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MAY 2014  
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# music

HANDS-ON

# RETAIL

**Ted Brown Music** connects with its community through its not-for-profit outreach program

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**FOCUS: ELECTRIC GUITAR & BASSES**

10 Guitar Lines You Should Stock Now

p.58

The Art of the Guitar Wall

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Billy Cuthrell

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# PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

## GET OUT THERE

Some MI retailers have large staffs, some don't. Some MI retailers carry a large overhead, some don't. But all retailers have one thing in common: a community. Whether you think of your community as the location of your store or the make up of your customers, you all have one — harvest it.

Ted Brown Music, this month's cover story (which starts on page 38), is a five-store operation that takes community involvement to a higher level.

The Tacoma, Wash.-based retailer sits on local boards and promotes at street fairs. Every summer the company gets major kudos by having the participants of its annual Live it OutLoud summer rock band camp play at numerous events around town, and even headline one big concert at a major Tacoma performance venue at the end of the session.

"I don't see us not being involved in the community we live in — it's important," said Stephanie Brown Howe, vice president of Ted Brown Music and executive director of Ted Brown Music Outreach, which offers many musical opportunities to lower income families in the Tacoma area including collecting donated instruments and giving them to students who cannot afford rental instruments. The store has seen up to 500 "likes" on photos it posts

to Facebook of a student receiving a donated instrument. What have you posted lately that has gotten you that kind of response?

Fanny's House of Music in Nashville, Tenn., another store focused on building community, recently celebrated its fifth anniversary (see page 14). Fanny's gives back by offering students of single parents a 5 percent discount on its music lessons program.

"Offering a discount to single parents was a no-brainer," said co-owner Pamela Cole. "It's the right thing to do. We see a lot of single parents struggling to give their children the same opportunities of a two-income household. The 5 percent is just a little break that can make a huge difference if they are trying to afford lessons every week. People are always happy and sometimes surprised we offer these."

While it is most fulfilling, getting involved in the community doesn't have to stop with philanthropy. Participating in street fairs, partnering up with local college music programs and sponsoring local music festivals gets your store's name out there. Summertime is the perfect time to take advantage of these kinds of activities. So go on, get out there. There are a ton of customers who want to meet you. **MI**



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# LETTERS

## Edgy Award

We are proud and thankful to receive an Editor's Choice Award for the Mapex Armory Series in the March/April issue of *Music Inc.* The north star for all of our product design, marketing and sales decisions are made with the goal of creating the best possible customer experience, so it's especially gratifying when we are recognized for those efforts.

The drum manufacturing community hasn't paid a lot of attention to the importance of bearing edges in the mid-range product category. Specifically, players have had a difficult time tuning their drums because the apex of the edge is too far to the outside of the shell and they can't get the drumhead to sit flat. The SONIClear Bearing Edge solves those issues and enables players to get a great sound even without much tuning experience.

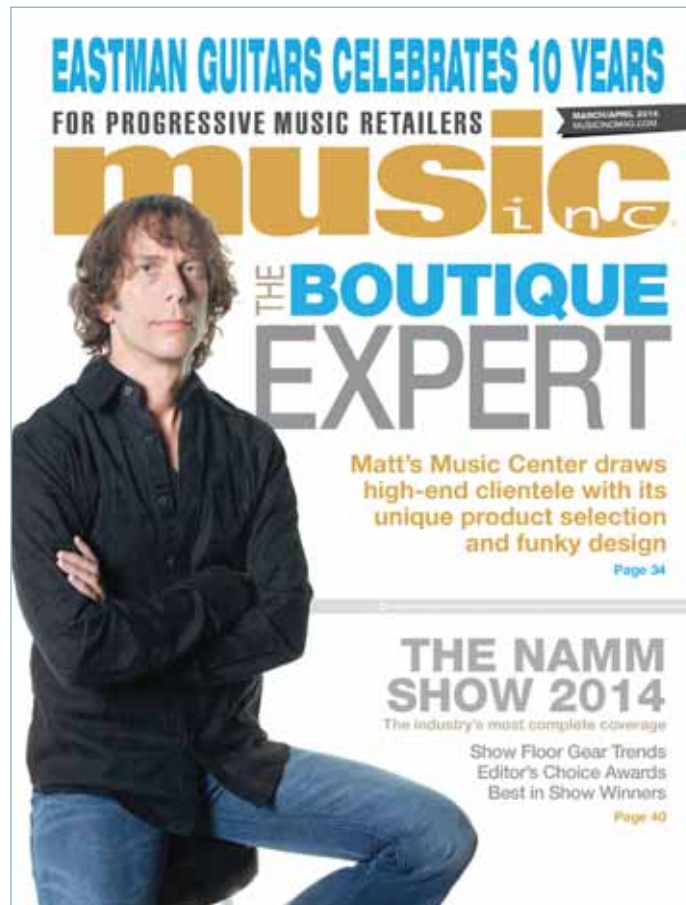
The Armory series also offers a snare trade-in program, giving the player a choice of five different Armory snare drums.

The Armory series, SONIClear Bearing Edge, and Snare trade-in program is bringing a lot of attention to the Mapex brand. Thank you again for awarding us with your Editor's Choice.

**Michael Robinson**  
Director of Marketing  
Mapex Drums

## A Decade in Perspective

It was truly humbling to read your article about Eastman Guitars celebrating our 10 year anniversary. The guitar business is rich in history and great companies. At Eastman, we are focused on building quality instruments that sound great. My hope is that the guitars that we are building today will be passed down and



treasured by musicians for many years in the future.

We feel extremely fortunate to be a part of this very special industry and your piece inspired me personally to further commit myself and our team to providing better instruments for musicians throughout the world. Thank you for putting our past 10 years of work into perspective.

**Qian Ni**  
Owner  
Eastman Music Company

## New Directions to Watch

Pintech Percussion would like to say "thank you" to *Music Inc.* for helping inform its readers about Pintech's recent Best in Show award at NAMM 2014.

Pintech has long been a leading manufacturer of electronic percussion and accessories, but

has recently seen a large gain in exposure do to our new marketing techniques and products. Being selected by Gayle Beacock from Beacock Music for her choice of Company to Watch at NAMM was a real honor — especially since her store was recently selected as NAMM's Dealer of the Year!

The first quarter of 2014 has brought upon the largest growth Pintech has seen for over a decade. A more driven marketing campaign aimed directly to our consumers, a refreshed and more current approach to dealer support and training, social marketing and new products have helped Pintech immensely.

Our new acoustic to electronic drum conversion kits have really helped get our message across while offering a perfect bridge

between acoustic drummers and electronic drummers. Look out for more products that aim to offer the same bridge coming in 2014, along with some new technologies that have never been seen in the electronic percussion category.

**Ryan Guard**  
Owner  
Pintech Percussion

## Mighty Win

We appreciate Chris Tso of Musician's Friend selecting the Ampridge MightyMic S microphone as a Best in Show winner. We hear from so many people how they get great video from their phone and then have to make excuses about the sound. Rather than design a product and then figure out what to do with it, we started with a goal to make a simple, high-quality solution to get good sound for videos.

The mic is a high quality phantom powered condenser shotgun design that plugs right into the headphone jack and does not need any batteries. It is small enough to fit in your pocket so you can take it anywhere. Using our MoviePro app, users can adjust the sensitivity and listen while recording using the headphone jack on the back of the mic. When done, you can edit the video and upload it directly to YouTube. Our goal with all our products is to bring affordable solutions to the consumer. Thanks for the great recognition.

**Paul Ackel**  
VP of Sales  
Ampridge

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Derek Song performs "Solar Flare" with the Fishman TriplePlay



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- > **Brantford Music**  
Gets star treatment  
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Celebrates five years  
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Adds 10 locations in Colorado  
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Switches stores  
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# RETAIL

BOOKMARK MUSIC | BY KATHLEEN COSTANZA

## THE PROBLEM SOLVERS

In late February, a woman contacted Bookmark Music in Pacific Grove, Calif., looking for ensemble sheet music she could play with her two friends. She was a rusty, intermediate piano player, one of her friends was a flutist and the other was a beginning cello player.

She had come to the right place.

Owner Marcia Stearns matched her with sheet music that students use to learn to play in ensembles and, knowing the flute can often play a violin part, she picked trio pieces written for a cello, violin and piano.

It was only one of the many hunts Stearns does for unique sheet music on a day-to-day basis for her customers. In fact, the crux of her 20-year-old business is solving problems and getting customers the specific sheet music they need, from rare pieces from overseas to the music for Disney's "Frozen."

"Part of the philosophy of the way we do business is everybody who comes to you has a question, problem or issue that they need sorted out or solved," Stearns said.

