compare the 3 top acoustic brands while we keep a tally. May the best sound win.

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Eric French
David French
Music Co.
Westborough, MA



GEAR >

DJ & LIGHTING



CHAUVET | NEXUS AW 7X7

Beaming Bright

Chauvet Professional has added the Nexus Aw 7x7, a versatile warm white LED panel. Emitting bright, narrow beams from 49, 3-watt 2,800K CREE LEDs, the Nexus Aw 7x7 offers the flexibility to generate high-impact aerial effects and produce warm white washes. chauvetprofessional.com

BLIZZARD | HOTBOX EXA

Hot & Cold

Blizzard Lighting's HotBox EXA is a 5-inch square, cast aluminum wash fixture. With its four-button LED control panel, the unit features a flicker-free constant-current 400hz LED driver. blizzardlighting.com



DJ-TECH | DIF-1M

Pro Mixer

The DJ Tech DIF-1M is a professional DJ scratch mixer with integrated Mini in-noFADER from scratch fader manufacturer Audio Innovate. The DIF-1M serves as a full-feature two-channel mixer with 3-band EQ, master jack out, mic input, and both 6.35mm and 3.5mm headphones outputs. djtechprousa.com



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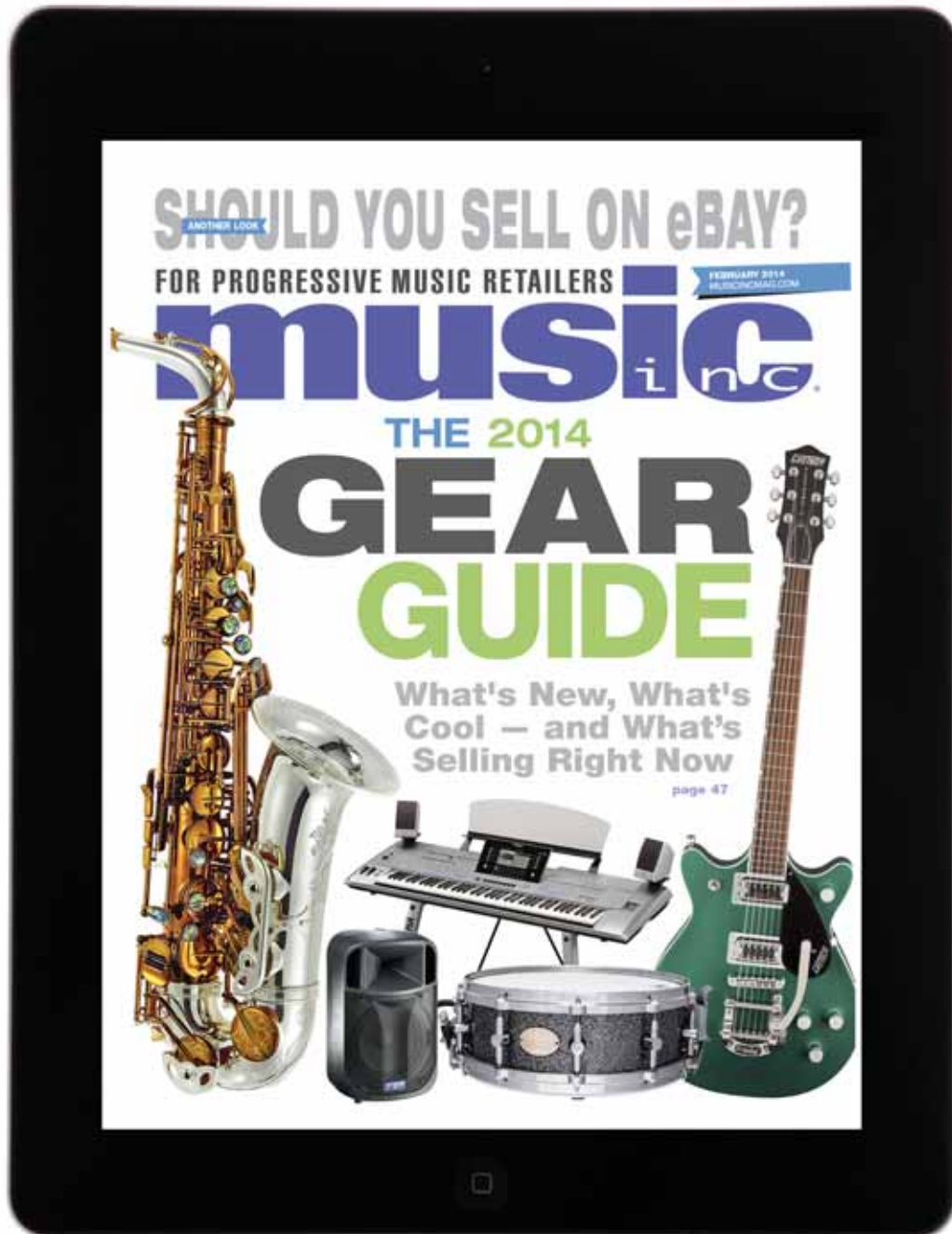
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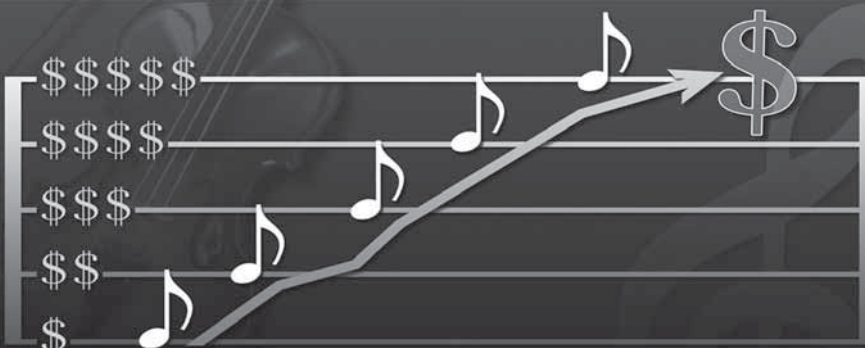
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Rand Cook

