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THE BOUTIQUE EXPERT

Matt's Music Center draws high-end clientele with its unique product selection and funky design

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THE NAMM SHOW 2014

The industry's most complete coverage

Show Floor Gear Trends
Editor's Choice Awards
Best in Show Winners

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PUBLISHER

Frank Alkyer

MANAGING EDITOR

Katie Kailus

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Kathleen Costanza

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

LoriAnne Nelson

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

Žaneta Čuntová

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Ed Enright, Davis Inman, Bobby Reed

PRESIDENT

Kevin Maher

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

John Cahill

WESTERN ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Tom Burns

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Sue Mahal

CIRCULATION ASSOCIATE

Kevin R. Maher

CIRCULATION ASSISTANT

Evelyn Oakes

BOOKKEEPING

Margaret Stevens

OFFICES

Ph (630) 941-2030 • Fax (630) 941-3210

email: editor@musicincmag.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE

(877) 904-7949

Jack Maher, President 1970-2003

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THE BOUTIQUE EXPERT

Matt Leff has turned Matt's Music Center outside Boston into a regional and global headquarters for high-end guitar gear.

BY KATIE KAILUS

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Craigie Zildjian reflects on history, new directions and continuing the legacy of America's oldest family business.

BY MICHAEL GALLANT

GUITARS OF YESTERDAY. GUITARS OF TOMORROW.

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For dealers who stock the brands that less experienced consumers recognize, the under-\$500 acoustic market is brisk. Traditionalists will love the new Artwood Vintage (AV) line. For those with an eye for style, the popular Exotic Wood (AEW) Series sports a dash of deco. Whatever folk acoustic instrument your customer desires, Ibanez is raising the quality standard for price-point instruments.



Artwood Vintage Series

AEW Series

INSIDE *DEPARTMENTS*



Photo credit: Jesse Grant/
Getty Images for NAMM

Jonny Lang
performs at NAMM.

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- 98 WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM NAMM?**
Dealers keep their eyes peeled for techie products and savvy strategies

Cover photo by Scott Eisen

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

MAKE MORE MUSICIANS

This past NAMM was the seventh show I've attended. And each time I get back from the sensory overload and networking overdrive that is a NAMM Show, I feel more pumped and more proud than ever to be working in this industry.

Maybe it's from all the shiny new products on display or maybe it's from listening to excited exhibitors discuss the new gear they've spent months — or even years — fine-tuning. But probably the main reason rises

from all of the incredible musicians I am surrounded by for four days. From talented artists playing at the exhibitor booths to those jamming in the hotel lobbies to the larger acts rockin' NAMM's GoPro Stage — their enthusiasm and mad skills are contagious. So contagious, in fact, that invariably each year they have me promising myself that I will find more time to play.

Watching these musicians rock out also reminds me of why we are all in this industry: to make more musicians. It's as simple as that. Now that you have returned to your store or office, and the NAMM buzz has died down a bit, take a second to think about the main reason you are in this industry.

Meeting this month's sales quota and managing your overhead stock are all important aspects of business — no doubt

— but so are the music makers that walk through the doors of your store. Foster these relationships. Take a good hard look at your lesson program, and revamp it if you need to. Put on more concerts in your community, and involve them in your business.

Take Tobias Music in Downers Grove, Ill., for example. This family-run guitar shop recently underwent a renovation, and added a music room, which the owners are now using to host a series of concerts. The series boasts four performances from February until May from such artists as Muriel Anderson and Lee Murdock. For more on the Tobias Music concert series, see page 19.

Possibly even more important than the musicians that already shop at your store are the potential musicians who haven't walked through your door yet.

Everyone knows someone who's always wanted to play guitar, but has never had the chance to learn. Or someone who used to play piano when they were a child, but has since stopped. Encourage these people to play. Go out into your community, put on a concert and inspire someone. Create more music makers. After all, it's the only way to keep our industry moving forward. **MI**



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MUSIC INC. LETTERS

Timely & Informative

I enjoyed reading Terry's Lewis' column "Changing Channels" regarding eBay and the MI industry in the February issue of *Music Inc.*

In this day age with so many new and different things happening in the industry, we need to accept change and the new ways of doing business. I thought that Lewis' article was timely and informative. Not only was the topic that he put forth informative, but the way he went about it. It was a well-written piece. Great article!

Bruce Stevens
Former CEO
Steinway and Sons

New Way of Retail

My main takeaway from this year's NAMM Show (besides electric guitars and drums being down from last year) was how brick-and-mortar stores saw declining foot traffic last year and how they're using the Web to help overall sales. If you're willing to embrace change and be a part of the "new way of doing business," you'll have a much better chance of succeeding in today's world.

The most important thing about a retail business is still the customers. Creating a local community that supports and loves what you do is key. I find that it's not always about price. Stores need to create a culture. People want quality, service, selection and a fun, cool place to shop.

Now, not only do you have to have an amazing brick-and-mortar store but you also have to do just as well online. This is where most people try to avoid change or just put up a simple website to let people know they exist. In today's world, you need a great website that offers your



customers more than just a few products and special prices. You need to engage your online customers daily and offer something more exiting than ever.

Finally, not only do you need a great website but you also have to find the time to build and maintain a wide variety of social media. My advice? Have this be an extension of your business and have a dedicated staff operate and update your Web and social media.

It's still all about the overall experience for the consumer. Now you just need to combine this in the store as well as online. That's the new way of retail.

Paul Decker
Owner
Music Villa
Bozeman, Mont.

Well Worth the Trip

This Winter NAMM was my 21st winter show. Through the years I have witnessed many changes in our industry. I truly went into this year's show very excited, mostly about change. I've been harping on our employees with this little saying for the last year: "If you become complacent, you become replaced."

Technology continues to march on in ways that I could have never dreamed of. We now not only have mixers that can be controlled by mobile devices; we have a mixer that looks like a combination of the two. The emphasis on getting new people to become music makers was stellar. Entry-level recording technology along with custom

tailored software to fit almost any application makes the possibilities endless.

This year there seemed to be a heavy focus on limited editions. I heard more than one person talking about individualizing products so that our customers had something that was much more unique. The product variation is becoming as individual as the music that's made with it. Our vendors are super tuned-in and innovative, and seeing it all together helps shift your business toward the trends.

For years I've talked to several people who think that The NAMM Show is a waste of time and money. I will be the first to tell all that it is one of the most important things we do during the year! It's not a big party, although it can be fun, and it's not

just a place to order what's new. There is so much to learn there for you if you choose to take it. Every day I use things that make me a more effective music retailer that came from The NAMM Show, and this year's show was a huge success again.

Tim Pratt
President
Dietze Music
Lincoln, Neb.

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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red and black patterned top and blue jeans, is sitting cross-legged on a wooden stage. She is playing a light-colored acoustic guitar. The background is a large, deep red curtain. The lighting is focused on her, creating a dramatic effect. The overall mood is intimate and artistic.

Speech impaired and completely **BLIND TO LIMITATIONS.**



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Musician's Friend names new marketing vice president
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Tobias Music debuts a concert series
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RETAIL

MIKE RISKO MUSIC SCHOOL | BY KATHLEEN COSTANZA

ROCK REIMAGINED

When Mike and Miriam Risko, owners of the Mike Risko Music School in Ossining, N.Y., were searching for a place to get married in 2000, they settled on the spot they loved most — their music school.

Since then, they've switched locations and expanded into a retail shop and music school that sees 600 students a week and employs a staff of about 30. Besides its lessons, the community-centric school offers a wide menu of programs that spans school outreach, group classes, open mic nights and rock band camps for all ages.

"The curtain opens at 1:00, and it's just non-stop energy until 9:00 at night," Miriam said.

The Risko's sales are a 50/50 split between their various education programs and their retail store. With lesson programs so central to their operations, they've prioritized making the space into one kids and parents enjoy waiting in by adding a cafe and well-stocked craft table.

Beyond the welcoming environment, Mike and Miriam's performance experience also helps the lesson program thrive. The duo founded the band Lucy's Frantic and have been gigging together since the early '90s.



Photo credit: Darryl Estrine

They pull from that background to integrate performance into their lessons.

"We want to make it clear to people that it's great to play an instrument but you also want to be surrounded by music all the time," Miriam said.

Whether at recitals, retirement homes or rock band camp performances — that can gather an audience of 500 — performing motivates kids toward a goal which gets them practicing and returning back for more lessons. Mike added that for both kids and adults, performing builds confidence and helps students learn their instrument in "a

complete way."

HIGH-END RENOVATION

When the Riskos moved to their current location in 2009 (the same building Mike started teaching in 20 years ago), their first priority was renovating the lesson space. But as they've veered into selling higher-end instruments, they decided 2013 was the right time to upgrade the retail portion.

Mike said the entry into the higher-end market — they recently picked up Fano Guitars and Two-Rock Amplification — came after he saw a demand for boutique instruments when

people kept calling and searching for them. He said stocking the small store with lower-end guitars makes it tough to compete with giant online retailers because, while their MAP prices are the same, people are less likely to travel far for lower-end instruments.

"When we have beautiful guitars that the pros want to play, [customers] want to go somewhere to play them," Mike said. "With the redesign, we're making this environment that will be so cool to come hang out in."

They've added a vaulted ceiling, painted the walls bright colors and installed a wood floor and acoustic room. The Riskos have also sectioned off a chunk of the shop with a funky, brushed aluminum garage door to add yet another practice and performance space that will double as a local fine art gallery.

The rest of 2014 is set to be filled with new experiments including Skype lessons, Rock Star for a Day camps held on school holidays and the expansion of the pop-rock vocal classes Miriam runs.

"Our whole thing was about being in bands, going out and having a good time and playing music," Mike said. "We love that stuff, so we're just sharing that with everybody." **MI**



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ALFRED | AWARD

ALFRED AWARDS TOP DEALERS

Alfred Music honored Long & McQuade, Musician's Friend and Nick Rail Music at the Alfred Music Premier Dealer Awards during The NAMM Show.

Established in 1956, Long & McQuade grew from a small store in Toronto to the largest chain of musical instrument and print retailers in Canada with over 60 locations across the country.

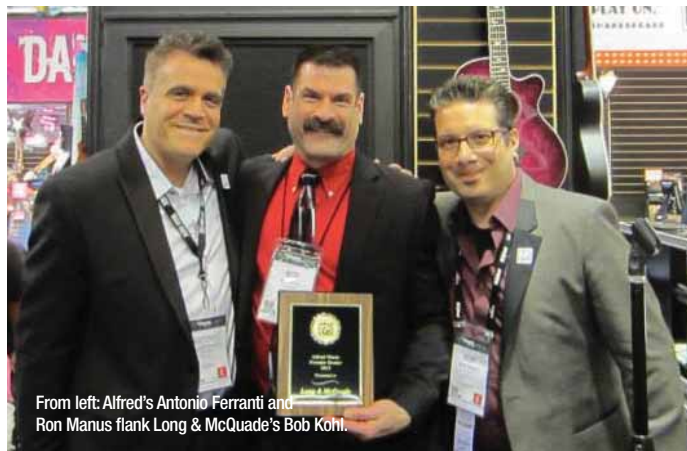
"From hosting piano workshops and clinics as well as band and choral reading sessions, to carrying all of our pop music songbooks and instructional media through new issues, they represent Alfred Music to the fullest extent," said Antonio Ferranti, Alfred's vice president of sales.

Musician's Friend is a fully serviceable website with a 300-person call center in Salt Lake City and distribution center in Kansas City, Mo.

"Their creative marketing ideas, including a recent promotion for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* titles on their social media pages, which coincided with the release of the films in movie theaters nationwide, show innovation, creativity, and capitalized on one of the many merchandising opportunities that only music

media and publications can provide," Ferranti said.

Established in Santa Barbara, Calif., Nick Rail Music was also awarded for its critical role in helping develop the new Alfred Music Dealer Rep program. alfred.com



From left: Alfred's Antonio Ferranti and Ron Manus flank Long & McQuade's Bob Kohl.



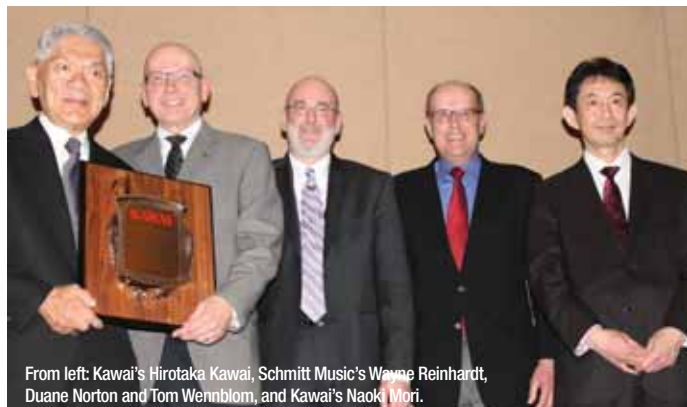
Nick Failla, president of Collected Concepts, speaks at NAMM's Retail Boot Camp.

NAMM | EVENT

NAMM Members Flock for Retail Boot Camp

The 2014 NAMM Show kicked off a day early with the annual Retail Boot Camp. More than 300 retailers attended the all-day event on Jan. 22 and heard a from a range of presenters on how to boost sales, utilize social media, manage inventory and leverage websites to their full potential.

MI experts included Nick Failla, president of business consulting firm Collected Concepts, product and marketing expert Michael Newman, and music retail financial experts Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe. namm.org



From left: Kawai's Hiroataka Kawai, Schmitt Music's Wayne Reinhardt, Duane Norton and Tom Wennblom, and Kawai's Naoki Mori.

KAWAI | AWARD

Kawai Awards a 'Family' Affair

During Kawai's annual awards ceremony, held during The NAMM Show on Jan. 23, Kawai America Senior Vice President Brian Chung stressed how Kawai's dealer network feels like a family.

"We've known so many of our dealers for such a long time that our relationships often transcend business and become friendships that feel like family," Chung said.

Kawai's Dealer of the

Year (USA) award went to A. McBain/Carnes Piano Company of San Jose, Calif. Dealer of the Year (Over Five Locations) went to Schmitt Music Company of Brooklyn Center, Minn.