Sometimes, the requests are as simple as a parent needing a specific music book for their kid — something the shop is likely to have with about 1,000 square



**'Everybody who comes to you has a question, problem or issue that they need sorted out or solved.'**

feet filled with sheet music. Other times, it's up to Stearns and her full-time employee, Pamela Scholz, to pull from their vast knowledge of sheet music to find what customers are searching for.

"We set ourselves up from the very beginning with tools

so that we could research music in print," Stearns said, adding she subscribes to a sheet music database to research composers and pieces. "We started with really good tools and then over time we've been able to finesse how to use them."

Stearns left her job as a manager for a motorcycle shop in 1994 to start Bookmark Music, which originally sold scripts and other theatre and dance materials. But within a year the customer demand for sheet music was so high that she phased out the other books all together. Today, 75 percent of Bookmark Music's sales come from sheet music while the remaining quarter

comes from a mix of gift items, instruments and accessories like reeds and stands.

### FORMING CONNECTIONS

To connect with music teachers outside the area, Stearns travels to a variety of conferences and music festivals and often brings inventory with her. There, she meets customers face-to-face and demonstrates the type of service she can provide when they call or email her with requests.

"Everyone who bought anything from us found out that they can have an intelligent musical conversation with us," Stearns said of the recent California All-State Music Education Conference. "If they had questions we did everything we could to get them an answer."

And while the Internet has challenged the print industry as a whole, Stearns says the personalized guidance Bookmark Music provides for its customers who depend on sheet music — mainly private music teachers, churches and schools — is something that can't be replicated on a website.

"We're infinitely adaptable — we're the people here, not the computers," Stearns said. "The whole idea is to satisfy the person who calls, emails, comes in, orders online and take of what it is they need." **MI**



## Movie Crew Shoots at Brantford Music

Over the week of March 3, the Brantford Music Centre in Brantford, Ontario was transformed into a movie set for the upcoming Hallmark Channel Christmas film, "Angel On My Tree."

Just two weeks prior to filming, owner Les Posan was approached by a location scout from Chesler Perlmutter Productions who said the store was "perfect" for the film about a music store employee looking for love.

"They said it was very clean, it was mom-and-pop, organized

and professional," Posan said. "A lot of music stores were very cluttered and it was going to be impossible to bring cameras and people in. We also have instruments like cellos and grand pianos on display."

For a full week, the store shut down to accommodate 80 cast and crew members. Parts of the street were blocked off, too. The store documented the whole shoot on its Facebook page, adding it was an exciting way to celebrate its 35th anniversary.

Or, as Posan joked, "We do a movie every 35 years here."



The film crew lights The Brantford Music Centre during the shoot.

## MUSIC & ARTS ACQUIRES SEVEN STORES

Music & Arts expanded into Washington state in late February with its acquisition of seven Music Centers stores.

Music Centers was founded in 1955, and its locations in the Tacoma, Wash., area including

Lacey, Lakewood, Federal Way, Olympia, Puyallup, Renton and South Hill are now part of the Music & Arts family of stores. The acquisition brings Music & Arts' total number of locations to 128 across 23 states.

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FANNY'S HOUSE OF MUSIC | ANNIVERSARY

## Fanny's House of Music Celebrates Five Years

Fanny's House of Music in Nashville, Tenn., celebrated five years in business on March 8 by unveiling a specially commissioned mural during an all-day open house. Painted by Nashville artist Scott Guion, the mural features female music icons like Joan Jett, Dolly Parton and Memphis Minnie rocking out around the store's front porch.

Co-owner Pamela Cole said the mural reflects her and fellow owner Leigh Maple's values and

mission since day one: to be a wholly inclusive place for all musicians regardless of musical ability, gender or age.

"We have a lesson program here, and the community just jumped right in to help us," Cole said of the success the store has seen over the last five years, despite starting off with little to no money in the height of the economic crash. "Everybody's just been like, 'OK, I get what you're trying to do, how can we help?'"

### DALE MUSIC | CLOSING

## Dale Music Closes After 64 Years

Dale Music Company in Silver Spring, Md., will close on its doors on June 30, its 64th birthday. Owner Carol Warden told the *Washington City Paper* that the store, which specializes in

sheet music, has seen a decrease in foot traffic in recent years and the internet has changed the way of business.

Warden's parents founded the company in 1950.



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FULL COMPASS SYSTEMS | EVENT

## Full Compass Systems Hosts Alex Buono

Full Compass Systems hosted Alex Buono, Saturday Night Live's director of photography, at the Discovery Center in Milwaukee on March 25. Over 150 people, mostly video professionals, showed up to hear Buono talk about his experiences and the challenges shooting live often presents.

Before the event, manufacturers including Canon, Marshall Electronics, Tascam and Yamaha showcased their products at an expo that was free and open to the public.

"His experiences are truly sensational and this was a fantastic event," said Roxanne Wenzel, VP of sales and marketing at Full Compass Systems. "He has a wealth of knowledge that we're proud to offer our customers."



Alex Buono speaks at the Discovery Center.

B2R | OPENING

## Bach To Rock To Open 10 Locations

Bach to Rock (B2R) has signed a franchise agreement with Arpeggio Capital Partners LLC to develop 10 music schools in Denver, Boulder and Colorado Springs, Colo. The first location is slated to open next fall in the Denver metro area.

Founded in 2007 with its first location in Bethesda, Md., B2R now has eight music schools across Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia and a total of 18 franchised locations in development across the country.



Customers mill about at The Music Stop's Grand Opening.



THE MUSIC STOP | MOVE

## THE MUSIC STOP MOVES

The Music Stop in Murfreesboro, Tenn., switched locations in February and kicked off the new store with a Grand Opening celebration. The event included hourly giveaways, music clinics, performances and a drawing where a local middle school won a \$1,000 gift card. The Music Stop also launched a new lesson program in recording engineering in its new technical recording area.

"It was just crazy! We were assisting an average of a hundred people every hour, and really appreciated the support from so many families and educators," said owner Allen Hayes, adding representatives from Marshall and Audio-Technica were on hand.

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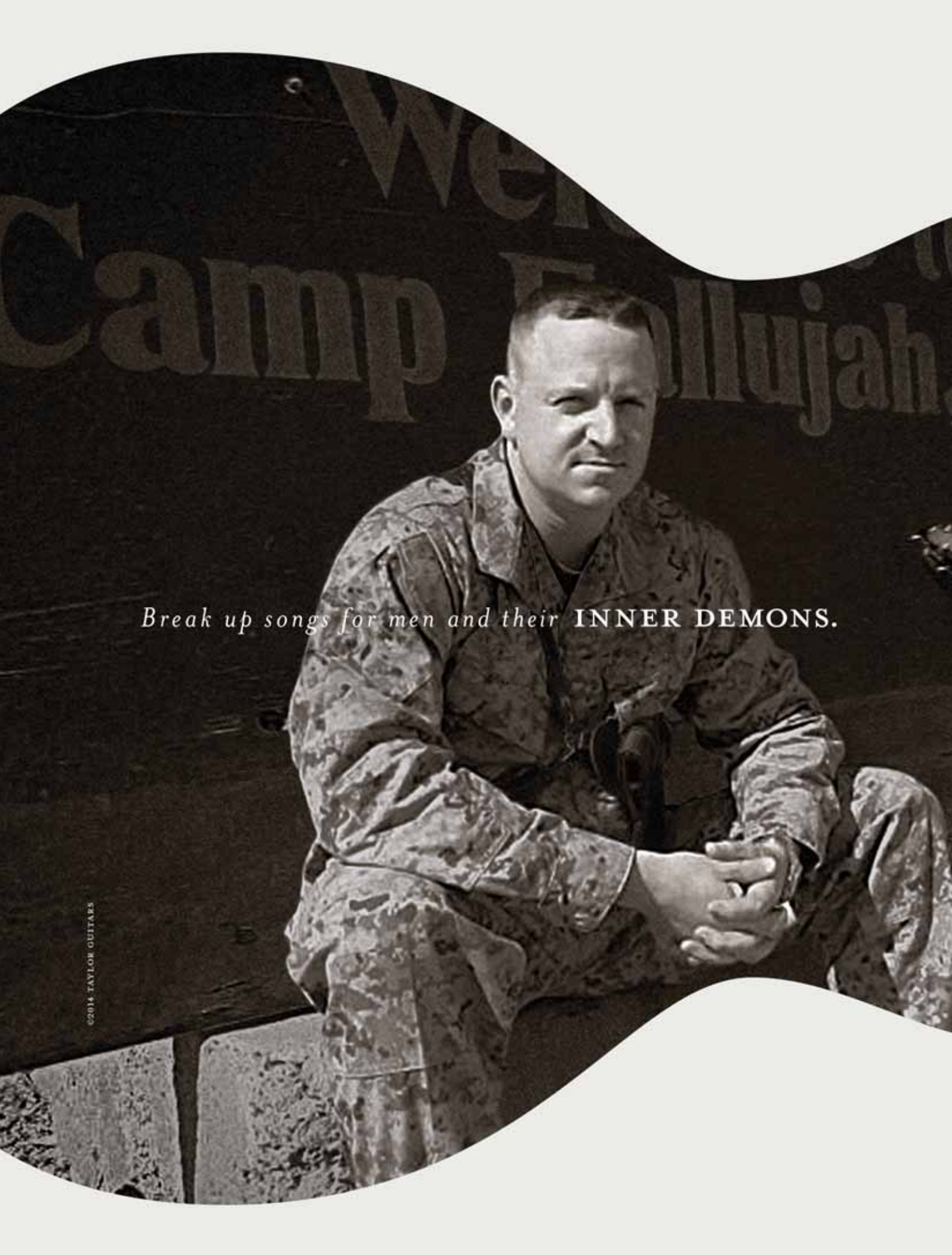
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- > **Sabian**  
Acquires Billdidit  
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- > **Alfred Music**  
Donates sheet music products to  
Operation Music Aid  
PAGE 24