*The Candyman Strings & Things
Santa Fe, N.M.*

Sales did meet my expectations, but 2013 was an odd year. Our overall sales grew a little, about what we expected but less than what we would always hope for. But the methods in which we met those numbers were not expected.

The categories we thought would be healthy were not as healthy, and categories we didn't really anticipate to be healthy were healthier. For example, low to middle-end electric guitars really slid pretty dramatically. The acoustic guitar market stayed very solid and very strong. We saw some growth in the keyboard market, which we didn't expect.

We developed a marketing plan five years ago which was a hyper-community centric, grassroots promotional program. We spend much of our energy promoting community and the benefits of making music throughout various outreaches.

>>>

Nate Corning

*Mark's Guitar Shop
Spokane, Wash.*

Not really. I expected a better year than last. When I ran the comparison, we're almost dead even with last year. We're not down, but I was hoping for an increase.

To make sure sales weren't down, we've tried to maximize on our repairs and lessons. We've tried to bring things in at a price range people are shopping in. Things above \$1,000 are pretty tough to sell, so we're trying to keep an affordable price range.

This year, we've scaled down on labor, and we're going to continue with that. We're going to be looking for products that can maximize our profits, especially hot sellers. We try to carry not exactly what the big box stores carry so we're not getting price shopped. We've also started doing a promotion with every instrument sold. In addition to our normal warranty, we're giving customers a free re-string or a free guitar lesson — their choice. We've only been doing it for a month, but after the holiday season, with new guitars going home, people are going to start coming in to get that first lesson. Hopefully that will translate into future lessons.



>>

Kevin Crossett

*GuitarSam
Montpelier, Vt.*

Did your 2013 sales meet your expectations?

In our case it's a little difficult to gauge this year on an apples-to-apples basis. We are a brick-and-mortar store and we're located in the middle of a busy downtown area. But we had massive street construction — they were installing central heating systems. So we went through eight months of the streets dug up. That certainly didn't help business in terms of vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

Our sales for the spring, summer and fall were down a little bit from what we would have expected to see, but it wasn't business related as much as it was access related.

To combat against the

construction, we beefed up our social media. That's one of the things you can change day by day, of course, as opposed to creating a radio ad or waiting for the next newspaper to come out.

We do all standard advertising as well. But in many cases, social media gives you the opportunity to respond to changes and needs very quickly.

The other thing that we did was try to remain as competitive as possible. We always price all of our products at MAP anyway. We tried to keep things in stock, kept track of expenses more than usual and just tried to plow through an

undesirable civic situation.

For 2014, we already have a couple of new guitar brands lined up to start with us. We've got that already in place. We're also looking to expand some of the departments that we already have — always trying to be a little bigger and a little better.

We're going to do more with percussion. We currently are pretty devoted to a lot of hand drum and world drumming products, and we've been out of the drum set business for a while. But I think we're going to turn back that way and start doing some stocking in the drum set line as well.

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