"There is no way for any manufacturing company like ours to achieve international success without faithful partners who are willing to trust in our people and invest in our brand," Kawai President Hiroataka Kawai said. kawaius.com

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TOBIAS MUSIC | EVENT

Tobias Music Kicks Off Concert Series in New Music Room

Tobias Music is putting its new performance space to use by kicking off a concert series in conjunction with folk and acoustic booking agency Artists of Note.

Located in Downers Grove, Ill., the 35-year-old shop expanded into the space behind it three years ago and then purchased the remaining half of the building last summer. But instead of filling the new space with more inventory, co-owner Paul Tobias decided to take the room in a different direction.

"I could fill that other room with guitars and amps, but you might only be coming into buy one — you're not going to buy two because I have a big store," Tobias

said. "So we decided from the very beginning to try to bring a different musical crowd into the neighborhood which would give our store more exposure."

Folk artists Kim and Reggie Harris performed on Feb. 8 and will be followed by Small Potatoes on March 15, Muriel Anderson on April 19, and Lee Murdock on May 17. tobiasmusic.com



Kim and Reggie Harris perform on Feb. 8.

IN MEMORIAM

President of Sam Ash Music Passes Away

Paul Ash, president of Sam Ash Music, passed away on Feb. 5. He was 84.

Paul worked with his father, Sam Ash, founder of Sam Ash Music, until his father passed away in the mid 1950s. According to an interview Paul did with *Music Inc.* in December 2013, he and his older brother Jerry were determined to carry on the company's name and traditions.

"I have always felt that the goal is to keep the reputation we inherited from our father," Paul told *Music Inc.* "Enhance it and protect it. It's not like we had a generic name like Musiland or something. This is our family. Our father's name. It's the most important thing that we own."



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APPOINTMENTS

MUSICIAN'S FRIEND NAMES NEW MARKETING VP

Michael Weiss has been named the vice president of marketing at Internet retailer Musician's Friend, a division of Guitar Center. Weiss was the CEO of California Web agency Imagistic for 14 years and worked with a range of clients including Disney, FOX, Estée Lauder and the ACLU. Weiss is also a musician, teacher and regular TEDx Talker.

"I am excited to work with the marketing team and merchants to create more ways that educate, inspire and engage our customers throughout their musical journey," Weiss said. musiciansfriend.com



Michael Weiss

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Note From Joe The Power of a Legacy

As many of you have experienced, each Thursday night at The NAMM Show thousands fill the Grand Plaza outside the Anaheim Convention Center for the Annual Tribute. This powerful event, set to the moving sounds of the L.A. Scots' bagpipes, gives us a moment of pause as we honor industry members, friends and peers who passed away in the last year.

As each face is recognized, we remember the conversations, experiences and laughter we shared with these people. We also reflect on their role in working toward our shared mission of creating more music makers . . . their contributions in the industry, their legacy.

No matter our place or position in the industry, we all are currently creating our own legacy, day by day—the one that will be remembered when our time comes to be in the Tribute. In some ways, the Tribute brings the sum total of how we spent our lives to a sharp point.

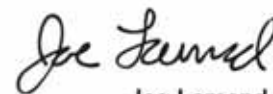
It sure makes you think, doesn't it? *What have I contributed in making the world a better and more musical place? What will I leave behind?* I'm reminded of a quote from Larry Morton's father who often told him that when all is said and done, "leave a little more wood on the pile."

Many, many NAMM Members are making a difference through their generosity, and it's great to read about these stories each month in the trade magazines. In fact just last month, there was an example of your association working in collaboration with a NAMM Member, without even realizing it! The D'Addario

Foundation supports the Harmony Project, a music program for inner-city kids in Los Angeles. Coincidentally, The NAMM Foundation had funded a scientific study with Northwestern University to understand the impact of music training on the learning skills of poor children using the Harmony Project as their subjects. Upon the study's conclusion, the research findings were widely publicized in the media, adding to the growing body of evidence that links music education with student success. Studies such as this also provide more advocacy ammunition for parents and policy makers, helping to strengthen programs around the country and resulting in more kids having access to music education.

These past few years have been tough for many NAMM Members, and having anything left over for charity hasn't always been possible. But creating a lasting legacy can occur in many ways—like mentoring a young person, participating in your local music education efforts, or even just helping a few of your students get free or reduced lessons in your store. We are truly blessed to live our lives in the music business, and opportunities to give back are all around us. And perhaps in one of the biggest paradoxes of all, it is absolutely true that the more you give, the more you get.

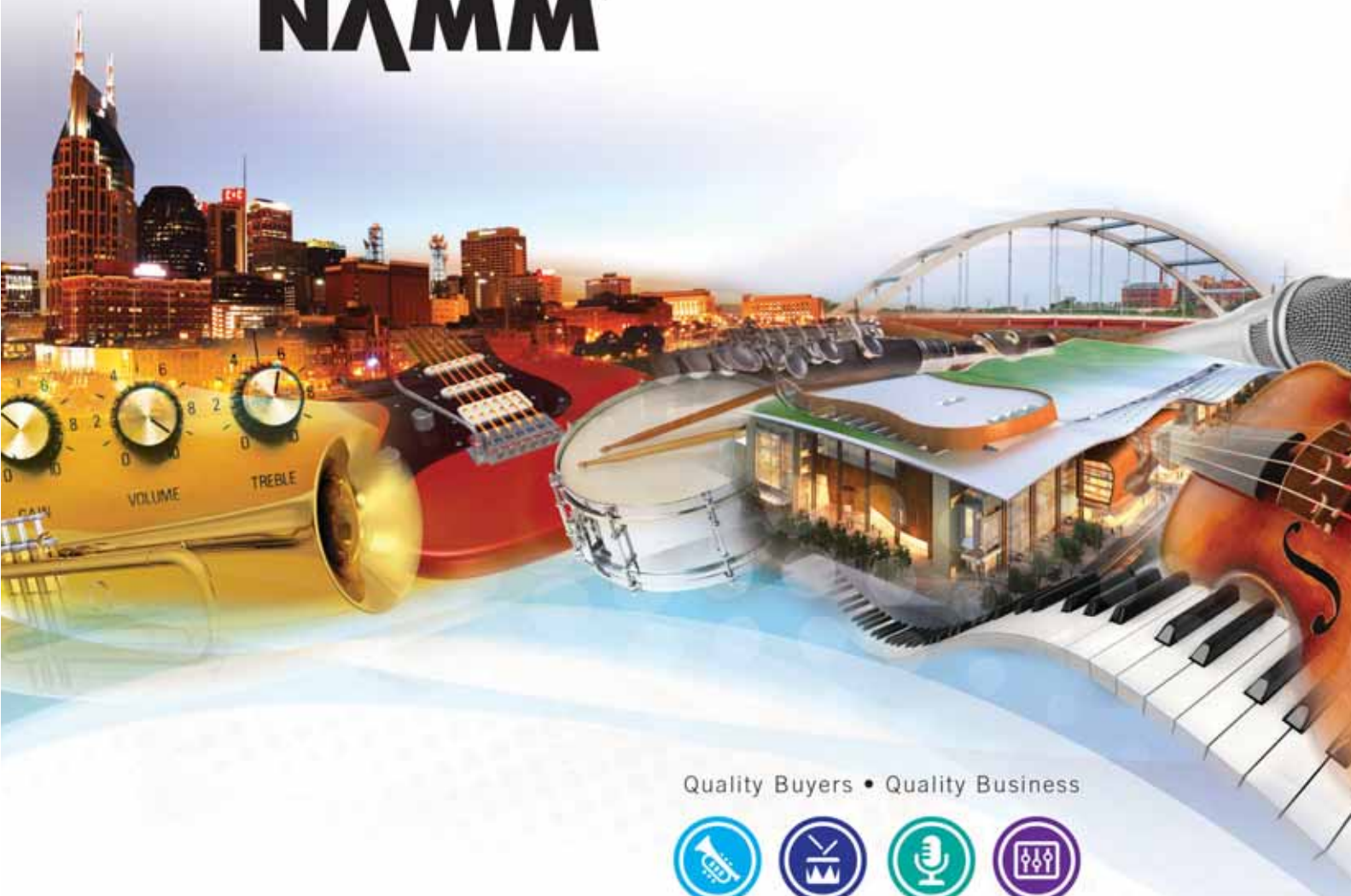
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NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



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SUPPLY

EASTMAN GUITARS | BY JOHN JANOWIAK

A DECADE OF MUSIC

Eastman Guitars celebrated 10 years of guitar-making at this year's NAMM Show, and the company's booth was buzzing.

Qian Ni, president of the Eastman Music Co., was encouraged by his conversations with the retailers, distributors, media and even other manufacturers who stopped by.

"I think people are noticing our commitment to build something special," Ni said. "And with dealers taking full notice of that confident shift, everyone's energy, excitement and belief in the brand is rising."

BUILT FROM PASSION

A classically trained flutist, Ni might seem an unlikely candidate for establishing a respected guitar brand. But throughout his career, Ni has shown a passion for manufacturing quality instruments of all kinds.

Ni launched Eastman Strings in 1992 as a small U.S. distributor for international violin-makers. Ni started small, importing and selling instruments across the country out of the trunk of his car.

Headquartered in Pomona, Calif., the company went on to



Ten years after launching its guitar line, Eastman continues to focus on craftsmanship

distribute and manufacture a wide variety of musical products, including violins, bows, woodwinds, brass, cases and

other accessories.

The guitar line grew out of Eastman's experience making violins. Eastman's team was experienced at carving violin tops, so why not apply those skills to making guitars?

Ni admired such renowned guitar builders as Bob Benedetto and John D'Angelico for their creativity as much as their dedication to traditional,



Eastman's new E1000

old-world building techniques. He had materials and equipment in place, and knowing that af-

fordable archtops were in high demand, he decided to give guitar-making a shot.

The first prototype was introduced at The 2002 NAMM Show.

“Those first guitars did not even have logos on the headstocks,” Ni said. “The idea was to just solicit feedback from our dealers. Were we doing it right? Was the quality there? Was this something we could do? Was there retail interest? And the response we received was overwhelmingly positive.”

Based on that feedback, Ni and his team fine-tuned the designs and put their first archtop guitar models into production. Eastman Guitars made their official debut at The 2004 Winter NAMM Show. Today, along with archtops, the company offers thinline hollow-body electrics, golden era-inspired flattop acoustics, handcrafted traditional mandolins, banjos and ukuleles.

THE FUTURE OF EASTMAN

The John Pisano signature model archtop drew lots of attention at this year’s NAMM Show. With his original \$3,000 signature model as the inspiration, Pisano designed a more affordable version around \$1,500 for his students and fans.

The guitars haven’t changed much since the early models, Ni said, although the company’s production and quality assurance processes have improved over the years. Now with its own dedicated factory, Eastman Guitars has invested heavily in manufacturing to increase production and improve quality. Every instrument is handcrafted, and this is reflected in the tone of the instruments, Ni said.

“We don’t have the strongest brand name or a long history to look back upon, but musicians appreciate our craftsmanship and our sound,” he said. “I think that is a major reason for our success. We are also very lucky to have a dealership network that believes in us and represents us with passion. It is an amazing partnership that has been crucial to our success.” **MI**



Eastman's John Pisano
Signature model

A large advertisement for ProRockGear. At the top left is the ProRockGear logo, a blue circle containing a white stylized 'P' and a lightning bolt. To the right of the logo is the text 'ProRockGear' in a bold, sans-serif font, with the tagline 'Full line of cases, bags, stands, & audio accessories' underneath. Below the logo and text is a collection of products: two dark purple guitar cases, a grey hard-shell case on a stand, a black music stand, a black microphone stand, a black floor monitor, and several colorful (yellow, orange, red, blue, green) circular objects. At the bottom of the advertisement, the following text is displayed: 'ProRockGear, 5044 Industrial Rd. Suite D, Wall Township, NJ 07727', 'Tel: 732.919.6200 | Fax: 732.919.6210 | www.prorockgear.com', and 'ProRockGear is a division of AP International. For more info, please visit apintl.com'.



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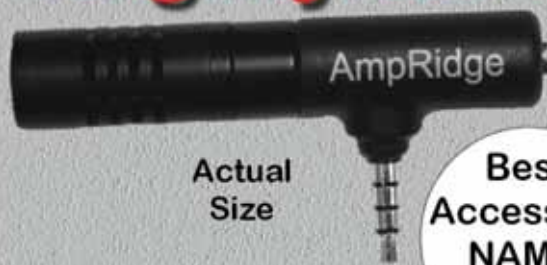
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Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee speaks at the PMC's all-member meeting.

PMC | EVENT

HUCKABEE SPEAKS AT PMC

The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) held its annual all-member meeting on Jan. 24 which included a keynote speech from former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee. Board members updated attendees on the council's programs and campaigns aimed at creating new players.

"I can sum up the PMC pretty simply: We want

to make more players," said Brad Smith, senior sales and marketing manager of Hal Leonard.

Huckabee, a bass player and advocate of music education, emphasized during his speech that "music is a vital part of our culture," and should be part of the education experience for American children. playdrums.com

TAYLOR GUITARS | ANNIVERSARY

Taylor Celebrates 40th

Taylor Guitars honored the company's 40th anniversary by going "back to the work bench" to reimagine the Taylor 800 series.

During a celebratory dinner and preview on Jan. 22 at Morton's Steakhouse in Anaheim, Calif., master luthier Andy Powers discussed the new instrument. "We thought the 800 series was the first real Taylor model," Powers said. "Let's take it head on and go back to the work bench and see if we can make that a better guitar."

During the event, co-founder Listug noted that he was 21 and Bob Taylor, the company's

other co-founder, was 19 years old when they started back in 1974. "We had absolutely no idea what we were getting ourselves into, which was probably a good thing because if we knew how hard it was going to be we probably wouldn't have even have tried," Listug said.