# SUPPLY

KREMONA | BY KATIE KAILUS

## STRINGED SUCCESS

At the end of World War I, Dimitar Georgiev left the battlefield and returned to his native Bulgaria with his mandolin in hand. It was from this love of music that in 1924 he founded string instrument manufacturer Kremona alongside his two brothers. Today, the family-owned company continues to handcraft violins, guitars and ukuleles in the company's native Bulgaria.

"It's named 'classical guitar' not because it's expressly for classical music, but because it's the tree from which other types of guitars are simply new branches," said Rich Shepherd, brand manager for Kremona North America. "In spite of trends, every guitarist makes their way back to the source. It's in a musician's nature to discover roots."

While the company has only offered its guitars in the U.S. for the past decade, Kremona has been handcrafting instruments at its Bulgarian factory for 90 years. The factory employs only about 100 people from luthiers to administration, begging the question: How does it manage to



From left: Brandon Coletti, Evgeny Sporov, Nikolay Iliev and Rich Shepherd

keep both costs and prices low?

"It's a challenge," Shepherd said. "We do not outsource our labor, as some companies do. Our heritage — offering European-made instruments at an outstanding value — is what's most important. We focus on reinvesting into the efficiency of the factory and our North American quality control."

Kremona also keep staff numbers low at its North American headquarters (at only about six people), which is located in Rancho Cordova, Calif., about an hour and a half outside of San Francisco where the company receives instruments that are

being shipped to the United States.

"We take the QC process quite seriously," Shepherd said.

### A TRADITIONAL ALTERNATIVE

Kremona's North American guitar line is made up entirely of nylon string guitars, including its all-solid Artist series, Flamenco, student and acoustic/electric models, crossover guitars and its new 14-fret-to-the-body Lulo Reinhardt Signature model.

"The market likes these instruments because they feature old world values and authenticity, but come at an affordable price," Shepherd said. "Guitar-

ists owning high quality steel-string and electric instruments [that are] tuned in to the possibilities of traditional guitar feel comfortable with a European-made instrument, and appreciate finding one in the \$500-\$2,000 price range."

Shepherd said he believes the nylon niche is an area where guitar dealers can really increase traffic and business. "Introducing customers to the tone and feel of nylon can be magical," he said. "Having those products

available and a staff member that can play some flamenco licks is fun and can increase sales."

With its affordable old-world charm, Shepherd hopes Kremona continues to expand into new markets. While available in many European and Asian countries, Shepherd said he would like to see the company grow its footprint in the United States, especially the Midwest and South.

"It's not uncommon for shop owners to recommend Kremona to colleagues in non-competing territories," Shepherd said. "Dealers are enthusiastic because we've held our margins." **MI**



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# SOFTWARE SOLUTION

Software tools have revolutionized the way musicians work in the digital age. Whether they're running a DAW on their laptop or laying down tracks in a professional recording studio, today's musicians rely on software like ProTools, Finale and Reason at every stage of the music production process.

Music retailers have played an important role in serving this growing market segment. But until recently, it has been a challenge for many to keep up with the expense and man-hours associated with software inventory maintenance. Now, the Xchange Music Platform ([xchangemarket.com](http://xchangemarket.com)) has implemented a no-brainer system that places retailers in the epicenter of the software business and eliminates their need for inventory entirely.

## HOW XCHANGE WORKS

Retailers who participate in the Xchange Music Platform can sell music software from more than 100 different vendors via direct digital download.

They don't have to ship their customers a box that contains a license code and a link. They don't even need to keep product in stock. All the necessary download information is provided digitally, in real time, at the point of sale.

And there's no overhead. "It's a boon for resellers because they can have a supermarket without having any stock," said Xchange



**'It's a boon for resellers because they can have a supermarket without having any stock.'**

founder Ray Williams, who also serves as president of Toronto-based distributor Music Marketing Inc. "It costs nothing to join Xchange, and there's no fees. These resellers don't have to pay a percentage of the sale. And they can list everything and not have to pay upfront — they pay after the sale. So it's a fabulous thing."

Everything is funded by fees from the vendor side — a modest percentage of every transaction made, according to Williams. Participating music stores sell

directly to the customer without the need for any Xchange branding. Once they sign up with the platform, dealers can download free images and text to post software titles and vendor information on their websites. All they need to do is code the material and give it a spot on their homepage along with the rest of their Web content.

The Xchange system evolved in 2010 when Music Marketing came up with a cost-effective way to digitally distribute music software for Guitar Center. It worked, and as software sales increased for the retailer, more lines and titles were made available.

When other music retailers began to express interest in getting onboard the platform, Williams decided to make Xchange into a digital logistics system with the capacity to serve the entire music software market.

## PROBLEM SOLVED

Today, Xchange has a catalog of more than 1,500 titles of plug-ins, virtual instruments, recording software, education software and other digital music creation tools from companies like PreSonus, Ableton, Open Labs, Propellerhead and Cakewalk. It provides portals to more than 450 retailers, Sam Ash and Sweetwater among them, and internationally in countries including Japan, Australia and Germany.

Xchange reported an enormous growth rate of 254 percent for 2012-'13, and the current trend suggests another year of triple-digit growth, according to Williams. More than 17,000 licenses have been sold to date. Annual sales have reached seven figures and climbing.

Xchange does away with a problem that has plagued software resellers since the day the very first version upgrade was announced: short shelf life and the need to resuscitate stock. By cutting out all inventory-related costs and offering a massive selection of titles, it has begun to help retailers increase sales with a bare minimum investment.

"Software, which was really going down as a product that would be attractive to resellers, has really experienced an upsurge," Williams said. "It changes the game because at this point in time, software is a very profitable thing for the vendors and the resellers." **MI**



HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

# HAL LEONARD, SONY SIGN DISTRIBUTION DEAL

Hal Leonard has struck a deal with the Sony Pro Audio division to become the distributor for DWZ digital wireless systems to U.S. retailers.

Sony Pro Audio offers a wide range of audio solutions for the music industry. Products include digital wireless mics for vocals and guitar systems, handheld recorders, and its industry-standard line of headphones. Hal Leonard will initially distribute the new DWZ line of wireless systems.

“Sony has dominated the broadcast industry and now is bringing that expertise and technology to the music products channel,” said Brad Smith, Hal Leonard

senior sales and marketing manager. “We are excited to work closely with them to offer dealers these top-quality product lines.”

“Hal Leonard is able to reach those accounts and players that we want to reach,” said Jeanne Lewis, marketing manager for pro audio at Sony. “Their explosive growth into tech distribution is great timing for Sony, since we’ve recently developed new products that fit that customer profile well. We look forward to expanding our product selection through Hal Leonard as we get up and running.” [halleonard.com](http://halleonard.com)



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ALFRED MUSIC | CHARITY

## Alfred Donates to Operation Music Aid

Alfred Music recently donated more than \$1,300 in sheet music products to Operation Music Aid in support of their mission to secure musical instruments of all types in order to help aid wounded service men and women.

Alfred Music presented Operation Music Aid with a donation of Alfred Music's hit Ultimate Easy Play-Along series to match a guitar manufacturer's recent donation of 50 electric guitars. Additionally, Alfred Music sent compilation books from a variety of genres that would appeal to

drum, guitar and keyboard musicians. Alfred Music has been supporting Operation Music Aid with regular donations of sheet music for seven years, totaling more than \$25,000.

"Alfred Music is proud to continue to help United States military troops experience the joy of making music," said Ron Manus, Alfred Music CEO.

Operation Music Aid was founded to supply instruments to wounded military service personnel that are currently in military hospitals for extended care. [alfred.com](http://alfred.com)

SABIAN | ACQUISITION

## Sabian Acquires Billdidit

Sabian has announced that Billdidit is now part of the Sabian group of companies. The acquisition expands Sabian design capabilities and adds a significant portfolio of new music products.