Today, Taylor has grown to more than 800 employees with two factories. taylorguitars.com



Taylor's Andy Powers and Bob Taylor

NAMM | MEETING

NAMM Elects New Slate of Board Members

At the annual meeting of members on Jan. 25, NAMM's voting members elected eight new directors to the board of directors. They are, from left: Joe Lamond, president and CEO of NAMM; Blake Augsburger, executive vice president, Harman Professional; Pat Averwater, president of Amro Music Stores; Peter Dods, CEO of Easy Music Center; Todd Heid, owner of Heid Music; Gabriela König, CEO of König & Meyer; Sheryl Laukat, CEO of Cannonball Musical Instruments; Liz Reisman, owner of Creative Music & Arts; Tom Sumner, senior vice president of Yamaha Corp. of America; Larry Morton, chairman. namm.org



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YAMAHA | ACQUISITION

Yamaha Formally Announces Acquisition of Line 6

Yamaha formally announced its acquisition of Line 6 during a press conference at Yamaha's booth on Jan. 23.

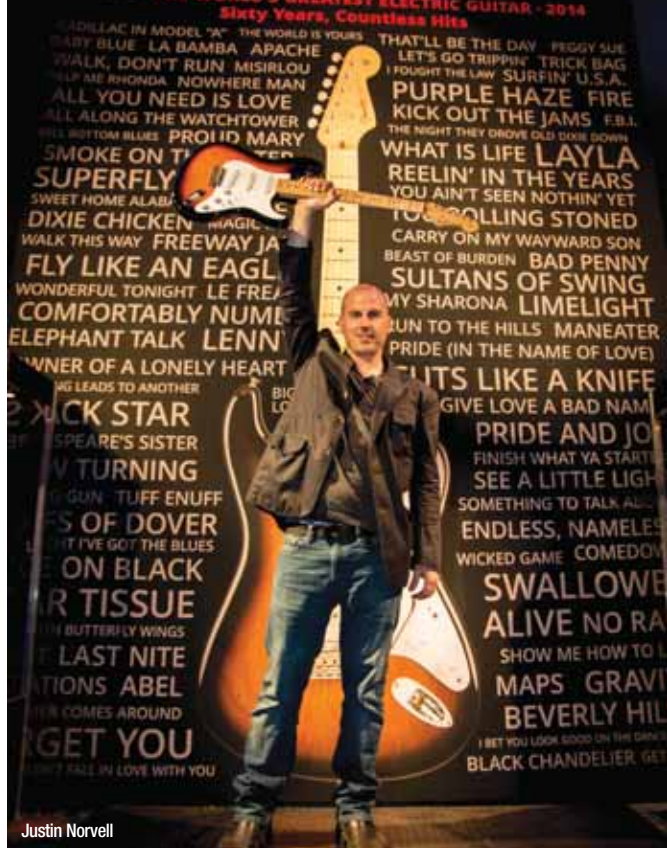
"By combining our strategic vision, I believe that Yamaha and Line 6 can achieve far greater penetration in the current market," said Tak Nakata, Yamaha president.

"I can tell you that the Line 6 team is most excited about the merger because we found that both Yamaha and Line 6 share a very similar culture and a very similar overall business goal, and that is enriching the lives of people in the world and musicians through music," said Paul Foeckler, Line 6 president and CEO. "When you have an align-

ment like that at the highest level, that's when everything feels really great. And that's how it feels today with Yamaha and Line 6 coming together." yamaha.com; line6.com



Paul Foeckler (left) and Tak Nakata



Justin Norvell

FENDER | ANNIVERSARY

Fender Celebrates 60 Years of Strat

Justin Norvell, Fender vice president of marketing, took part in commemorating 60 years of the Fender Stratocaster at this year's show. The company held a VIP reception in honor of the event on the evening of Jan. 22. fender.com

NAMM | EVENT

NAMM REACHES GLOBAL LEVEL, AGAIN

NAMM's tradition of networking reached a global level Jan. 22 as the International Coalition met to exchange information on what happened in musical products markets around the world and talk about issues that are close to the industry, such as music education advocacy and the NAMM Standards. The coalition, which meets every year at the show, is made up of more than 40 association heads and opinion leaders from 20-plus nations. namm.org



TEC | AWARDS

TEC Awards Honor Best in Audio

The 29th annual NAMM Technical Excellence & Creativity (TEC) Awards presented honors in 30 categories on Jan. 24 at the Anaheim Hilton.

The TEC Awards celebrate the best in professional audio and sound production.

This year's recipient of the Les Paul Award was Todd Rundgren, who was honored for his achievements as a visionary musician, producer, engineer, video artist and tech pioneer.

In his acceptance speech, Rundgren said he felt humbled by the honor, and rather than focus on his own accomplishments, he talked about Les Paul's influential innovations.

"He was, indeed, a Renaissance man," Rundgren said. "He didn't have any tech support. If something broke, he fixed it."

In 2013, the TEC Foundation for Excellence in Audio merged with the NAMM Foundation, the educational and charitable arm of NAMM. nammfoundation.org



Todd Rundgren

APPOINTMENTS

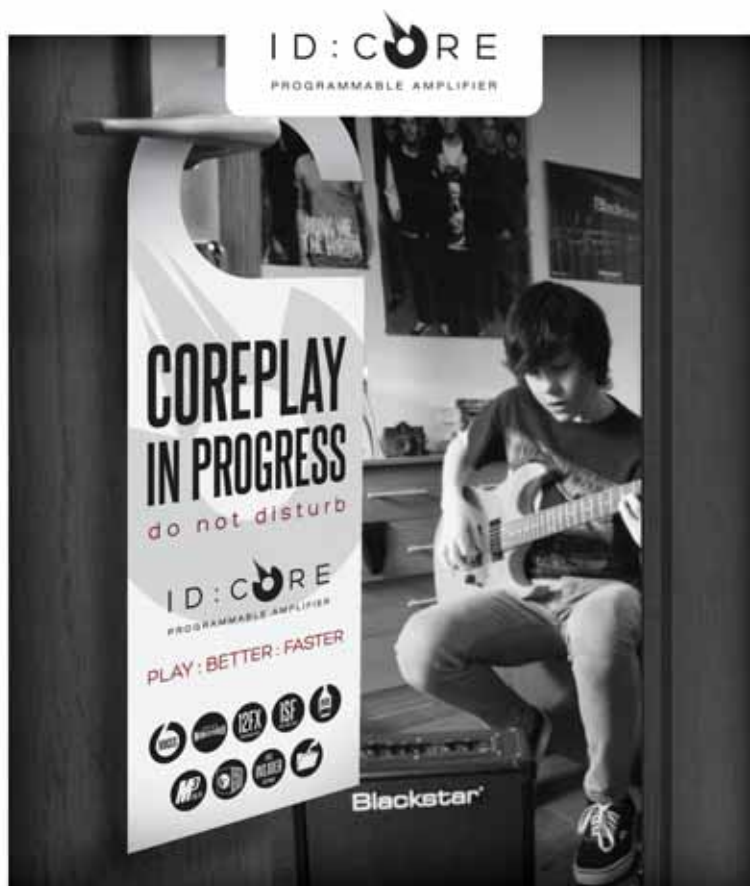
Jupiter Adds Richardson

Jupiter Band Instruments has added John Richardson to its brand management team as its woodwind brand manager. Richardson previously worked at Miles Ahead Music in Kentucky where he helped grow a small storefront business into a two-location school music retailer.



John Richardson

"He brings a strong balance of industry experience, music education background and performance experience which will be invaluable to the growth of the Jupiter and Altus brands," said Michael Robinson, KHS America's director of marketing. jupitermusic.com



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FROM THE TOP

CRAIGIE ZILDJIAN | AVEDIS ZILDJIAN COMPANY

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

When I get up in the morning, I immediately start by clearing emails from home. Once I come into the office, I like to be able to talk to people instead of being distracted by my inbox. I check in with my admin to see what's on my calendar, and I reach out to the heads of each department to see if there are any issues that need my attention.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS A MANAGER?

I manage by walking around. There's some informality about my style. I try to be collaborative, and I try to empower people. I like to surround myself with smart collaborators. I do not need to be the smartest one in the room.

HOW HAVE YOU APPROACHED GROWING YOUR COMPANY?

Three years ago we grew by merging with the Vic Firth Company. The two companies have so much in common — both are U.S. manufacturers, leaders in percussion, family businesses, and based in the Boston area, which facilitates a lot of dialog and collaboration.

ZILDJIAN SEEMS TO BE ACTIVE IN THE EDUCATIONAL WORLD.

Initially, the Avedis Zildjian Scholarship Program started out as a way to honor my grandfather after he passed in 1979. The first scholarship went to Berklee College of Music, where both my father and I had served on the Board of Trustees.

We found it very gratifying to reward musical talent, so we decided to expand the program to music schools around the country, such as Juilliard, Oberlin, Eastman, University of Michigan and Tanglewood. Later, we decided to expand the program internationally by adding prominent music schools like the Royal Academy in London. One of our core values at Zildjian is to support music education.

ARE YOU A DRUMMER YOURSELF?

I've studied drums, but that doesn't make me a drummer. [Laughs.] I took lessons because I believe it's important for me to gain an appreciation for the art of drumming. Drumming may look easy, but the coordination alone takes tremendous skill. We at Zildjian consider drummers to be the most important musicians in the band. Drummers hold everything together — bad drummer, bad band.

WHAT, TO YOU, MAKES A GREAT CYMBAL?

A cymbal that exceeds a drummer's expectations. That's the ultimate goal.

HOW LONG DOES THE MANUFACTURING PROCESS TAKE?

It varies depending on the particular cymbal. Some of the hardest cymbals to make are the K Constantinople cymbals and the new Kerope cymbals we launched at The 2014 NAMM Show. Our manufacturing people will tell you that working on a Kerope cymbal is like making two cymbals — it's a more intense process that requires doing more work by hand. The entire process from start to finish takes many weeks and a team of skilled craftsmen before the final sound testing and approval by an experienced Zildjian cymbal tester.

WHAT ARE YOU ALLOWED TO SHARE ABOUT HOW THE CYMBALS ARE MADE?

Very little. [Laughs.] The people who work in the melt room don't report through manufacturing, like they would in a traditional organization. The melt room continues to report into the family, specifically my sister Debbie. It's always been that way.

IS THE FORMULATION OF METALS A SECRET?

You can analyze the alloys and find that our cymbals are close to 80 percent copper and 20 percent tin, though when copper is mined, a little silver can get in there as well. That composition isn't a secret. The high tin content — tin being far more precious than copper, by the way — makes it difficult to bond the two metals. That's where the secret process that Avedis Zildjian discovered in the 1600s comes in.

HOW DO YOU KEEP THE PROCESS FROM BEING LEAKED OR SOLD TO A COMPETITOR?

We have very senior people with us who are privy to what goes on in that room. You have to be with the company for a very long time. They are some of our very best employees, and they are hand-selected to work in that capacity.

WHERE IS THE FOUNDRY — AND DO YOU HAVE TO HAVE A RETINA SCAN TO GET IN?

I've thought about that! The factory, which includes the foundry, is located in Norwell, Mass. To maintain quality, we feel that we have to be close to our manufacturing process at all times. I can't even imagine having it off site. The process of cymbal making is at the center of everything that we do.

HOW IS YOUR WORK WITH ORCHESTRAL CYMBALS DIFFERENT THAN, SAY CYMBALS FOR A METAL DRUMMER?

People don't realize that my father originally developed the K Constantinople line as an orchestral product. Then, just as we



THE DETAILS

CRAIGIE ZILDJIAN
CEO

HQ: Norwell, Mass.

FOUNDED: 1623

EMPLOYEES: 103

CRAIGIE'S FAVORITE CYMBAL: "K Constantinople, because it was the last cymbal my father developed."

FUN FACT: The company was started by the first Avedis Zildjian, an Armenian alchemist turned cymbal-maker who discovered a secret process for blending metals. It has been a family-run business for 15 generations.

were bringing them to market, my father thought they would make a great line for the drum set as well.

The approach to developing both orchestral and drum set cymbals is similar in that we seek input from artists. Marc Damoulakis, principal percussionist of The Cleveland Orchestra, helped with the development of the K Symphonic line. We like to involve our artists because we want to know that we've hit the mark before we launch a new product. Plus, our artists really enjoy being involved in the development process.

IF YOU'RE AT A CONCERT, CAN YOU TELL BY LISTENING WHETHER THE DRUMMER IS USING ZILDJIAN CYMBALS?

Yes, it's that 80/20 sound. We are open to other sounds, and we've tried other alloys as well, but the 80/20 is our premium, flagship Zildjian sound.

WHEN IT COMES TO RUNNING THE BUSINESS, IS THE FAMILY LEGACY A BLESSING, A CURSE OR BOTH?

Family businesses tend to think long term unlike publicly-traded companies that have to satisfy Wall Street. This vision is one of the reasons why Zildjian has endured for 390 years to become the oldest family business in America. At the same time, it's critical that family members are in alignment, which can be one of the biggest challenges for any family business. There is also pressure, particularly for the next generation, to ensure that the company continues to thrive well into the future. As one of the oldest music companies in the world, it's our obligation to perpetuate and revitalize the company.

BEING A PERCUSSION COMPANY, IS HEARING PROTECTION SOMETHING YOU THINK ABOUT?

Our sister company, Vic Firth, sells hearing protection, and it's become a significant part of our accessory business. Hearing protection has become a big concern in our industry.

WHAT ABOUT VOLUME?

Traditionally, people would play drum kits in their garages and basements and make a lot of noise without any problems. Now, the market is calling for something quieter. More people are living in cities and have to take their neighbors into account. It's the same reason why in other countries, and particularly in parts of Asia, products like the Roland V-Drums do so well. In Japan, you can go into a studio and practice drums, but if you're in your home, chances are that you have to play a product that

doesn't annoy the neighbors.

HOW IS ZILDJIAN REACTING?

The market is calling for cymbals that feel and sound like cymbals, but are quieter. This has led us to make our Gen16 line. They're acoustic-electric cymbals. We introduced the first generation of the product and just came to market with the second generation at Winter NAMM. We've designed them to be up to 70 percent quieter than a traditional acoustic cymbal so you can play them, even if you have neighbors nearby or live in an apartment.

I recently had a conversation with Remo Belli, who is doing something similar with Silentstroke drumheads. In fact, Remo featured Silent Stroke with our Gen16 line at both PASIC last year and The 2014 NAMM Show. Everybody's coming to the same point, offering products for drummers who want to practice in their homes.

'I try to be collaborative and try to empower people. I like to surround myself with smart collaborators.'

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST OVERALL CHALLENGES AS CEO?

We have to be ready to embrace consumers and address the way they want to approach percussion. Our Gen16 cymbals are taking us a step closer to aligning with that shift, and partnering with other companies is something we've been thinking about for the future.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

My favorite thing is the relationships with our employees

whom we view as an extension of our family. Our Head of Quality Testing, Leon Chiappini, has been with us for 52 years. His career spans three generations of Zildjian family members, starting with my grandfather Avedis. Early in his career, Leon selected cymbals for some of the great drummers of the day like Buddy Rich, Jo Jones and Tony Williams, and he remains a valuable resource in developing new products.

ARE THE DRUMMERS YOU WORK WITH GENERALLY COOL?

When I meet artists like Steve Gadd, I'm surprised by how humble and nice they are. People who have accomplished so much and could easily have egos that are out of control — but they don't. I love Max Roach, and Gene Krupa was a lovely man.

IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

I have a master's degree in education, so I had considered becoming a teacher or working for a not-for-profit organization. Helping people has always been important to me. It's the reason why the Zildjian Company is so committed to supporting music education through its endowments and scholarship programs. **MI**

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THE

BOUTIQUE

Matt's Music Center, a rockin' high-end guitar shop just outside of Boston, banks in on not only its award-winning showroom design, but also on its boutique product selection



BY: KATIE KAILUS

BIQUE

EXPERT



It doesn't get much more rock n' roll than red crushed velvet walls — except, of course, for red crushed velvet walls covered by hundreds of high-end boutique guitars. And that's just what customers are greeted with when they walk into Matt Music's Center in Weymouth, Mass. Named Best Merchandising and Display by NAMM at last year's Top Dealer Awards, the 3,000-square-foot, two-man operation primarily concentrates on high-end boutique guitars, amps and pedals, and showcases them in a hip, well-merchandised showroom.

"High end is a specialized market, and we wanted the shop to look unique and fitting for a boutique-style store," said owner Matt Leff, who opened his shop in 1996. But Leff hasn't always

specialized in the boutique brands.

"Over the years, my business model has changed a lot," he said. "When I first opened I was trying to be everything, full MI."

So why did Leff decide to leave the full MI approach behind and focus only on the high end? Simple. It wasn't paying the bills.

"The beginner stuff just wasn't selling as well," he said. "My first boutique line was Mesa Boogie about 16 years ago. It did well, and slowly other lines have come to us."

"Between [the recent] Guitar Center opening up, the increase in competition and an opportunity to make a fresh start, it all started to come together. We've pushed harder in the boutique direction, and it's worked out well. We now concentrate almost exclusively on high-end guitar-related products."

THE HIGH-END CLIENT

Matt's Music Center stocks such brands as Suhr Guitars, Mesa Boogie amps, Nash guitars and Dr. Z Amps. Some of the lines the store carries are so niche that Matt's is the only dealer in the Boston and New England area.

"There aren't a lot of places around here where you can try this stuff out," said Jay Tagg, Leff's self-proclaimed "right-hand man."

Tagg said the average boutique customer is in their late 30s, but they are not always professional players.

"A lot of times they are closet players, weekend warriors or church players," he said. "They want something bigger."

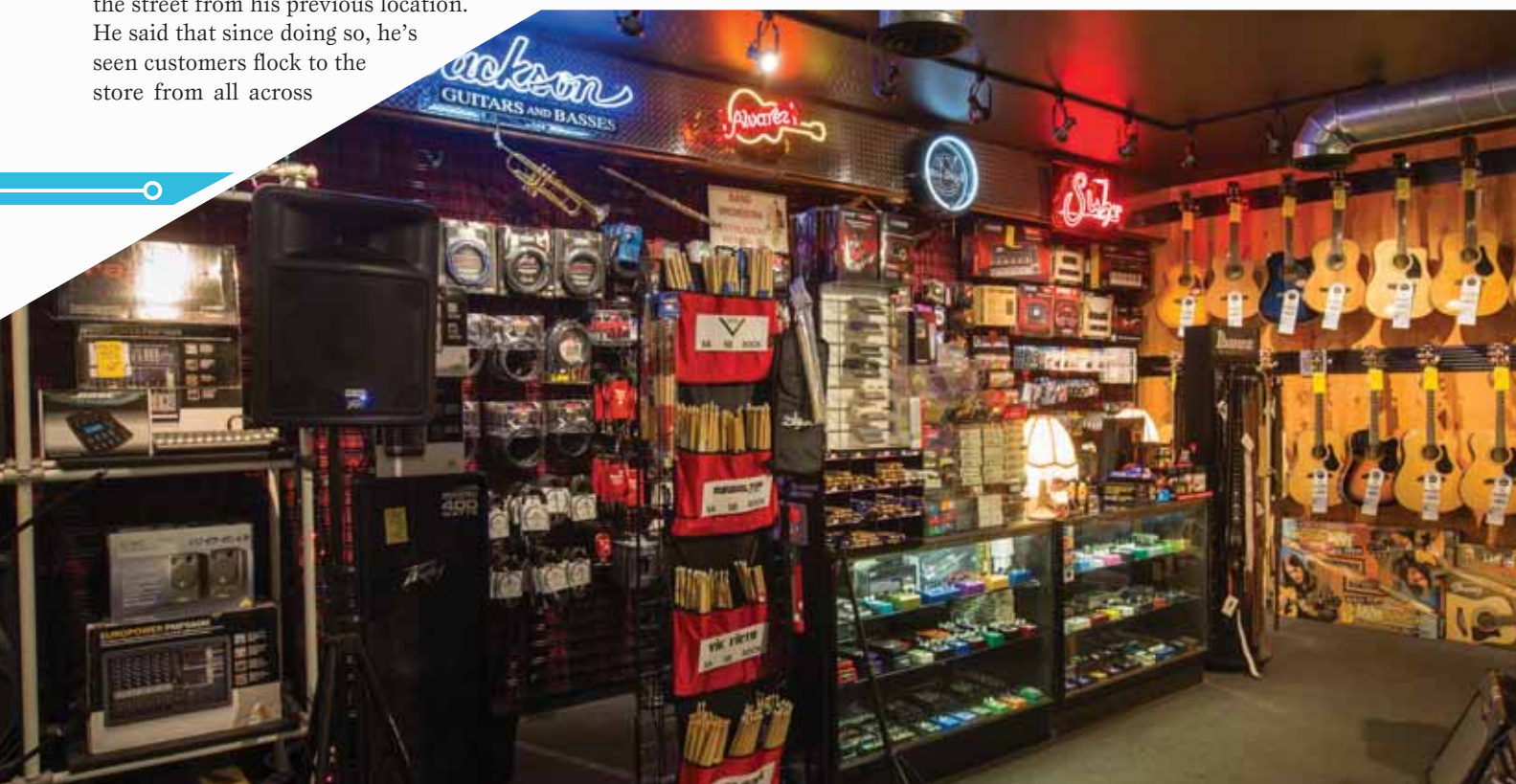
Despite his store's location, close to the busy Boston music scene, Leff believes high-end is where it is at for his business. While he stocks beginner packages for his lesson program — which sees an average of about 100 students a week on guitar, bass, voice, keyboards and drums — it is not a major part of his business.

"We have to sell so much more beginner- and moderate-level stuff to make the same profit we would on one high-end guitar," he said. "And there are so many places that a beginner can buy what they are looking for."

Leff recently increased his store's traffic by moving to a standalone building two years ago — a spot just down the street from his previous location. He said that since doing so, he's seen customers flock to the store from all across



Jay Tagg (left) and Matt Leff



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New England.

He has also garnered the attention of gearheads across the globe by creating a Web presence for his store almost since day one — that’s right, all the way back in 1997.

“A music retailer I used to work for was heavy in mail order,” Leff said. “Back then it was my responsibility to create catalogs. Way before I had the itch to go into business on my own, I had already been educated on how the whole mail-ordering [system] works. We had a website up and running in the early ’90s before the Web was really happening, so when I opened my own store in 1996, I already had 12 years experience of working with mail order and a couple years on the Internet.

One of the first things Leff did when he opened was put together his own catalog and develop a mailing list.

“I had my first website up and running by early 1997,” he said. “I stopped making catalogs [around] 2002 and really started concentrating on the click-and-mortar aspect at that point. I do think that getting online at an early stage gave me an edge over some who may have gotten on the Web later.”

One of those advantages is that Leff gets business from customers all over the world.

“We get orders from countries I’ve never heard of before,” he said. “We ship to Russia a lot, Australia, all over.”

Aside from a short-lived TV campaign that entailed a pink chicken costume and a Harley Davidson, Matt’s Music Center has managed to grab the attention of its customer base with little or no marketing, relying mostly on word of mouth.

“The longer we are in business and the more satisfied customers we serve, and business tends to generate on its own,” Leff said. “We have established a reputation as a go-to dealer for the high-end brands we carry. When we make a sale to a customer in a foreign country — or even here in the States — if they have a good experience, when a friend of theirs is looking for a guitar, that first customer will recommend us. It’ll snowball that way. The key is to keep taking care of the customers and making sure they are happy.”

DEVIL’S IN THE DETAILS

Another way Leff maintains his customers is by giving them a rockin’ place to shop and play. When he moved the store, he decided it would be the perfect time to refresh its look and update its vibe.

“When I bought the building and we were putting together what it was going to look like, I studied lots of different magazines as well as NAMM display ideas,” Leff explained. “We took the best of the best and

added in our own creative ideas.”

The store features no traditional slat wall. Instead, crushed velvet and wood paneling covers the walls. LED lighting offers a comfortable setting that highlights the gear, while neon signs add a touch of character.

Tagg said that the store elicits a response from almost every customer that walks through the door for the first time.

“They literally say, ‘Wow,’ because our store is so much different than what they are used to seeing,” Tagg said.

“We wanted to create a warm, comfortable and unique environment for our customers that was also very modern,” Leff added.

Aside from the design of the store, Leff finds it important to maintain the store’s appearance.

“I’m a neat freak,” he said. “When I walk into a store I don’t personally want to see a lot of dust on the products and cardboard boxes all over. I think customers today expect a higher quality experience when they are shopping and there is a lot of competition around.

“There’s a Guitar Center about four miles away from us. If you want to compete, you have to offer something special. Something different. And that’s what we do.” **MI**



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Turn Up THE HEAT

BY KATIE KAILUS

NAMM attendees heat up the Anaheim Convention Center in record numbers to debut and check out all the cool new gear



Pianist Brockett Parsons
PianoArc



Joe Lamond and
Larry Morton
NAMM

As the polar vortex gripped the majority of the Eastern and Midwestern United States, temperatures on the NAMM show floor were heating up as the MI industry flooded into the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, Calif., for the 2014 NAMM Show.

Held from Jan. 23–26, this year’s show saw the second-highest amount of exhibitors ever, ringing in at 1,533 companies representing 5,010 brands.

“As the global platform for the music products industry, The NAMM Show is an annual checkup for what is happening in the music marketplace worldwide,” Joe Lamond, president and CEO of NAMM, said in a statement. “A focus on doing business reflected confidence among buyers and manufacturers alike. I believe that the stage is set for growth in 2014.”



Vincent Pierce
Schlagwerk Percussion



DJ Paul Oakenfold
Photo by Jesse Grant/
Getty Images for NAMM



Jonny Lang performs on
NAMM's GoPro Stage.
Photo by Jesse Grant/
Getty Images for NAMM



Members of the all-industry
drum circle jam.



NAMM's Joe Lamond (left) presents DownBeat magazine's Frank Alkyer (center) and Kevin Maher (right) with an award marking the magazine's 80th anniversary.



Gaby Moreno (center) and her band perform during the She Rocks Awards.



From left: Sharon Hennessey, Jeremy Payne, James Hennessey and John Hennessey
The Music People



NAMM's Idea Center was packed throughout the show.

And manufacturers felt the same way. “Our booth is full, and it looks like the traffic is very good,” said Bob Yerby, Remo’s vice president of sales and marketing. “The response to our new products has been very, very positive.”

Peavey Product Manager Michael Smith echoed Yerby’s sentiments, comparing Peavey’s booth traffic to last year’s.

“We have been seeing a lot of really consistent traffic,” Smith said. “Last year, our Thursday was really busy because it was the first year that we were on the second floor, but this year it has been really steady — busy and steady the whole time.”

Bob Incitti, sales account manager for SKB Cases, said the show seemed bigger and busier to him than in past years.

“We have been really busy,” Incitti said. “I am wondering if the show will get close to the 100,000 attendee mark.”

Incitti’s prediction was close. In total, 96,129 members of the MI industry registered for the show, an increase of more than 2,200 attendees over last year.

And there was plenty for those attendees to take in including the TEC Awards, held on Jan. 24, which handed out the annual Les Paul Award to legendary musician Todd Rundgren. Tama celebrated its 40th anniversary with a blowout concert on Jan. 25 and the NAMM GoPro Stage was rockin’ all-day with performances by such artists as Jonny Lang and Shelia E.

So what were the hottest products at the show? From portable DJ gear to high-end drum kits to entry-level acoustics, the *Music Inc.* crew scoured the show floor for the latest and greatest. Turn the page to find out what we saw. **MI**



Tama's rocks its 40th anniversary with a concert.



Kerry King (right) performs at Samson's Metal Masters 5.



A jam session at the Mapex booth



From left: Andrew Surmani, Tish Ciravolo, Steve Raft, Ron Manus and Antonio Ferranti
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STRIKING CHORDS

BY KATIE KAILUS

Affordable starter acoustic guitars make a splash, while ukes continue their domination



Guitar manufacturers showed off their new wares to droves of gearheads as they reported busy booths and eager buyers throughout this year's show. "We have seen great traffic this year; we've been extremely pleased," said Erik Lind, product manager at Tanglewood Guitars, which debuted its new Liberty series of affordable acoustic guitars — a hot trend at the show.

“Budget boutique is kind of the buzz word right now,” Lind said.