"Billdidit has manufacturing and prototype capabilities designed specifically for the music industry," said Andy Zildjian, Sabian president. "In addition to their important contribution in developing new products, they are able to produce small volumes at very reasonable cost without the tooling charges, high volume commitment, and extremely long lead times that are typical of production overseas."

"We are making it easy and economical to develop products right here in North America," said Joe Menchefski, Billdidit president. "For a company of our size, the breadth of our artist roster is testament to the appeal of our products to top artists." [sabian.com](http://sabian.com)

UNIVERSAL AUDIO | PARTNERSHIP

## UA, TC PARTNER UP

Universal Audio has welcomed TC Electronic as a direct developer for the UAD Powered Plug-Ins platform. This partnership will bring TC Electronic's tools for music production to users of Universal Audio's UAD-2 DSP Accelerators and Apollo audio interfaces.



"We are excited to bring our products to the vibrant and growing UAD platform," said Thomas Valter, vice president of business management, broadcast and production for TC Electronic. [uaudio.com/apollo](http://uaudio.com/apollo)

MUSEUM OF MAKING MUSIC | OPENING

## BANJO EXHIBIT HITS MUSEUM OF MAKING MUSIC

The NAMM Museum of Making Music has introduced its latest exhibit, "The Banjo: A New Day for an Old Instrument." The exhibit features the story of the instrument's path to stardom, and boasts support of NAMM-member companies and individuals. The exhibit incorporates artifacts, hands-on displays, information,

and examples of custom, vintage, and one-of-a-kind instruments — many of which were contributed by NAMM members.

"Special exhibitions are one way in which the NAMM Museum of Making Music explores and celebrates key industry stories and shares them with a broad audience," said Carolyn Grant, museum director. "The

most recent exhibition explores not only the history of the banjo but also its current popularity. It is because of the generosity and enthusiasm of NAMM members that we were able to develop it so fully with information, graphics and a display of more than 80 historic and modern-day instruments." [museumofmakingmusic.com](http://museumofmakingmusic.com)



## APPOINTMENTS



Jeff Schroedl

### HAL LEONARD NAMES SCHROEDL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Hal Leonard has promoted Jeff Schroedl to executive vice president. In this expanded role, Schroedl will oversee all product development in the company's Milwaukee headquarters. "Jeff's a proven leader with an outstanding reputation both inside and outside the company," said Hal Leonard President Larry Morton.

After freelancing as a music transcriber

for the company, Schroedl joined Hal Leonard in 1994 as a guitar editor. He took on more responsibilities along the way, including a stint as editor-in-chief of the company's *Guitar One* magazine, as well as author of several instructional books.

He was appointed vice president of pop and standard publications in 2000. [halleonard.com](http://halleonard.com)

**Jupiter Band** has added John Richardson to its brand management team as a woodwind brand manager.

Iain Wilson has been named international sales manager for **Fishman**.

**Martin Audio** has named Robin Dibble applications engineer to support the company's consistent

sales growth and further its credentials within the install space.

**D'Addario** has announced a series of new appointments, including Walter Gross as digital marketing director and Nick Barbieri as a regional sales manager. The company has also named Brandon Medici to the newly created position

of business development specialist.

**St. Louis Music** has named Craig Denny the vice president of band and has appointed Patrick Stevenson senior vice president of sales.

Ignazio Vagnone has joined **PreSonus** as a sales manager for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

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## Note From Joe

# So What's the Deal With Summer NAMM?

It's a fair question. After all these years, through changes in technology, communication and how we do business (not to mention that other *big* show in Anaheim), some industry pundits ask: *Why are we still hosting a show like Summer NAMM?*

To us, it's simple. The NAMM Members who find this show critically important to their success will do whatever it takes—long-distance driving, week-long camping, just about anything—to be there and join their friends for this intimate midyear gathering packed with opportunity.

For this reason, we strive to set up a show that works for them. By its very nature, Summer NAMM is better at balancing business, networking, personal development and, yes, fun. It's smaller, allowing for more conversations and meetings with people that you can't really get time with anywhere else. The education is second-to-none, with experts presenting ideas that really inspire and change the way people do business.

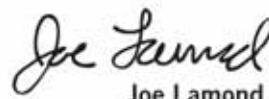
Plus, the events and entertainment planned by NAMM and our exhibitors are some of the most exclusive experiences in our industry. There are one-of-a-kind "you had to be there" moments such as last year's power-packed "Insight" panel with industry icons, hosted by Vince Gill, or the pride and excitement seen on stage at our annual Top 100 Dealer Awards gala, where we recognized our best in retail. And the experience certainly doesn't stop when the show closes for the day.

That brings up Nashville itself, with its honky-tonk bars, historical venues, Music Row studios and publishing houses. There's live music around every corner, as well as eclectic restaurants serving some of the most incredible food found anywhere. Nashville was even noted as "one of the top destinations to visit in 2014" by *Condé Nast Traveler*.

And with the show now located in the beautiful Music City Center—one of the best buildings to hold a trade show in the country, maybe even in the world—Summer NAMM has taken on a whole new look and feel. We can't imagine a better place to bring our show, our exhibitors, our attendees and our creative minds.

So that's why, after all these years, we've stuck it out and continue to fight for Summer NAMM. We believe it's important for that vital segment of our industry—the community music dealers—and the suppliers who support them. It's not for everyone, but for those who make the trip, we promise to continue pulling together the events, the education and the resources to bring you the very best show we can.

Still on the fence? Come to Nashville this July and experience the revitalized energy of Summer NAMM for yourself—you won't regret it!



Joe Lamond  
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



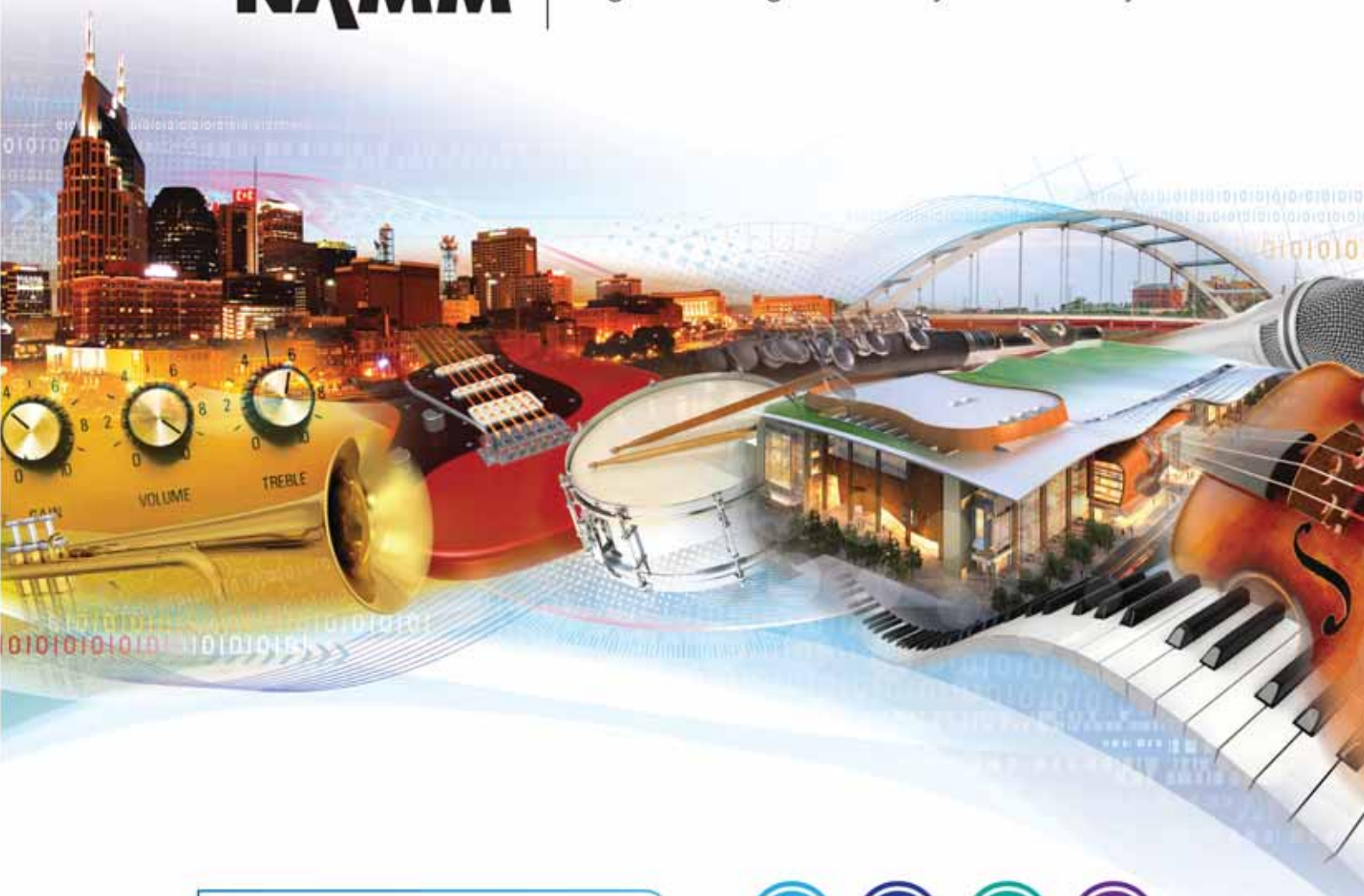
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# IDEAS

Inside**IDEAS** > The Retail Doctor Page 30 > The Customer Whisperer Page 32

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLIOM

## CHANGE, OR ELSE!

The longer you've been in business, the more likely you're set in your ways. And if you've been successful in that time, you can multiply the effect. Call it inertia or apathy or arrogance or laziness or just plain not knowing better, but there seems to be some sort of blindness that comes the result of your time in business. Let me explain using my own lessons learned as an example and see if you can relate.

My former company, Medley Music, was started by my parents back in the 1950s. With stars in their eyes, they did whatever it took to succeed. Working long, crazy hours, at times they survived on their wits alone. Clearly, ours was a case of "if at first you don't succeed, try, try again." And since success was not immediate, they experimented and constantly tried new things in an attempt to gain a firm footing.

And then a funny thing happened: the place actually started to make money. Was it because of a brilliantly designed business plan? Had their persistence finally paid off? Or was it a lucky Sunday night 50



**'What worked yesterday is probably barely working today and has a strong probability of being ineffective in the future.'**

years ago when the Beatles first appeared on "The Ed Sullivan Show?" That single performance brought scores of new customers to our front door with their wallets open.

Next up was a string of innovative keyboards starting with

MiniMoogs, ARP Odysseys — all leading up to the Yamaha DX7. I don't think anyone had seen such a successful product, and no one has since. It was practically a license to print money.

### DON'T REST ON YOUR LAURELS

It all sounds like quite a nice success story so far, doesn't it? But here's the bad news. These great successes I enjoyed did nothing but train me to be on the lookout for the next hot product. But when hot products stopped driving the market, I was in trouble.

Having success is like an addictive drug — the more you have, the more blinded you become. I learned through failure that success doesn't always breeds success. In reality, what worked for you yesterday is probably barely working for you today and has a strong probability of being ineffective in the future.

Do you ever find yourself saying, "If it ain't broke, I'm not going to fix it?" The problem with that mentality is that the market is changing around you. If you stubbornly stick to what worked before, you'll be ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of a rapidly chang-

ing marketplace. For instance, thinking that I had a formula that people loved, I found myself catering to a progressively older clientele. What's the problem with that? Death! Your customer base starts to dwindle with the passage of time. Meanwhile, younger customers flock to your competitors who better understand what they want to buy, how they want to buy it, and what type of sales approach works on them. If you're not constantly searching for ways of reaching new customers, you are plotting a course towards irrelevance.

But what if you are the dealer that is at the cutting edge? I warn you: Be cautious of resting on your laurels. Your customers will mature and their expectations will shift. And while that's happening, new generations will be right behind them with a whole new set of needs. Don't let success lull you to sleep. Let it serve as a sign of the hard work that lies ahead in order to maintain success. **MI**

Gerson Rosenbloom is the vice president of strategic management at Sweetwater Sound, the former president of Medley Music, and a past NAMM chairman. Email him at: [gersonmusicinc@gmail.com](mailto:gersonmusicinc@gmail.com).

THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

# IDM Moves To May

For those of you not familiar, the Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) is the percussion industry's only trade organization. It's made up of drum and percussion manufacturers, suppliers, and dealers and governed by a board of four executives from a representative group of its members and assisted by a group of advisory board members of which I am one. The mission of PMC is to promote the many benefits of drumming to the public.



## International Drum Month makes a move. Are you ready?

One of the PMC's core campaigns is International Drum Month (IDM). While previously celebrated in November, PMC has decided to relaunch and revise the IDM program following feedback from PMC members and requests from music retailers across the country. Beginning this month, the new IDM will be celebrated annually in May, offering a gateway for all retailers to get involved in more PMC programs that extend throughout the summer months.

For the redesigned IDM launch, the PMC will target young and diverse audiences to get them interested in drumming as a creative and healthy lifestyle activity. The new program will reach beyond the music industry through targeted Internet marketing to create excitement for drumming.

### PROMOTE IDM IN YOUR STORE

Although the PMC will contact dealers about participating and welcomes retailers to contact the organization, retailers can get a jump on the IDM push by offering in-store specials and promotions.

In the past, retailers have offered specific discounts on merchandise made by PMC member firms. A few years ago, one Midwestern retailer offered a contest that picked the winner from a group that played the worst "first-ever drum solo" and the winner was awarded a month of free drum lessons along with sticks, practice pad, etc. Pump up store traffic by offering workshops on tuning drums, selecting the proper drum set, drumsticks, or hand drum.

The MI industry faces the same hurdles as any other industry

— growing market share. And PMC programs serve as a vehicle for the drum and percussion industry to make new players.

When I attended Metallica's Orion festival a few years ago I loved seeing the mash up of custom motorcycle and car shows, motorcycle stunt riders and all kinds of lifestyle aspects beside the music and bands.

I heard one guy that said he had always loved motorcycles, but never really thought of actually buying one before the festival. But that afternoon he decided to head to a Harley dealer and buy a bike. It made me consider how many people came for the music but were converted to skaters, bikers or car enthusiasts after the experience. The music brought us but the festival converted us to other lifestyle activities.

While we can continue to manufacture new products, we need new people to start playing those products, and the PMC offers programs geared towards converting the public into the percussionists of tomorrow. If we get one person who has only thought about playing drums to go out and buy a kit, then we have succeeded. **MI**

Billy Cuthrell owns and operates Progressive Music Center in Raleigh, N.C.





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THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

# Break Conventions

**H**indsight is 20/20 may be the most common cliché in the business world. We each have decisions we would have made differently if we hadn't followed the "conventional wisdom." Conventional wisdom is just an idea that people generally believe to be true. Of course, what people believe to be true is constantly changing. Our hindsight keeps confirming that conventional wisdom is often wrong, yet we blindly accept in the present.



**'Seeing through the conventional wisdom and becoming a better decision maker is challenging, but possible.'**

When a guitar department opened in my dad's music store in 1965, the Fender Jazzmaster and Jaguar were the top of the line guitars the Ventures and the Beach Boys played. The Strat and Telecaster were the guitars of old guys like Buck Owens and Buddy Holly. That was the conventional wisdom until Eric and Jimi picked up Strats and George was seen playing a rosewood Tele in the "Let It Be" video about five years later. Today, hardly anyone but Elvis Costello plays a Jazzmaster, but everybody has at least one Strat.

From the '50s to the '80s, church committees and school boards clung to the conventional wisdom and bid out the venerable Baldwin 246 school studio piano, until the upstart Yamaha P2/202 displaced it. It was hard to get them to even consider Kimball or Wur-

litzer studios. Actually, in the mid-70s, the conventional wisdom was that Japanese or Korean manufacturers would overtake the piano and guitar industries. Nobody had a clue that Indonesia and China would become our largest suppliers.

Recently, we had five of those old pianos in our used department at the same time. The Kimball was better than either the Baldwin or the Yamaha. We were surprised that an obscure experimental Currier, with neither a

plate nor posts — rejected en masse at the time — out performed them all; even the Steinway 1098. Clearly, the conventional wisdom had school pianos wrong.

## RESISTING THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE

Early in the '80s optimists thought cheap portable keyboards would create a new generation of pianists. By 1990, conventional wisdom had school music dead. Five years later, Mars

Music threatened the existence of independent MI merchants. Armageddon seemed on the horizon in 2005 when Guitar Hero poised to hijack a generation of potential guitarists. Like the Y2K scare, all these notions evaporated.

The conventional wisdom held it impossible a haberdasher, a Catholic, a peanut farmer, an actor, an African American or a woman could be elected President. Strangely enough, conventional wisdom still holds hope for time travel and flying cars.

There are economic consequences for dealers who succumb to the conventional wisdom and follow the path of least resistance when merchandising. Invariably, products favored by the conventional wisdom retail at low margin because they are widely distributed and because manufacturers are smart enough to keep the lions share of the profit for themselves. They call it brand equity.

How is it that we are so seduced by the group think of our time, and how can we make smarter decisions and avoid costly or foolish errors based on conventional wisdom?