The Liberty series features spruce tops, linden backs and sides, rosewood fingerboards and bridges, and a variety of gloss finishes. Ideal for the beginner or budget-minded player, these guitars’ suggested retail prices start at around \$169.

Tanglewood also debuted its Java series, a step up from the Liberty series, but still affordable boasting such high-end attributes as a three-piece back consisting of matching outer pieces of amara wood centered by a wedge of golden spalted mango.

“I think everyone is tired of seeing spruce, mahogany or cedar on starter guitars, so we have done a few beginners with the exotic woods,” Lind said. “These new Java models have been out since the last Musikmesse, and they have taken it by storm.”

Also showing affordable acoustics was Breedlove Guitars with the release of its new Discovery series, which boasts a price point starting at \$299 without electronics.

“It’s great because these models include a solid Sitka spruce top and a Sapele laminate back and sides,” said Sami Mulhern, who does marketing services and artist relations for Two Old Hippies, Breedlove’s parent company. “It’s a still a really high-quality



Bob Incitti
SKB Cases



Ellie Ellery and Grace Pantony
Marshall Amplification



Erik Lind
Musiquip



Brian Vance
D'Addario

model for a starter. They look and play really well.”

Hohner rolled out the A+ Advantage line of acoustic guitars meant for beginners that boast multiple models in half- to full-scale sizes, offering players of all ages a chance to learn.

“The whole approach is the right size guitar for the right size player,” said Rock Clouser, Hohner’s guitar product manager.

The models feature a horizontal grain in the direction of the neck block assuring a smooth change in dimensions together with the neck and body as well as a high-quality finish and rigid body glue joints.

“They are very playable guitars,” Clouser said. “They are not a toy.”

Can’t Stop the Uke

Ukulele sales are still through the roof, and are showing no signs of slowing down. Martin Guitar’s Jay Myer said the company



Rick Carlson and Clark Rector
Kala



Chris Larpenieur
Yamaha



Jay Myer
Martin Guitars



Susan Glamore
and Lisa Zigani
MusicNomad



Sam Mulhern
Two Old Hippies

has been seeing an increase in orders for custom ukes.

“We have been doing custom uke orders for a while, but not in the same scale as we are now,” he said. “We didn’t think it would go this strong for this long.”

D’Addario’s Planet Waves continued to stoke the uke fire with its NS Ukulele Capo Pro, a ukulele-specific capo which features a micrometer tension adjustment assuring buzz-free and in-tune performance at every fret. With the variety of stringed instruments available on the market, Brian Vance, D’Addario’s director of product management, said the company is trying to expand out into new segments, including banjo and ukulele.

“It’s not like one capo fits all anymore,” Vance said. “There’s so many choices. We are trying to do more



From left: Travis Atz, Ashley Atz and Brian Jones
The Music Link



Patrick Stevenson
St. Louis Music

 TRI-ACTION	 ARTIST	 BANJO/MANDO	<p>THE COMPLETE NS CAPO FAMILY</p> <p>FEATURING</p> <p>ADJUSTABLE TENSION</p> <p>MICROMETER</p> <p>SLEEK LIGHT WEIGHT DESIGN</p> <p>& CONSISTENT IN-TUNE PERFORMANCE</p> <p>YOU ARE NOW FREE TO PLAY</p>
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Gary Mobley, Dave Coontz
and Raul Reynoso
Shubb Capos



Michael Smith
Peasley

personalized things and get inside different preferences.”

In other uke news, Kala released its first ukuleles manufactured in the United States with the debut of its Banjo Ukulele line. The Petaluma, Calif.-based workshop currently has about six to 10 people building the instruments with plans to grow.

“Once we get back from the show, there will be more,” said Rick Carlson, branding manager at Kala. “We plan to make all the high-end ukules here eventually and then who knows. The sky’s the limit.”

■ Guitarists on the Go

The emphasis on portable went beyond the instruments and into the add-on segment. Blackstar debuted its portable ID:Core line of amplifiers and won a “Best in Show” nod at the annual Sunday session. (For more on “Best in Show,” see page 86.) The amps come in three sizes and boast big tone in a compact design.

“The ID:Core series is designed for beginners and students, as well as established players who are home recordists,” said Loren Molinare, Blackstar U.S. product manager. “They are well-suited for personal practicing just about anywhere.”

Planet Waves introduced its Guitar Dock, a lightweight and compact holder with an adjustable clamp and ergonomic knob.

“You clamp the Guitar Dock onto any flat surface, and it turns into an instant guitar stand,” said D’Addario’s Vance. “All this stuff is about portability. You can fold this up and put it into a pocket in your guitar case.”

Also notable was String Swing’s Flat Folding Guitar Stand which folds flat while still remaining stable, allowing for easy transport.

“This stand is meant mostly for the active musician that plays out often at many different venues,” said Travis Thieman, vice president of String Swing. “[The stand] can transport just about anywhere with ease.” **MI**



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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

**BLACKSTAR
ID:CORE**

The ID:Core amplifier series features the core attributes of Blackstar's original ID:Series. These programmable, wide-stereo amps are small in size, but deliver huge tone. Well-suited for personal practicing along with a MP3 player or CD, the amplifiers are available in 10-, 20- and 40-watt configurations. blackstaramps.com



**RADIAL
ENGINEERING
BASSBONE OD**

This preamp features two instrument input channels, each fully equipped with level control, a semi-parametric equalizer and low frequency resonance filter. Channel-1 is also equipped with Drag Control load correction to optimize feel when using a vintage passive instrument. radialeng.com



**DUNLOP
EP101 ECHOPLEX
PREAMP**

The EP101 preamp features a Field-effect Transistor (FET) just like the original EP-3 and follows the same exact signal path. The gain control lets players boost their signal by up to +11dB with light asymmetrical clipping at higher settings for a nice organic grit. jimdunlop.com



**FENDER
FISHMAN
TRIPLEPLAY
STRATOCASTER HSS**

This guitar uses state-of-the-art, built-in digital technology to give users a new playing experience in which they can emulate other instruments' sounds. Engage the built-in Fishman Triple-Play system — which wirelessly transmits MIDI data to a computer to create sounds with a wealth of performance — composing and recording features. fender.com



**FISHMAN
FLUENCE PICKUPS**

The Fluence pickups incorporate a combination of new technologies including Fluence Core coils and true dual-voice electronics to consistently create the idealized versions of classic sounds. The "dual-voice" feature lets players transform their individual pickups from Vintage, to Hot, "line-in" Clean or Death Defying (depending on the model), with the right level and gain for each voice. fishman.com



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For more information, email AMPLIFIsales@line6.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

PRS ARCHON AMPLIFIER

The Archon is a versatile two-channel amp with aggressive overdriven tones and sparkling cleans with plenty of headroom. The Archon's lead channel was designed with five gain stages before the master volume, delivering full distortion. prsguitars.com



BREEDLOVE DISCOVERY SERIES

This series of affordable acoustic guitars are available in two different models, with and without electronics. The guitars feature a solid Sitka spruce top, Sapele laminate back and sides, and a rosewood fretboard. breedlovemusic.com

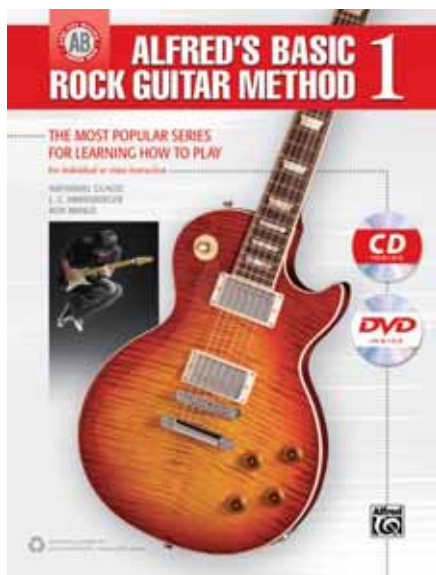
BOSS ME-80

The new ME-80 delivers the equivalent of a huge pedalboard of stomps in one travel-ready unit. The hands-on operation makes it easy to dial up sounds instantly, while eight multifunction footswitches and other enhancements provide more flexibility and real-time control options. bossus.com



ALFRED MUSIC BASIC GUITAR METHOD

This book provides a new approach to learning guitar for students who want to play in the rock style. By starting on the 6th string, students are immediately able to play riffs and licks that inspire guitarists to continue learning and have fun doing it. Additionally, an included DVD and CD supplement the material in the method. alfred.com



KALA BANJO UKULELES

Kala has released the company's first ukuleles manufactured in the United States with the debut of its banjo ukuleles. Kala introduced its first U.S.-made products in 2011 with the California Series Solid Body U-Basses and subsequent custom shop basses. The new American-made banjo ukuleles are available in a custom-figured Koa or maple shell and feature vintage styling and a slim, contoured mahogany neck. kalabrand.com



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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



**LINE 6
AMPLIFI**

This new unit from Line 6 combines a high-performance guitar amp, a streaming Bluetooth speaker system and a iOS app into one device. The Bluetooth speaker system features streaming compatibility with Android, iOS, Mac and PC devices. The AMPLIFI Remote app for iOS lets guitarists control all aspects of their tones from an iOS device. line6.com

**STRING SWING
CC37 FLAT-FOLDING
GUITAR STAND**

Ideal for musicians on the go, this stand was developed on String Swing's precision CNC automated bender. The sturdy stand allows for quick and easy transport between venues. stringswing.com



**TAYLOR GUITARS
800 SERIES**

To celebrate its 40th anniversary, Taylor has reimagined its flagship guitar series. One notable modification includes a new bracing design that brings out greater warmth, midrange, balance and sustain. taylorguitars.com

**SONUUS
VOLUM
STOMP BOX**

This unit is a volume-based analog multi-effect with a digitally controlled, high-fidelity, pure-analog signal path for guitar and bass. It combines sonic performance with flexibility and control. sonuus.com



**PLANET WAVES
GUITAR DOCK**

D'Addario and Planet Waves' new Guitar Dock is a portable, leg-free, lock-on stand that turns any flat surface with an edge into a guitar stand. Using a 360-degree rotatable neck cradle, it allows mounting at any angle. planetwaves.com



**RECORDING KING
STARLIGHT BANJO**

This model offers a multi-ply rim, tone ring, 24 brackets for precise head-tensioning and a 26 1/4-inch scale. The series comes in custom colors, including Sky, Midnight and Sunbeam. recordingking.com

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SMART SOUNDS

BY DAVIS INMAN

Pro audio integrates iOS devices, gets customized and says goodbye to wires



Justin Eggleton
Allen & Heath

The audio halls of NAMM have always been a tech-lover's paradise. This year, manufacturers didn't disappoint as they pushed technology's limits by increasing integration with mobile technology in the live sound sector, losing wires on mics and debuting portable recorders and next-gen headphones.

Perfect Match

Integration with Apple's iOS operating system for smartphones and tablets continues to be a major development for the audio market. Mackie's DL series mixer is used in combination with software controlled by an iPad or other iOS device. With Apple's frequent updates to the iOS operating system, Mackie is able to quickly bring new features to the DL series' software, which is now in version 2.0.

Allen & Heath is taking on the challenges of making its digital technology usable for new sound engineers.



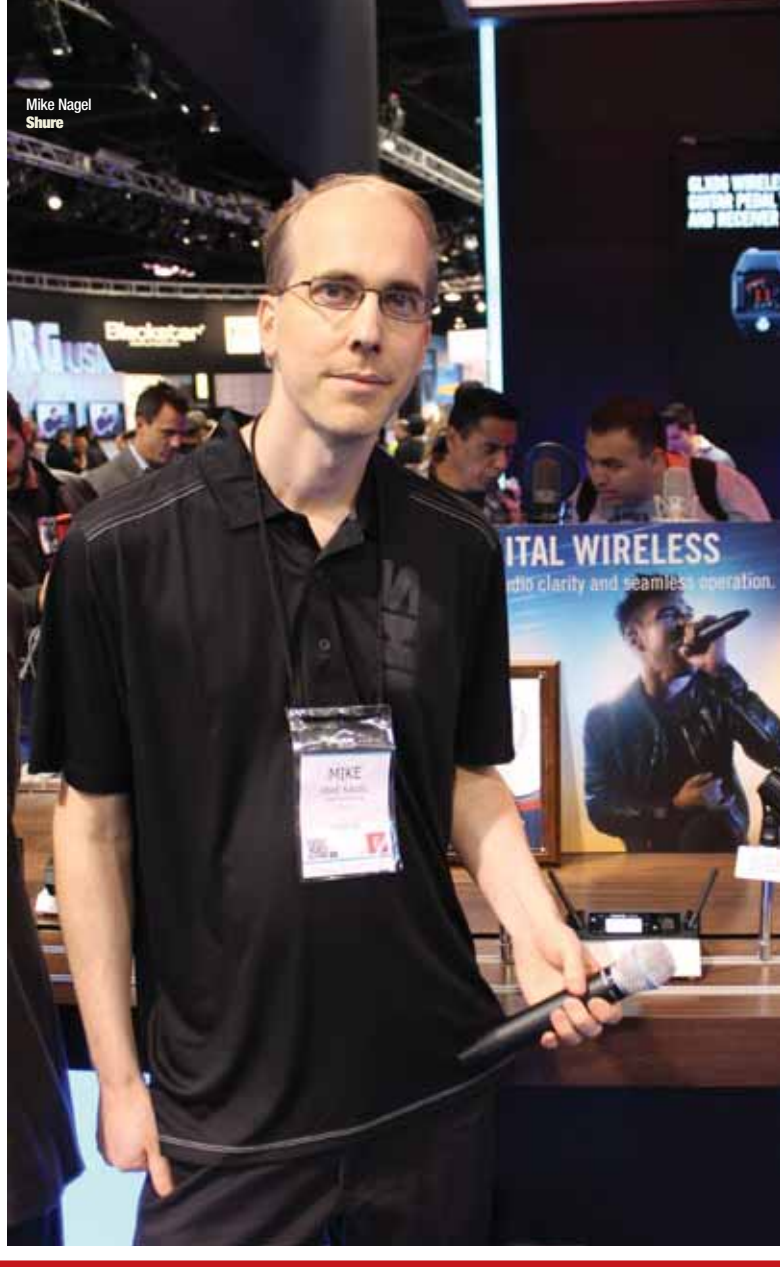
Ben Olswang
Mackie



Laura Clapp, Peter
Jeppesen and Kim Bang
TC Group



Kenneth Crouch
Samson



Mike Nagel
Shure



Gary Boss
Audio Technica



Andy Flint
Harman

The company's Q series of small format digital mixers include features like motorized faders and iPad wireless control.