The seduction breeds in repetition and ferments conformity. If we see or hear an idea often enough we are naturally inclined to accept it, especially in the absence of conflicting information. If we hear it repeated by



those we respect, the idea gains credibility.

By second grade most of us had learned to conform; to get along ... go along. Besides, what is to be gained by challenging the status quo?

If all our friends liked the Monkees better than the Stones, it was easier to just suck it up and listen to the Monkees. One person doesn't have much influence on the conventional wisdom. But just stepping back, thinking the subject through and challenging an idea might be all you need to escape its seduction.

#### CHALLENGE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Seeing through the conventional wisdom and becoming a better decision maker is challenging, but possible. Of the countless volumes written on the subject, three books stand out:

- *Gut Feelings: Short Cuts to Better Decision Making* by Gerd Gigerenzer proves that in complex matters our gut feeling (or intuition) is actually more reliable than our analytical skills. Most of us hate to admit this because we think we are so damn smart. That is, we prefer to rely on the analysis of our upper brain. Gut feelings are the result of our lower brain factoring all the information we have acquired on a subject, filtering it through our personal biases and preferences producing an instant inclination. All of us have said, "I should have just followed my gut," at some point or another.

- Joseph T. Hallinan makes a big mistake in his book *Why We Make Mistakes* by telling us in the first few pages that we make mistakes because we are really good at BS-ing ourselves — making the purchase of the book unnecessary. Stop BS-ing yourself. Save it for your customers.

- Jonah Lehrer dissects the decision making process in *How We Decide*. In the end, great decision making is the exact opposite of BS-ing ourselves. Great decision makers are always seeking contrary evidence. Most of us actively seek conformation. We like having our prejudices and preconceived ideas re-enforced. Our middle brain secretes a little shot of the happiness hormone dopamine every time conformation occurs. Looking for contrary evidence is like arguing with your Monkee loving friends. It is no fun, and there is no dopamine. Challenging your ideas is the only way to really test them. In the process you will achieve confidence that

you are right or you will be forced to re-examine something that needs re-examining. That is how you get to a better decision.

A few weeks ago I saw my favorite pianist Lang Lang, a 32-year-old Chinese superstar at Artis Naples near my home. I gained admission to the concert with tickets purchased online, drove to the theatre in an electric car and heard the performance perfectly through nearly invisible hearing aids. At some point, the conventional wisdom had all of those circumstances near implausible.

We see today's world filtered through the conventional wisdom of our time. Someday, we will look back on 2014 with 20/20 hindsight. Maybe with regret, maybe with smug conviction. Before you act on the conventional wisdom, step back, challenge your assumptions, seek contrary evidence, listen to your gut — and for heaven's sake stop BS-ing yourself. **MI**

Greg Billings whispers to customers at the Steinway Piano Gallery in Naples, Fla. He welcomes questions and comments at [greg@steinwaynaples.com](mailto:greg@steinwaynaples.com).

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# A

# LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA ON OBAMACARE

by Alan Friedman

Dear President Obama,

Hi. It's your buddy here, Alan Friedman. You may not remember me (mostly because we've never met), but I voted for you in the last two elections. I liked what you stood for and the changes you promised to make during the eight years I helped put and keep you in the office of President of the United States.

The reason why I'm writing you is because (1) I write business articles for a progressive music retailing magazine called *Music Inc.* and they asked me if I would write an article on the still relatively new legislation called the Affordable Care Act a.k.a. ObamaCare, which on March 31, just closed its first open enrollment period; (2) I turned 58 earlier this year and am getting to the age where I no longer worry about what people think of me ... plus no one listens to me anyway; and (3) I wanted to challenge myself to write you a provocative but "even-handed" letter on this highly debated topic that's extremely important to all Americans.

I thought I'd start off with the ACA's undisputable facts and beautiful benefits, which I'm totally giving you props for. The ACA was signed into law by you on March 23, 2010 and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court on June 28, 2012. Its goal is to reform the health care industry by giving more Americans access to affordable, quality health insurance, and to reduce the growth in health-care spending in the United States. The ACA expands the affordability, quality and availability of private and public health insurance through consumer protections, regulations, subsidies, taxes, insurance exchanges and other reforms. It does not replace private insurance, Medicare or Medicaid, nor does it regulate our health care system. Instead, it regulates health insurance and some of the worst practices found in the health care industry.

The ACA offers a number of new benefits, rights and protections. As I understand it, here are some details on five major benefits of the ACA:

**1.) Access to Affordable, Quality Health Insurance.** The ACA has the potential to provide coverage to more than 40 million uninsured Americans. Many

of the uninsured will gain affordable, quality insurance via the online health insurance exchange or "marketplace." In its first open enrollment period from Oct. 1, 2013–March 31, 2014, 7.1 million Americans enrolled using this marketplace. These previously uninsured Americans have often used the hospital emergency room as their primary care physician which increases healthcare costs for everyone.

**2.) New Health Care Benefits.** The ACA gives Americans access to hundreds of new health care benefits, as well as 47 million women access to women's health services. New health plans include preventive and wellness services, which lower health care costs by treating diseases before they reach an expensive crisis. Other benefits are: no out-of-pocket costs for preventative healthcare services, no denial of coverage for pre-existing conditions, no annual or lifetime limits on coverage, children can stay on their parent's plans up to age 26, and the FDA can approve more generic drugs.

**3.) Benefits to Low Income Americans and Senior Citizens.** Most low income Americans, especially those without insurance, will see nothing but benefits from the ACA. For people who can't afford health insurance, the federal government will pay the states to add them to Medicaid, which could expand eligibility to 15 million previously uninsured low-income individuals and families. The ACA also includes unprecedented reforms to Medicare, including expanding benefits and coverage options.

**4.) Consumer Protection for Insured Americans.** The ACA regulates the insurance industry with "rate reviews," enacts the "80/20" rule that makes health insurance providers spend at least 80 percent of their income on health and marketing expenses or



be subject to premium rebates, and eliminates the ability for insurance companies to deny coverage for being sick or having a pre-existing condition.

**5.) Improved Health Care Quality.** The ACA incorporates a system where doctors and hospitals will be rewarded for providing quality care, instead of being rewarded for the quantity of healthcare services. Though sometimes regarded as a “detriment” of the ACA, having federal oversight on a reform of this size is mandatory to ensure the program works. It’s important to note that the ACA doesn’t ration healthcare, rather it regulates the health insurance industry which has been rationing our health care for years.

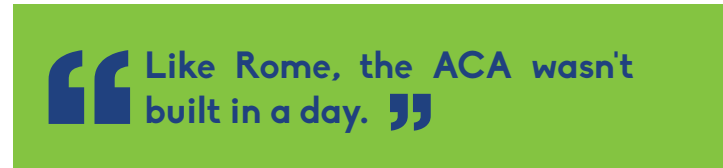
Mr. President, while I’m an accountant by trade, I am also a musician, which is an art-form filled with emotion and driven by those who usually possess a deep sense of caring and sensitivity towards one another. So it should come as no surprise to you that most musicians and like-minded caring Americans embrace the humanitarian side of the ACA. But as I just mentioned, I am also an accountant. I operate in a world that unfortunately places an ultra-high value on money and wealth, and has an insatiable hatred of taxes and the IRS. Frankly, I am appalled by the uncharitable behavior of many wealthy citizens, and the short-sighted “my money is more important than helping those in need” mantra of many Americans.

But I also empathize with those law-abiding Americans who oppose tax hikes and have been subject to unwarranted intrusive IRS audits. When many American taxpayers refuse to pay their fair share of tax by lying on their tax returns, coupled with the government’s outrageous spending habits, it’s hard to argue with those tax-law-abiding Americans who oppose tax hikes.

So, Mr. President, if you’re going to have us partially pay for the ACA through increases in tax revenue, then I feel justified in asking for: (a) fairer tax laws and greater simplicity in our tax code, (b) more vigorous and targeted IRS audit efforts to go after those not paying taxes instead of those who are, and (c) an intelligent, transparent and accountable policy of government spending on the things that matter most instead of frivolous spending. While you’re at it, enact some tort reform to make losers of lawsuits pay the entire cost of those lawsuits, and please do something to force the state governments to get their act together by making all retailers collect their home state’s sales tax on

all taxable transactions and let the state governments figure out how to split up the billions in new sales tax revenue. With all that new tax revenue and savings in litigation costs, businesses will have more net taxable revenue to pay more federal tax. With that new tax revenue, maybe you can either reduce tax rates or stop borrowing money. Trust me when I tell you this — no business, and certainly not even the U.S. government, can borrow its way out of the kind of fiscal mess we’re in. By doing some or all of the above, you’ll have a plenty of money to fix these problems. The only downside is you’ll have to create a few more jobs for all of the unemployed lawyers. Oh well.

Like Rome, the ACA wasn’t built in a day. I understand it’s wrought with complicated rules and policies buried in 11,000-plus pages of regulations. Even though the ACA will ultimately do a lot of very good things, it’s created some unintended hurtful consequences for some Americans. The ACA has financially hurt some small businesses, has had a significant negative effect on insurance premiums, and has made reforms that hurt some medical industries and



their workers. And did I mention the faulty launch of the ACA’s enrollment website? Really, Mr. President, I could have had my high school computer nerd neighbor build a functioning ACA enrollment website in less time and for far less dollars than the government spent. I just wish someone had put a little more thought into avoiding or minimizing the following five problems and unintended disappointments of the ACA:

**1.) Unexpected Cancellation of Existing Health Insurance Plans.** There are more than 15 million people who currently buy their own private health insurance. Many had their plans cancelled by their insurance companies because it didn’t meet the 10 essential health benefits dictated by the ACA. The outrage that ensued prompted your administration to switch its stance in early March, letting people keep their plans that don’t comply for another two years. However, the cost of replacement insurance may be higher because the new insurance plans provide a wider range of benefits. On a personal note, my cousin sought and obtained quality healthcare services for breast cancer

from Johns Hopkins Hospital a few years ago. She just found out her insurance plan no longer exists (for reasons mentioned above), and her new plan does not cover what is now considered “out of network” care from Johns Hopkins Hospital. Not good.

### 2.) A Bad Reaction to a New Business Cost.

Starting in 2015, any U.S. company who has more than 50 full-time employees will now have to choose to either insure full-time workers or pay a penalty. To avoid this, some businesses will cut employee hours or will stop hiring. While the penalty isn't paid for your first 30 workers and many businesses will pass the extra cost onto their customers, cutting the workforce hurts our economy and reduces tax revenue. Many businesses will find it more cost-effective to pay the penalty and let their employees purchase their own insurance plans on the exchanges.

**3.) Rising Insurance Premiums.** The ACA itself doesn't raise premiums. In fact, it reforms the insurance industry by finding ways to drive down costs, make the quality of insurance better, and prevent insurance company abuse. Unfortunately, many provisions of the ACA that offer protections to consumers don't go into law until this year. In the meantime, premium rates have risen at alarming rates and the ACA doesn't offer a protection beyond letting states enact provisions against price gouging. While many states are enforcing this, other states aren't. Frankly, we've seen an ACA causing upward “adjustment” to health insurance premiums for many of our clients, ranging from a 20-percent to more than 60-percent increase over the prior year's premiums.

**4.) The Federal Cost of the ACA.** The Congressional Budget Office projects the ACA to cost \$1.1 trillion through 2021. In order for the program to work as intended this is going to including funding from both the taxpayers and the states. While the CBO also projected the ACA to generate an approximate \$143 billion dollar reduction in the federal deficit over the next decade, overall health care costs may rise in the short-term because of the increase in preventative care. These additional tests will lead to higher medical spending. Of course, health insurance companies stand to make billions of dollars (despite a loss of profit per plan) because they will be insuring millions of new Americans.

**5.) Penalties With Unintended Outcomes.** To make an individual insurance market work, a significant percentage of young, healthy people (age 18-34) need to pay into the system to effectively subsidize the older enrollees (age 50-64) who, on average, are less healthy than the younger group. Those who didn't purchase insurance by March 31, 2014, and don't

qualify for Medicaid, will be assessed a penalty tax of \$95 (or 1 percent of income, whichever is higher) in 2014, \$325 (or 2 percent of income) in 2015, and \$695 (or 2.5 percent of income) in 2016. The worst-case scenario for the ACA would be if not enough healthy people sign up, leaving insurance companies with mostly high-cost customers on their plans resulting in higher premiums threatening the long-term viability of the ACA. I suspect future increases in penalty amounts may be implemented to reverse any trend of non-enrollment.

Mr. President, let's get real. The ACA was highly controversial right from the start. That's partly because the act is so complex that most people don't fully understand it and anyone can easily pick out whichever facts support their points of view. Furthermore, the advantages will mostly benefit those who currently don't have health insurance, whether because of cost, employment status or pre-existing health conditions. The disadvantages will affect those individuals who pay more tax and those businesses willing to incur higher operating costs. The truthful answer to the million-dollar question “Is ObamaCare a good thing?” is “It depends on who you are, how old you are, who you work for, and how much money you earn.”

We all know fixing ACA problems isn't as simple as just “repealing” the ACA. Doing away with the ACA is an action that would cost taxpayers billions of dollars, given the investment of time and money we've already made as a country to understand and abide by the ACA. Plus, dealing with the upsides and downsides of this new law is already built into the bill via oversight committees and other forward-thinking provisions.

With that said, I urge you to stay on top of this important legislation and address all known problems without delay to achieve the ACA's intended goals. I believe your heart was in the right place when you pushed through this ground-breaking bill. Don't be swayed off your path by the naysayers in getting this right.

BTW, when you're out of office in a couple of years, ring me up and we'll hire you to help prepare tax returns during tax season. That work experience, coupled with the federal minimum wage (a whole other issue) we'll pay you, will give you some new insight into the woes of our country that need fixing.

Respectfully yours,  
Alan M. Friedman, taxpayer

Alan Friedman, CPA, provides accounting and financial services to music industry clients. Visit his website at [fkco.com](http://fkco.com).



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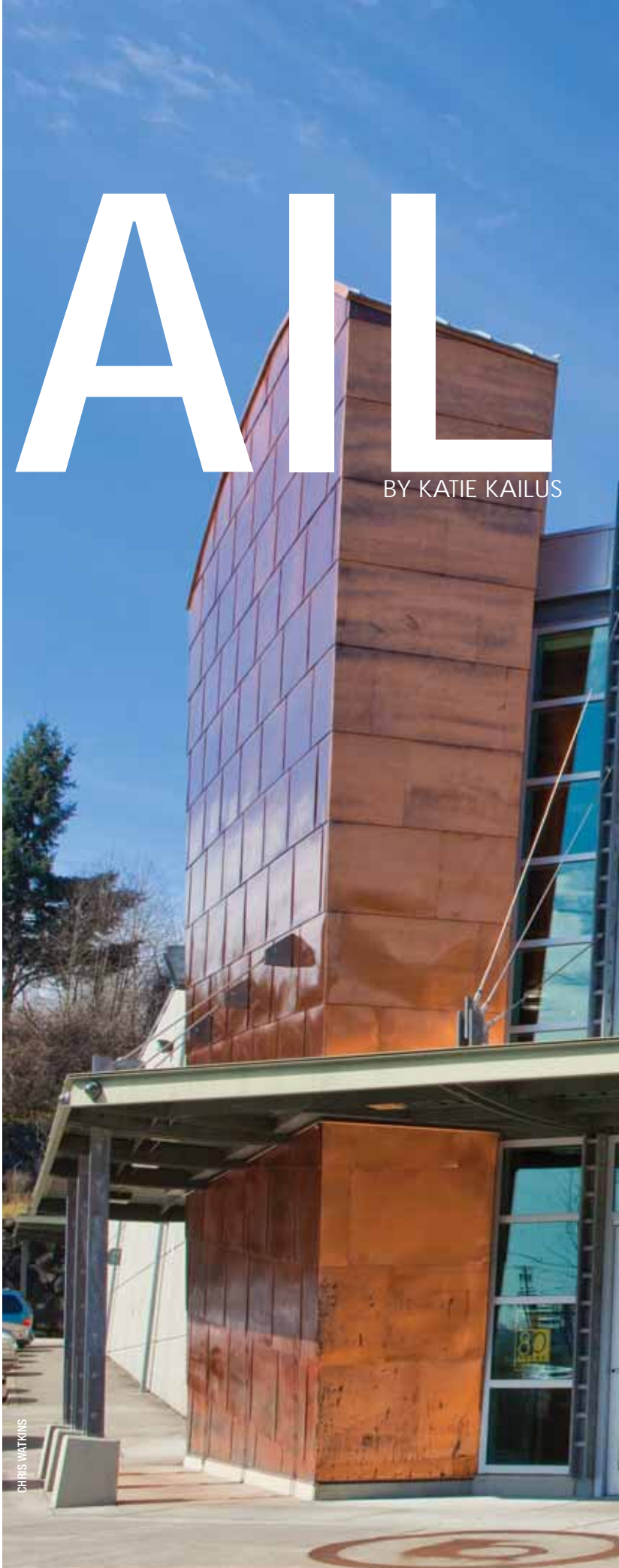
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# HANDS-ON RETAIL

# TAIL

BY KATIE KAILUS

HOW  
TED BROWN  
MUSIC  
USES  
INNOVATIVE  
PROGRAMS AND  
ITS OWN  
NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
TO FORM DEEP  
CONNECTIONS IN  
ITS COMMUNITY



CHRIS WATKINS





**T**wo students have been standing for almost 33 hours straight, hungry, thirsty and surviving only on a handful of 10 minute breaks and the encouragement of their loved ones.