■ Ditching Wires

Many companies made the move to wireless technology with an increased focus on digital within the wireless space. Audio-Technica showcased its updated System 10 pedalboard-mounted wireless system at the show. The System 10 supports 2.4 GHz with full fidelity 24-bit 48 kHz.

Shure also touted its digital wireless system, GLX-D. Associate Product Manager Mike Nagel said the critical element in any wireless system is the audio performance.

"You don't want to lose sound going from a wire to wireless," he said. Another focus for the GLX-D system is ease-of-use and simplicity.



Audix didn't debut a wireless system at the show, but Shaun Ellis, account manager for Audix, said the company is in development on a new wireless system.

"It's important for the wireless system to be digital, to be multi-band, because the FCC keeps canceling frequencies out," Ellis said. "We're really taking our time to develop that to make the right entry into the market."

Other microphone companies debuted new designs at the show. DPA Microphones



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 **audio-technica**



David Schierman
Harman

showed its d:vote 4099 instrument mics.

■ Price Balance

Finely tuned price points were key for many vendors. Peter Jeppesen, product manager at Tannoy, said the company's new Reveal monitors are ideal for personal studios. "A lot of musicians out there want something that's not too expensive but sounds great," said Jeppesen.

The Reveal monitors feature new driver,



Scott Krueckeberg
MXL

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amp and cabinet designs and also come with a new Aux Link feature.

Harman's JBL brand introduced its EON 600 series of loudspeakers. Director of Knowledge Resources David Scheirman touted the 600 series' "purposeful design," adding that the loudspeakers would appeal to a broad range of customers.

In the headphone market, companies focused on streamlining their design aesthetic. Audio-Technica revamped its M line around the flagship M50x headphone, which now has three detachable cables and improved ear pad and headband material.

In the in-ear monitoring market, Westone showed off its UM Pro 50 model. Albuquerque-based funk outfit The James Douglas Show highlighted the UM Pro 50s, inviting attendees to listen to the group's live performance of "Papa Was A Rollin' Stone" through the high-performance headphones.

■ One of a Kind

For both portable and studio-based recording, suppliers opted toward customization. Avid debuted its S6 modular control surface. Each section of the S6 is a module, so users can assemble the width and the depth of each piece of the console. Zoom showed its H6 six-channel portable recorder. The H6 features a series of interchangeable modular mic capsules. It ships with XY and mid-side mic modules, but there are additional options for shotgun and hot shoe modules which let users customize the H6 to fit their recording needs. **MI**

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Definitive Sound. Singular Vision.

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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

GOPRO

HERO3+

HERO3+ is a smaller and lighter version of the GoPro video recorder, adding new features, such as wide-angle mode and low-light mode, plus a longer battery life and faster Wi-Fi. gopro.com



JBL

EON 600

JBL's EON 600 series portable P.A. system is designed for a broad range of customers. The system features JBL's Waveguide technology and has Bluetooth integration for wireless EQ control. jbl.com



ZOOM

IQ5 MICROPHONE

Zoom iQ5 adds high-quality audio to iOS camera app video recordings. The mid-side stereo condenser mic connects to the iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch's Lightning connector. zoom-na.com



AUDIO-TECHNICA
M50X

Audio-Technica revamped its M50x headphones by adding features, such as three detachable cables and improved ear pad and headband material, all while retaining the same sonic signature. audio-technica.com

UNIVERSAL AUDIO
APOLLO TWIN
DESKTOP
AUDIO INTERFACE

Universal Audio's Apollo Twin brings 24/192 kHz audio conversion to a compact desktop audio interface. It comes with Unison mic preamp modeling and supports the full range of UAD plug-ins. uaudio.com





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uaudio.com/twin

*Apollo Twin includes the "Realtime Analog Classics" UAD plug-in bundle. All other plug-ins are sold separately at www.uaudio.com. All trademarks are property of their respective owners. Requires Mac OS X 10.8 Mountain Lion or 10.9 Mavericks. Thunderbolt cable sold separately.

 UNIVERSAL AUDIO

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



**QSC TOUCHMIX
DIGITAL MIXER**

QSC's TouchMix Digital Mixer puts the power of a mixing console into a compact form. The 16-input TouchMix-16 features a color touchscreen, 4-band EQ and DSP effects. qsc.com



**MACKIE
DL1608**

Mackie's DL1608 mixer takes advantage of mobile technology. The mixer can be controlled wirelessly by an iPad using Mackie's Master Fader app. mackie.com



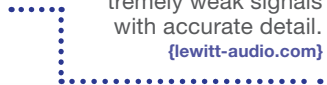
**SHURE
GLXD16**

Shure's GLXD16 bodypack wireless system puts the performer in control. The system supports 16 hours of continuous use and includes a guitar pedal receiver and tuner. shure.com



**LEWITT
LCT 550
MICROPHONE**

The LCT 550 is a large-diaphragm studio microphone that achieves 0 dB-A self-noise. The mic captures even extremely weak signals with accurate detail. lewitt-audio.com



"I would never tour without an **Audix OM 7.**

It's my desert island microphone."

Andy Tinsley - FOH Engineer, Alkaline Trio

In 1986, Audix redefined the performance standards of dynamic vocal microphones with our OM Series. With our exclusive VLM™ (Very Low Mass) capsule technology, the OM Series mics tolerate high SPLs, have superior feedback rejection, and deliver incredibly clear, accurate sound. Mechanical design innovations have reduced handling noise and increased durability.

Audix OM Series dynamic vocal microphones are widely used on stage by professionals around the world.

"Audix mics bring the vocals into focus. The capsules sound very natural and open. Audix mics give me new inspiration for listening and getting not just a great sound but the best representation of what's going on at the source."

**Richard 'Dickie' Chappell -
Monitors, Peter Gabriel**

"The tight pattern of the OM7 helps to capture just the vocals. Then I can compress it just a bit and ride the levels. There's no wash of cymbals and stage clutter that can interfere with the vocal mix."

Simon Fuller - FOH, Dry The River

"The OM7 is REALLY doing it for me - so smooth and hi-fi for a vocal dynamic. The OM7 is a gorgeous sounding vocal mic through a P.A. All of the OM Series mics are remarkable and would work for me in a bunch of contexts. They sound balanced in frequency response from top to bottom."

Brent Bodrug - Sly-Fy Chapel Studio



"Ben Kowalewicz had been using the standard vocal mic forever and I always struggled with it. We started trying out all types of mics, and Audix came out on top. Ben's a performer and the Audix OM6 has the feel that he likes - it just feels right to him. The OM6 works great and he loves it!"

**Bob Strakele -FOH,
Billy Talent**

"The noise rejection characteristics of the OM6 and OM5 have been the total selling point for us."

**Ciaran McKenna - FOH
Engineer, Alex Clare**

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MICROPHONES

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The RHYTHM SECTION

BY KATHLEEN COSTANZA

New shapes, sounds and clever tweaks kept the volume up in the percussion hall



The drum and percussion hall was as deafening as ever as enthusiastic NAMM-goers tested the bevy of innovations manufacturers brought to this year's show. From minor tweaks with big impacts to entirely new shapes and sounds emerging in the hand percussion market, manufacturers kicked off 2014 with a resounding bang.

Several manufacturers adjusted their products for better functionality. The crux of Mapex's showcase was its new SONIClear Bearing Edge, which comes on the two kits it introduced — the Armory and Mars. The SONIClear edge has a 3/8-inch back cut on the outside of the shell which moves the center of the bearing edge inwards on the shell, letting the shell touch the flat part of the drumhead.

"What this allows a less experienced player to do is spend less time tuning their drum because the head is seated on the shell better," said Bob Berheide, Mapex national sales manager. "Since the head is seated flat on the shell, you simply go around





Todd Trent
Taye Drums



Rhett Hendrix
Hendrix Drums



Stephanie Guay
Los Cabos Drumsticks



Dion Dublin
The Dube

and tune up the lugs and the drum sounds great without having to spend a lot of detail on tuning.”

Mapex wasn't alone in honing in on user-friendly tweaks. Remo unveiled its Silentstroke drumheads made of single-ply mesh that make only 20 percent of the sonic volume of traditional drumheads.

■ Hitting the Price Point

Price points were all over the spectrum to draw in all different areas of the market, even outside traditional percussionists. On one side was Sonor's 14-inch Martini Kit with a MAP price of \$359, which can be sold as either a beginner kit or a super-portable kit for a pro player, according to Matthew Fisher, Hohner district sales manager. Ludwig Drums went an alterna-

tive route to keep prices as low as possible without sacrificing quality by offering the American-made Signet 105 series, which players assemble themselves.

On the opposite side of price range were numerous super high-end kits. Big Bang Distribution entered into the boutique market with Hendrix Drum's Archetype Series Vertical Stave Drums.

"Plywood versus solid wood is a whole different level of instrument," said Rhett Hendrix, drum builder and owner of Hendrix

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Brandt Bourque
- Music Inc.

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Drums. “All the really nice instruments, from guitars, to cellos, to violins, are made out of solid wood. But for some reason, drums are almost exclusively made out of plywood. So I kind of [said], ‘Lets do drums out of solid wood. Why not?’”

Hands-On

Like last year’s hand percussion scene, the ubiquitous cajon showed up in full force. Unique tonewoods were ever-present, as in Gon Bop’s cajons which are handcrafted in Peru out of woods like Mohena, Requia and Nogal. But manufacturers are pushing the drum a step further than just rare materials with twists to the once-simple box.

Meinl introduced the Turbo Slap-Top Cajon, a T-shaped cajon that sits on a player’s knees, as well as a cajon backpack. As part of its 50th anniversary blow-out, one of Latin Percussion’s takes on the cajon was its baltic birch Americana Series Kevin Ricard Signature Cajon with four guitar strings behind its face plate. Each string’s tension is individually adjustable via knobs at the top.

Tycoon also played with the cajon’s inner construction with its DOHC Cajon which has two completely separate chambers, one for deep bass tones, the other for snare tones, as well as two sound holes. “If you look at the construction of it, the snares are really flush against the faceplate so it gives you a really nice snare tone,” said Joel Knight, artist relations associate at Tycoon.

The variation of shapes, sizes, and price points in hand percussion were endless, reflecting even further the ever-changing beat of the percussion industry. **MI**



Matthew Fisher
Hohner



Paul Francis
Zildjian



Bob Berheide
Mapex Drums



Terry Platt
Crush Drums



Spencer Strand
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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

**MAPEX
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BEARING EDGE)**

The Armory series features Mapex's SONIClear Bearing Edge which lets the drumhead sit flat on the edge of the shell for a deeper pitch and easy tuning. The series features a hybrid shell of maple and birch. mapexdrums.com



**TYCOON
DOHC CAJON**

The siam oak, double overhead chamber cajon has two separate chambers and sound holes for a combination of deep bass sounds and snare slaps. tycoonpercussion.com



**TAMA
40TH ANNIVERSARY
SNARES**

Tama has reintroduced the snares that put it on the map: The '70s Superstar Snare Drum, the '80s Bell Brass and Rosewood drums, the '90s Starclassic G-Maple with abalone inlay, and the 2000-era steel, ultra-heavy Starphonic snare. tama.com



**VIC FIRTH
VICKICKS BASS
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Vic Firth's first venture into bass drum beaters were built for consistent sound. The felt and wood beaters can be played two ways — either flat or on their radial side — and there's a spherical fleece version as well. vicfirth.com



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VKB1

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VKB3

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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



PEARL
INNER CIRCLE
MULTI-DRUM CAJON

By removing the inner drum from its fiberglass shell, Pearl's versatile Inner Circle drum can be played three ways: as a cajon, djembe, or at bongo level. {pearldrums.com}



SABIAN
STICK FLIP

With Sabian's entry into the world of accessories comes this clever drumstick bag that switches into a stand with just a simple fold. One second it's a handy gig bag, the next it's holding sticks upright for easy access while performing. {sabian.com}



LATIN PERCUSSION
GUIRA COWBELL

Players can use this cowbell for the traditional, low-pitch cowbell sound or its textured side as a guira. The stainless-steel cowbells come in hand-held or mountable models. {lpmusic.com}



ZILDJIAN
KEROPE LINE

Named after Keropé Zildjian, these darker sounding cymbals channel the sounds of the '50s and '60s and come in 14- and 15-inch hats as well as 18-, 19-, 20- and 22-inch models. {zildjian.com}

THE AUTHENTIC K SOUND FROM ZILDJIAN

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K

KEROPE™

These hand crafted cymbals look as they sound – rich, dark, and complex. Reminiscent of cymbals from the 50s and 60s yet distinctly modern and relevant for today's music, the cymbal line is named in honor of Kerope Zildjian, who presided over one of the most storied periods in Zildjian history. In memory of Kerope's contribution to cymbal making and his deep commitment to craftsmanship, the Zildjian family is introducing a line of cymbals that includes 14" and 15" hats as well as 18", 19", 20" and 22" models.

Zildjian
SOUND LEGACY

Building On SUCCESS

BY BOBBY REED

Piano and keyboard companies follow winners with new gems

Piano and keyboard manufacturers at The NAMM Show capitalized on past successes while vamping up product features and applications.

Hammond Organ, which was founded in 1934, celebrated its 80th birthday at the show by touting new and recent products. Hammond's A-162 organ, available in May, has a 150-watt onboard sound system, five heavy-duty speakers (one which has a 15-inch woofer), a built-in digital Leslie and the same VASE III engine as the popular B-3mk2.



Jim Wieda
Lowrey



James Sajeva
Korg



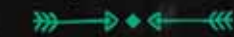
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“With the A-162, we’re paying tribute to the past, but at the same time, offering a more affordable product for the church market,” said Gregg Gronowski, director of marketing and sales.

Following the successful 2012 launch of Hammond’s first “ultra-light” keyboard, the 15-pound Sk1 portable organ, the company released the 16-pound XK-1c, which has a budget price and was a hot seller during the holiday shopping season.

Lowrey Organ unveiled the Liberty LE6500, the company’s new flagship instrument.

“Our market is totally home use, the hobbyist, the easy-play customer,” said Jim Wieda, national sales, product development and promotions manager. “One of the neat features we’ve introduced is the automatic Fake It. You can simply touch a button and



Scott May
Hammond



Brennan Galley
Alesis



Scott Tibbs
Roland



Gabe Ireland and
Clay Edwards
Hohner

Award Winning Hybrids



MMR Dealer's Choice
Kawai CA95 (2013)



MMR Dealer's Choice
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Diapason Magazine
Kawai CA95 (2012)



Music Inc. Magazine
Kawai CA95 (2012)



Japan Institute of
Design Promotion
Kawai CA95 (2012)



Music Inc. Magazine
Kawai CS10 (2014)

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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

YAMAHA
U1TA PE
PROFESSIONAL
UPRIGHT PIANO

Yamaha's U1TA PE is the first of its kind to reproduce all sounds from the soundboard instead of a traditional speaker. Using Trans-Acoustic technology, the soundboard turns into one big loud-speaker. {yamaha.com}



SAMSON
CARBON 61 USB
MIDI CONTROLLER

The Carbon 61 is a 61-key, velocity-sensitive, semi-weighted keyboard designed to feel more like an instrument than a controller. The compact design is great for live performance and studio applications. {samsontech.com}



KORG
MS-20 KIT

This kit lets users build a working reproduction of Korg's original MS-20 analog synthesizer. The version in the kit contains all the original MS-20 product specifications and features, and is true analog, with the same circuit path. {korg.com}



HAL LEONARD
PIANO/VOCAL/
GUITAR SONGBOOK
FOR 'FROZEN'
SOUNDTRACK

This songbook features 11 songs from Disney's film "Frozen." Songs include "For The First Time In Forever," "Frozen Heart" and "In Summer." {halleonard.com}



GARRITAN
ABBEY ROAD
CFX CONCERT
GRAND PIANO
SAMPLE LIBRARY

MakeMusic and Abbey Road Studios teamed up to create the CFX Concert Grand, a library of sounds featuring the Yamaha CFX Concert Grand Piano recorded in historic Studio One. {garritan.com}



ROLAND
FA-08 MUSIC
WORKSTATION

The FA-08 features an 88-note weighted-action keyboard and comes packed with a sound collection inherited from the flagship INTEGRA-7. {rolandus.com}



DAVE SMITH
INSTRUMENTS
PROPHET 12
MODULE

This module is a tabletop, rack-ready reworking of the company's popular Prophet 12 keyboard, a 12-voice hybrid digital/analog synthesizer. {davesmithinstruments.com}



KAWAI
CS10

This hybrid piano blurs the lines between acoustic pianos and their digital counterparts. It merges the convenience of digital performance with the characteristics of an acoustic piano, and includes an upright piano cabinet and Harmonic Imaging XL technology. {kawaius.com}





Keith Emerson performs at a Hammond-sponsored event at the Hilton Anaheim.



Hitoshi Fukutome addresses attendees at Yamaha's annual keyboard dealer meeting.

the instrument will take off and do really professional riffs for you automatically. And you can do it in the middle of a song.”

Roland introduced the 88-key RD-800 stage piano. “This keyboard has a new, high-resolution velocity MIDI out, which captures the performances of all your fingers,” said Roland’s Scott Tibbs. “All of the velocity is accurate, so it really makes for a very defined, realistic performance. This piano has a great feel, so people are really going to want to play it live or in the studio.”

Dave Smith Instruments has enjoyed great success with its Prophet 12 keyboard, a 12-voice hybrid digital/analog synthesizer launched in 2013. At NAMM, the company unveiled the Prophet 12 module, which has the same voice board as the keyboard version, and it fits into a backpack. All parameters are easily editable via the module’s front panel.

■ Attention Grabbers

Thousands of NAMM attendees stopped in their tracks when they saw the Piano-Arc, the world’s only circular keyboard controller. This one-of-a-kind instrument was designed for Lady Gaga’s keyboardist, Brockett Parsons. It has 292 keys (three contiguous 88-note keyboards), sprung (unweighted) wood keys and rocker pivot with PNOscan custom optical sensing by QRS Music Technologies. Parsons has played the instrument onstage, but The NAMM Show was the first time the general public had seen the stunning PianoArc.

Hohner drew hordes of fans to its booth with an 8-foot replica of its Anacleto series accordion. The replica was an effective way to showcase an instrument that sounds great and looks fantastic, thanks to its red-and-black design and elements that sparkle when hit by stage lights. “Anacleto accordions are handmade,” said Scott Emmerman, director of sales and marketing. “Each one is a work of art.” **MI**

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Mobile SPINNING



Joel Henry
Blizzard Lighting



Alex Solano
inMusic Brands

DJ manufacturers focus on portability

BY KATIE KAILUS



Brian Reilly
Sennheiser



DJ Mark Gallo
Pioneer DJ

With EDM mania in full effect, DJ suppliers showed up to The NAMM Show ready to show their wares and continue to feed the craze. A few manufacturers like Numark and Pioneer DJ focused on the mobile DJ by offering portable mixers that could be thrown in a backpack and taken to a gig on the fly.

Pioneer DJ's RMX-500 features a compact and sleek design for those on the go. Other features include two large pressure knobs that give DJs access to multi-dimensional manipulation with just one hand.

"It is super lightweight," said Pioneer rep DJ Mark Gallo. "Portability is definitely one of the interests for us. It's durable, and the knobs on this unit are rubberized and rounded and don't have a sharp edge, so if you put it in your backpack they won't get caught on anything."

Numark's DJ 2 Go features all controls onboard, including a crossfader, jog wheels for each deck, pitch faders and music library navigation controls. Aside from being ideal for on-the-go DJs, it is also great for beginners and is offered at a low price point.

"Something like this it's all about portability and accessibility," said Alex Solano, product specialist for inMusic Brands, parent company of Numark. "Bring your laptop and you are basically ready to go."

No DJ's setup would be complete without a lighting rig. Blizzard Lighting is offering a portable solution with its new Hotbox line of RGBW and RGBA lights. The two models include 4-in-1 LEDs, advanced electronics, and an aluminum casing with dual hanging brackets and secure grip locking knobs. The unit weighs in at just 3.5 pounds and stands 7.25 inches tall including the brackets.

"They are so small and so durable," said Joel Henry, product manager for Blizzard Lighting. "You could literally toss these into a heavy-duty bag and take it to your gig. They are going to be a big thing for us."

■ All Ears

Headphones have been a hot topic in pro-audio for a while, and now the DJ

segment has jumped onto the bandwagon, offering up many different models specifically made for DJs.

Numark's Red Wave and Red-phone headphones have been hot sellers according to Solano, and Sennheiser has recently gotten back into the DJ headphone market by building on the legacy of its HD 25 DJ headphones. The new HD6 Mix, HD7 DJ and HD8 DJ headphones are built for comfort and durability, whether they are being used in the studio or during a live performance. They feature a chord that can be switched from the right or left side of the phones for ease when mixing.

"They are built for the rigors of touring," said Brian Reilly, social media manager for Sennheiser. "They are ultra durable. DJ's like to beat up their gear, and we know that." **MI**

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

CASIO
XW-J1 DJ

An all-in-one VJ/DJ controller, this unit allows for mixing using the djay app, turning an iOS device into a DJ application. {casio.com}



NUMARK
DJ 2 GO

This portable unit features such onboard controls as a cross-fader, jog wheels for each deck and pitch faders. {numark.com}



PIONEER DJ
RMX-500

The Remix Station 500 offers DJs easy access to multi-layered FX for unlimited creativity. {pioneerdj.com}



M-AUDIO
TRIGGER FINGER PRO

This unit is a USB controller with a step sequencer and features over 8 GB of instruments, one-shots, loops and more. {m-audio.com}



SENNHEISER
HD6 MIX, HD 7 DJ, HD8 DJ

This new range builds on the legacy of Sennheiser's HD 25 headphones. The new line includes one model for the studio and two for live use. {sennheiserusa.com}



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Jody Espina
Jody Jazz



Ralph Bowen
Dansr/Vandoren



Theo Wanne
Theo Wanne



Brian Go and BK Son
Silverstein

The band and orchestra market, with its traditional roots and time-tested instrumental designs, might seem like an unlikely beneficiary of modern advancements in high-tech manufacturing. But, as this year's NAMM Show demonstrated, an increasing number of woodwind companies are using digital tools like CNC machines to design and create ever-important accessories that are "cut" more precisely than ever before.

For the newly branded D'Addario Woodwinds division, which will reintroduce its Reserve series of reeds (formerly a Rico product line) this year, a change in technology comes with a change of name. "We've been working for the last two years to develop the next generation of reed-cutting machines," said Robert Polan, D'Addario Woodwinds product manager. "These digital machines give us greater precision, and we're actually able to tailor the cut to the raw material. It should result in a huge increase in quality. Our new Reserve reeds will start coming off of these digital machines in the second quarter."

Once the process is up and running with Reserve reeds, D'Addario Woodwinds will move its Select Jazz reeds onto the digital production line and simultaneously release its CNC-milled, vintage-inspired Select



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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

**CONNOLLY MUSIC
REVELLE
VIOLIN OUTFITS**

Revelle violin outfits provide students and advancing players with high-quality components, well-seasoned tonewoods and a variety of hand-applied finishes. {connollymusic.com}



**CANNONBALL
MUSICAL
INSTRUMENTS
779/779-L
FLUGELHORN**

This flugelhorn features patent-pending cocobolo wood bracing and a unique combination of bell size, bell taper and bore size for a velvety tone. {cannonballmusic.com}



**JODYJAZZ
JET ALTO
SAXOPHONE
MOUTHPIECE**

JodyJazz has taken brightness to the warning track with this alto saxophone mouthpiece, which features a short facing curve that produces a clean, direct sound and facilitates the altissimo range. {jodyjazz.com}



**VANDOREN
V16 METAL
TENOR SAXOPHONE
MOUTHPIECE**

Vandoren's V16 line now includes a large-chamber model with a 1940s tone, a medium-chamber model with a 1950s vibe and a small-chamber model. The mouthpieces have no baffle and less edge. {dansr.com}



**BACKUN
PROTÉGÉ Bb
CLARINET**

This clarinet is a step between Backun's Alpha and Artist models and comes standard in grenadilla wood with silver plated keys, a custom barrel, bell and case. {backunmusical.com}



**EASTMAN
MUSIC COMPANY
EBB534
CONCERT TUBA**

This tuba is a 4/4 "American style" BBb tuba with four front-action valves to help players find a comfortable playing position. The tuba has a warm, centered tone that's capable of powerful projection. {eastmanmusiccompany.com}



**YAMAHA
XENO TRUMPET**

The evolving Xeno line has been redesigned with a revamped yellow brass bell that provides improved resistance for a powerful tonal core and more accurate slotting. Models include the medium-bore YTR-8335 and large-bore YTR-8345. {yamaha.com}



**ANTIGUA
PRO-ONE
SAXOPHONES**

Notable Pro-One features include an ergonomic keyboard, G-sharp lifting mechanism, F-sharp bridge key and trident key arms. {antiguawinds.com}



Jazz mouthpiece for alto saxophone.

“Our technology will allow us to make the Select Jazz mouthpiece consistently and put it out at a price that anyone — whether it’s a professional or an advanced student — can afford,” Polan said.

■ In-Depth Design

Jody Espina of JodyJazz designed the facing curves of two new mouthpieces using CNC-enabled techniques. The hard-rubber Jet for alto saxophone features a shorter curve that facilitates the altissimo range and produces a bright tonal quality. The anodized-aluminum Giant for tenor saxophone has more of a traditional, longer curve that results in a darker, bigger sound.

Theo Wanne of Theo Wanne Mouthpieces has redesigned most of his product line for 2014 and added a new model: the Mantra mouthpiece for alto saxophone, which creates a large-chamber effect for fatness of sound while maintaining a medium-chamber bore diameter that makes it more responsive.

“The reason I’m able to produce all new products is because of the way we do such high-level CNC work and design work,” Wanne said. “I can constantly improve our product based on customer and endorser feedback. So, instead of using molds and hand-finishing, I’m invested into a design process that I can tweak and constantly improve.”

Wanne recently designed a saxophone mouthpiece called the Tantra that’s made to complement the new line of synthetic reeds featuring natural hemp fibers from Harry Hartmann’s Fiberreed.

■ Other Worldly Sound

Silverstein Works has applied space-age technology to its new line of self-adjusting clarinet and saxophone ligatures. Designed to minimize surface contact and allow for maximum vibration, Silverstein ligatures hold the reed in place using a cord made of the same stretch-proof material that secured the landing parachute on NASA’s Mars Rover. “With the strength of that cord, that’s one of the reasons why we’re able to minimize the surface contact and still maintain a really good grip on the reed,” said Brian Go, director of Silverstein Works. “Independent audio laboratory tests comparing our ligatures to other more traditional metal ligatures show more defined harmonic partials, indicating a richer and fuller sound.” **MI**



Jim D'Addario and Robert Polan
D'Addario Woodwinds



Al Maniscalco and Tim Ornato
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2014 BEST IN SHOW AWARDS >



BEST IN SHOW rocked the Sunday morning breakfast crowd at NAMM University, highlighting some of the most buzzworthy gear and companies on display at The 2014 NAMM Show. On the following pages, check out the picks from six

retail buying experts who shopped the NAMM floor and presented their findings on the final morning of the show. *Music Inc.* Publisher Frank Alkyer, left, moderated as the experts discussed their 25 choices in front of a packed house.

THE PANELISTS



GAYLE BEACOCK
BEACOCK'S MUSIC
Vancouver, Wash.



LEE ANDERTON
ANDERTON'S MUSIC
Guilford, England



JOHN GRABOWSKI
SWEETWATER SOUND
Fort Wayne, Ind.



JEFF MOZINGO
MOZINGO MUSIC
St. Louis



CHRIS TSO
MUSICIAN'S FRIEND
Westlake Village, Calif.



DONOVAN BANKHEAD
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GAYLE BEACOCK
Alfred's Mastering Ukulele
 "This is a wonderful, advanced method book that we should be bundling into our ukulele sales."



JOHN GRABOWSKI
Universal Audio Apollo Twin
 "This is a desktop recording interface that also has processing plug-ins. They've had some larger interfaces, but this is now at a point where a solo musician who wants to record and mix can use this."



JEFF MOZINGO
QSC TouchMix Digital Mixer
 "It's compact. It's light. It's easy to carry around, but it gives you all these big mixer features."

DONOVAN BANKHEAD
Blackstar ID:Core Series
 "The thing that's amazing about this amp is that it's really tiny, and when you hear it, mark my words, you will start looking around because you'll think they're running it through a P.A."

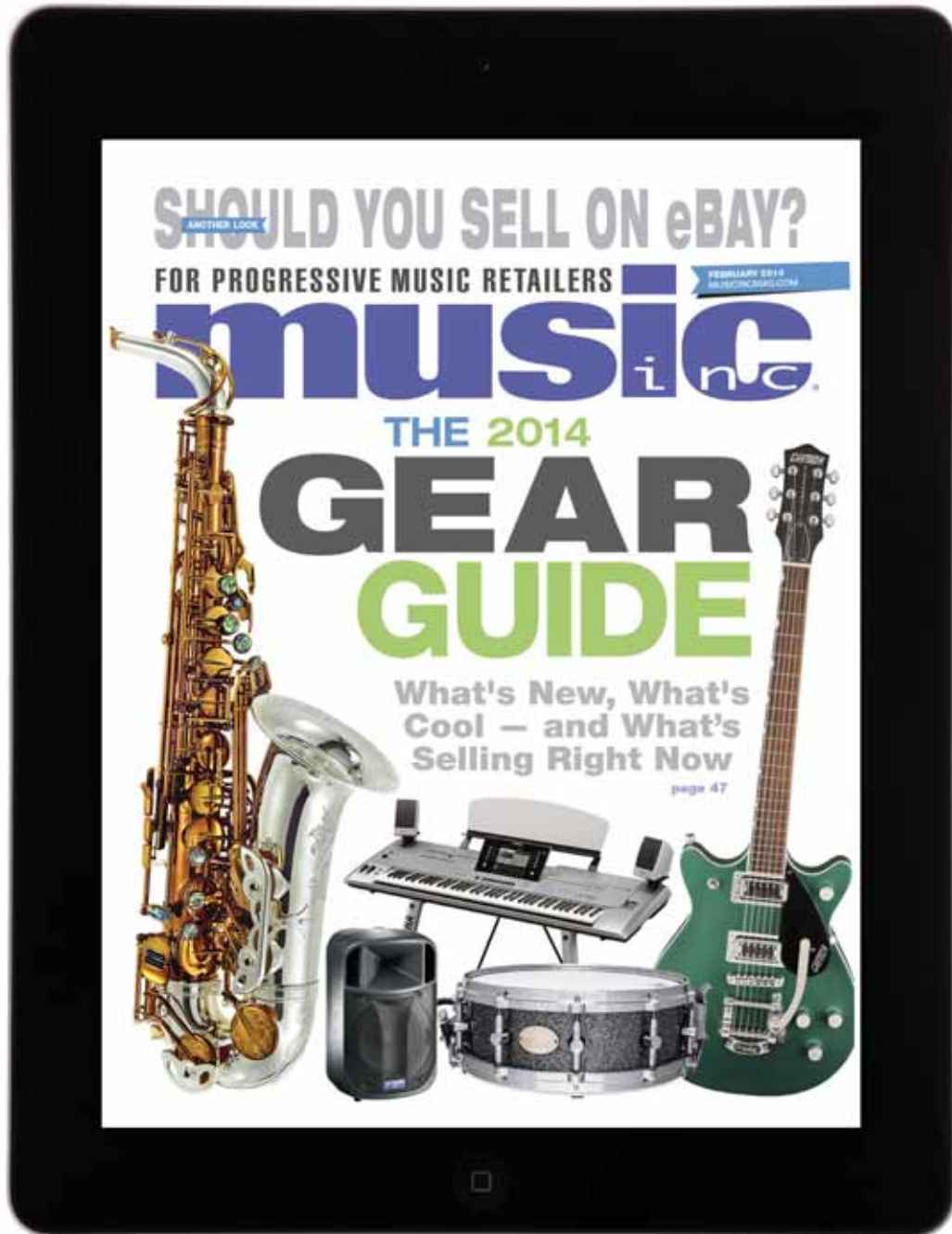


LEE ANDERTON
Line 6 Amplifi
 "It's got Line 6 Pod technology, so you've got a really cool suite of guitar amp sounds. But the cool bit that's the clincher is that Line 6 has developed an app that will listen to the track that you've started to play from your iTunes library. Within two or three seconds, provided you have a Wi-Fi connection, it will select three or four patches from a bank of about 10,000 patches up in the cloud that would be an appropriate guitar tone for you to jam along with."

GAYLE BEACOCK
Gretsch G9100-L Soprano Long Neck Ukulele
 "We're seeing the market shift from beginner and intermediate to some specialized and higher-end ukuleles. It's a long-neck soprano ukulele, which is very unique. The neck is 15 inches, so guitar players can easily switch to a soprano uke."



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ADD-ON OR ACCESSORY



LEE ANDERTON
Hercules Stands

"My sales guys find it very easy to point out the unique features that Hercules puts on the stands: the easy-lock grasp system, the easy way the mic stands can be adjusted; all of the packaging is fantastic with very bold colors, and it's easy to see the product inside."



DONOVAN BANKHEAD
Kirlin Cables

"This is a product we've had for awhile. They make really high quality cables at an extremely attractive price point that is very profitable for dealers. And the fail rate is practically zero."



GAYLE BEACOCK
Gator ProGo Gig Bag

"Gator has thought of everything on this case. It comes in electric, acoustic, bass and double bass models. Great price points. It's the best gig bag for the money. I love this gig bag."



CHRIS TSO
AmpRidge Mighty Mic S iPhone Shotgun Video Mic

"With social media exploding, how do you get people to share their experiences and their music? The Mighty Mic is a shotgun mic that plugs right into [an] iPhone. The shotgun pattern reduces unwanted noise, but it also has a built-in headphone jack."

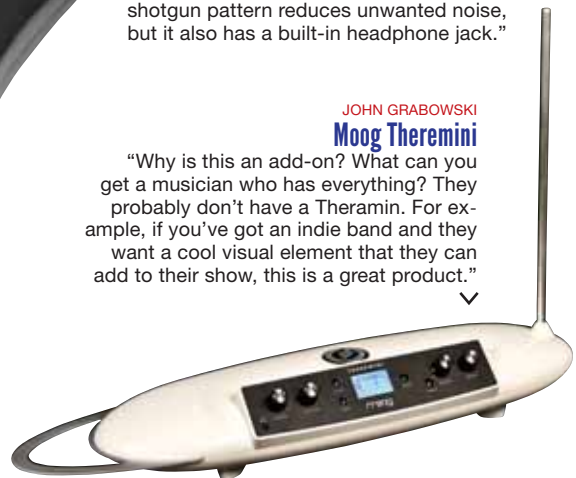


JEFF MOZINGO
Samson BT30

"Every other second, we've got a new electronic device that changes compatibility and plug-ins. So, I chose the Samson BT30. It's very inexpensive. We've got all these docks that use the old 30-pin system, and we've got all of this new stuff coming out. The BT30 allows those to turn into a Bluetooth connection."

JOHN GRABOWSKI
Moog Theremini

"Why is this an add-on? What can you get a musician who has everything? They probably don't have a Theremin. For example, if you've got an indie band and they want a cool visual element that they can add to their show, this is a great product."



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GOTTA STOCK IT



LEE ANDERTON

Gretsch Bluegrass Range

"It's a fantastic crossover product for a store like ours that's primarily a contemporary guitar store. Our customers already knew who the brand was. They'd seen all the models like the White Falcon and such. And, Gretsch could deliver an authentic bluegrass range with products that had been in their catalog 50 or 60 years ago. It covers all the bases — ukuleles, banjos, dobros."



CHRIS TSO

On-Stage Stands u-mount Lighting Arms

"I think this is a gateway product. This attaches to any speaker stand creating a T-bar for lights that you can clamp right onto it. To get your customers into the growing world of lighting could expand their consumer life span."



JOHN GRABOWSKI

Audio-Technica System 10 Stompbox

"We're always looking for something that solves a problem. This stompbox system includes a two-amp switcher in it. And the system will pair up to eight transmitters. So, say you have a customer who plays out and they use two electric and an acoustic, and they have an electric amp and an acoustic amp. You can sell them a System 10 digital wireless stompbox and a couple of extra transmitters and they can switch from guitar to guitar — and from amp to amp — very easily."



JEFF MOZINGO

Samson Expedition XP106w

"You can sell this, literally, to anyone. It's great for anyone who has parties in the backyard, wants to go to the beach, or wants to go to the pool."

GAYLE BEACOCK

Chord Buddy

"We get customers every day who say, 'My four-year-old or my five-year-old wants to play guitar.' With Chord Buddy, children can start playing right away. It gets people playing music. It's super easy. It's also great for the elderly. It helps make more music makers."



DONOVAN BANKHEAD

Bedell/Breedlove Guitars

"I like their philosophy on dealers and end users and life in general. It's one of the fastest turning product lines we have."





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COMPANIES TO WATCH



JOHN GRABOWSKI
< Roland

"Roland is definitely one of the premier brands in our industry. But there's definitely a new energy and slightly new direction in their products. The new FA series workstations are a great example. They've got new sounds from the Integra Sound Module. It's very different from what they've done in the past. It looks like there will be some things on the horizon for Roland that will be pretty exciting."



LEE ANDERTON
< Blackstar Amps

"At my store, we pride ourselves on the breadth of different amps that we stock. We're fortunate that we've got the space to stock about 12 different amp lines. Blackstar, for the last three years, has been our No. 1 selling amp line — outperforming the guy at No. 2 by about 50 percent. It's a fantastic range of products. They're fantastic people to deal with."



JEFF MOZINGO
< QSC

"One of the fastest growing categories in our store has been P.A. gear and the rental of P.A. gear. In that vein, QSC is definitely a company to watch. They have just a vast array of speakers to choose from. QSC has been the No. 1 SKU in our store for P.A. gear, and we've also put it into our rental pool."

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Rory Gallagher
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DONOVAN BANKHEAD
Peavey

“My company to watch may be a little bit of an unusual choice, but it’s Peavey. That company’s been through some challenges. But it’s a great American company.

I wanted to show you [the] Mini-Mega Bass Amp. It’s a great product at a wonderful price point. It’s a 1,000-watt bass amp. It’s got built-in overdrive. It’s got built-in compression. It’s got Cosmos technology built-in. And one of the coolest things is the front panel. Not only does it light up, but it lights up in multiple different colors. It’s a sure-fire attention-getter in your stores.”



^
CHRIS TSO
Harman

“Harman’s new, fresh leadership team has a wide array of experience, expertise and they’re focused on not only leveraging the technologies across their brands for the benefit of their customer, but also making the products they should make, not the products they could make — whether it’s AKG in Austria, Crown in Elkhart, Ind., Digitech being reborn with DOD as well, and of course, JBL. They’re a force to be reckoned with, and we look forward to growing with them.”



^
GAYLE BEACOCK
Pintech

“It’s a very small and focused and really innovative company. Pintech has selectively targeted a few drum items that are really amazing. The biggest item they have right now is called the Converter Kit. A lot of churches and schools like the look of acoustic drums. So, Pintech has created this conversion kit that will make any acoustic set into an electric set. You get the best of both worlds.”



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Kate Rich

**Creative Music Center
Monroe, Conn.**

I think the biggest takeaway for me is that we need to continually embrace change. I did a lot of sessions at the Idea Center regarding all kinds of topics — social media, lessons programs, rock band camps. We're going to be working on our Facebook and YouTube platform, and coordinate that with our e-commerce business.

I can't say I saw any product that was exceptionally new but one thing that was great was Yamaha put out a new Xeno horn. That's very exciting for us, to be able to go home and promote it to our school districts and those up-and-coming musicians in our local area.



Chad Wright

**Look Alike Productions
Granada Hills, Calif.**

I come to see all the new technology because one of the focuses of our studio is to be on the cutting edge of technology. One of the main things we saw was the RME products and all the new MADI stuff that they have. MADI has been around for a few years now but this company has really stayed on the cutting edge of that technology. They have some new devices that we can really implement into our studio to give us more I/O for clients so we can also continue to do mobile, off-site recording.



Brad Ricketts
**Entertainment Resources
Little Rock, Ark.**

What's your biggest takeaway from NAMM?

We supply backline gear, instruments, sound, lighting and we do professional installs. Living in Arkansas, we're not in the big music cities, so what we take away are the big trends that are happening for the year. We go to the show, we come home, and then we start on Monday talking to all of our clients and customers. We put together a list of about 10 products that we've seen here that we think are valuable for our customers based on what they've asked for or what they need.

The Behringer X32 is a mixer that has been very popular. It just came out last year, but it's been very popular for the simple

fact that whether you're a church, band or corporation, you can use this. It decreases your equipment and gear that you take around. We saw it last year when it was just coming out but this year they've come out with the new model in an advanced version, [the X32 Version 2.0].

Another thing we're seeing is the new technology in LED lighting. That's probably going to be a big seller for us because most of our customers are in the traditional PAR can lighting but now they're wanting LED lighting. We saw a lot of LED from Blizzard Lighting. There are less power requirements and the temperature is lower; it's not hot. I think it's go-

ing to be a big hit for us.

What we're seeing in the professional sound arena is that the sound systems at this NAMM are all being condensed. They're condensed and compact, which is a really big plus factor because a lot of places might not have a really big space and area. We're looking forward to taking some of those systems in. There's a wide variety; from Mackie to dB Technologies, LD Systems and QSC, it seems like everyone has something out. So I think what's going to happen there is everybody is going to compete for everybody's business. It's going to be up to the customer — what they like and price range.

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