No, this isn't a scene out of CBS' "Survivor" game show.

This is Ted Brown Music's annual Hands-On Instrument Contest, a competition that offers students the chance to win the band or orchestral instrument of their choice by standing with their hands on a trumpet case without removing them for as long as they can with only one 10-minute break every six hours.

## HANDS-ON RETAIL

“We have had contestants drive from as far as two hours away — it’s a big draw,” said Whitney Brown Grisaffi, president of the five-store, full-line retailer based in Tacoma, Wash., where the contest is held.

It’s no surprise the event garners local media attention, but Grisaffi said the best part is actually the bond the students and their parents make during the competition — all brought to them by Ted Brown Music.

“It’s good PR with our school partners, customers and especially with the families of the contestants,” Grisaffi said. “We have parents come and thank us for putting on the contest because it’s a great bonding time for the parents and kids, and it’s great because Ted Brown Music was able to create that. And we love it because we get great bonding time with our customers. The parents talk to us about their kids, and the kids talk to us about their musical goals. It helps us better serve them.”

## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

**B**uzzworthy contests aside, another way Ted Brown Music (TBM) gets the word out about its store is through its involvement in its community.

“Tacoma is the biggest small town around,” Grisaffi said. “We might not be unique in saying that, but it’s a very common saying because you know somebody who knows somebody else and you are only one person away from knowing everybody. So participating on a board of directors or during a street fair gets the word out about the store. The idea is to get people talking about us.”

TBM also gets the community talking by offering many musical opportunities for lower income families through its non-profit organization, Ted Brown Music Outreach.

“We think it’s very important to be involved and give back to the community in which we live,” said Stephanie Brown Howe, vice president of Ted Brown Music and executive director of Ted Brown Music Outreach.

One of the major facets of the outreach organization is its instrument donation program, which fixes up instruments, and gives them to students who can’t afford them. Ninety percent of all instruments are do-

nated by customers, and cash donations are used to purchase new smaller instruments as well. Grisaffi said the program gets instruments in the hands of students who can’t afford next month’s instrument rent — it’s one more way to keep people talking about the store.

“A woman came in just last week, and she needed a clarinet,” Grisaffi said. “She was renting from us, but she couldn’t afford it, so she was coming to return it. It was proposed to her that she apply for one through Ted Brown Music Outreach and when she was presented with one she burst into tears because she was afraid that she would have to pull her child out of the music program.”

Grisaffi said its stories such as these that have kept the donation program going strong for seven years. Last year alone, TBM Outreach gave away 130 instruments.

“It resonates so well with people that we are not just here as a business taking money,” said Anthony Myers, marketing manager for Ted Brown. “We are out there in the community, and it’s unbelievable the response we get any time we post a photo of a child receiving an instrument. Some of the photos get up to 500 likes [on Facebook].”

In addition to donating instruments, Ted Brown Music Outreach offers many of its programs at discounted prices if a family can prove the need. Programs available for scholarship include Teddie Bear Music, Jazz Combo Class and the store’s annual Live it OutLoud Rock Camp — which, last

summer, brought in about 70 kids making up 13 bands.

Incorporating Live it OutLoud in the community is also important to TBM. All bands in the camp play three smaller concerts during street fairs and events around town before taking the main stage at the end of the eight-week program a larger venue in Tacoma. TBM also partners with its local parks and recreational center to promote its programs.

“Students can register for our exploration camps through Metro Parks,” Howe said. “We seem to be the most popular here in Tacoma. Metro Parks runs a few music camps, but they have cancelled most of them because they can’t get the students to show up whereas we get almost a full load with every class.”

Grisaffi said that since Ted Brown Music Outreach is a 501c3 non-profit organization, the schools let them advertise their store



Stephanie Brown Howe and Whitney Brown Grisaffi



programs in a way that most stores can't.

"We can promote the discounted programs within a school district, where as a for-profit entity we couldn't do that," she said.

## THE EVER-CHANGING BUSINESS MODEL

Ted Brown Music has been a staple in Tacoma since 1931. Ted Brown — the store's founder and Whitney and Stephanie's grandfather — was in charge of liquidating a Sherman Clay piano store, but decided instead to buy the store. However, when World War II began and there were no more instruments to sell, Brown was forced to re-evaluate his business model. He began selling anything he could get his hands on, including toys. This continued as the market changed throughout the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

"We starting carrying radios and eventually TVs, stereos and records," Howe said.

Today, TBM is a full-line MI dealer, carrying everything but acoustic pianos. (Despite the fact that its founding roots were in acoustic piano sales, the store now only stocks digital pianos and keyboards.) The lesson program is 800 students strong across all five stores with 78 teachers — 19 of which are employees of the store. Lessons are provided, as Grisaffi puts it, on everything "from harp to harmonica — big to small."

The store also offers an extensive repair shop and its rental program includes seven full-time educational reps that work in 20 to 30 school districts in Washington state and a few in Oregon.

However, despite the size of the store today, Ted Brown Music continues to adapt its business model to keep up with the ever-changing market.

"It speaks well of the store that we are not so ingrained in what we started with that we are not not willing to change," Howe said.

TBM recently got into the school concert attire business by hiring on a local tuxedo store owner who had just closed down his shop. Now, Ted Brown Music can offer schools not only the instruments its students play, but also the clothes the students wear when they play them, includ-

ing tuxedo shirts, jackets, pants, dresses, cummerbunds and shoes.

"It's great because our guy uses his expertise and goes out and measures the kids to make sure that if they are going to get concert attire they are going to get the right fit," Grisaffi said. "That's a really cool, different thing to be offering and it

makes our teachers go, 'Oh, wow,' because again it is another opportunity for us to be a resource for them.

"We are nimble, and we're not afraid to experiment and try new things. We don't have to go with the cookie cutter. We don't have to do that. We think that gives us a competitive edge." **MI**

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# WALK THROUGH

Ted Brown Music's Tacoma location is 35,000 square feet and boasts 20 lesson studios, a group practice space, and a performance stage that seats more than 100. Here's a quick glance into the retailer's flagship store.



## LESSON ROOM

Drum studios are located towards the back of the lesson corridor to abate some of the noise and all rooms are sound-proofed. A larger classroom is used for group classes and sometimes even birthday parties that include karaoke.



## DRUMS & PERCUSSION

The drum department boasts drum kits and world percussion on display as well as a wall of cymbals and a cymbal try-out space. It showcases its cymbal selection with specialty track lighting.



## ACOUSTIC ROOM

While TBM is known for its large selection of school music instruments, it decided to devote an entire room to acoustic guitars when it moved into this Tacoma space 13 years ago.

"It's old hat now, but when we first moved in it was unusual to have [an acoustic room], but we wanted to make sure that no matter what a customer plays, they are able to find exactly what they are looking for," Grisaffi said.



➤ **MAIN SHOWROOM**

An open floorplan allows for an easy flow of traffic between the products and the lesson rooms located towards the back of the store. By keeping the main showroom open, Grisaffi said they are “really aiming for that ‘wow’ factor.”



**AUDIO & PIANOS** ⌚

Everything in the audio section is on rollers allowing it to be pushed to the side so chairs can be set up for performances. Because the stage is considered temporary and made up of products that are sold in store, TBM can have the in store stage without having to acquire extra permits.

*Thanks to everyone in the industry for 5 incredible years of quiet practice, stage monitoring, and great recording!*



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# ▶▶ WHAT TO STOCK NOW

Just like music itself, the hottest gear is always changing. *Music Inc.* asked retail experts from six MI categories to weigh in on what's selling well, what's trending the strongest, and what you should be stocking your shelves with today. Here's what they said.

## GUITARS

### BRIAN DOUGLAS

Cream City Music  
Brookfield, Wis.



nies create compelling American built instruments that hit that \$499-\$699 price point? I'd love to think so. Based on the success we've had selling through those products, there is a clear customer segment that is hungry for it and our shop would continue to invest in it so we could reach that consumer.

Based on the success of Cream City Music in 2013 and what we've seen in just the first two months of 2014, in addition to discussions with other store owners, we're seeing the industry bounce back. People are buying again with enthusiasm and confidence.

#### ▶▶ WHAT'S SELLING?

At the moment our top selling categories are guitars and effects. We're seeing a high degree of sell through with our core lines such as Gibson, Gretsch, Fender and Martin. Solid body electrics are moving really well for us at the moment. We've also seen exceptional growth in our pedal effect sales. Some of our best sellers are Martin's 000-15SM and Gibson's 2014 selection of entry-mid level price point instruments.

In this post-recession economy our customer base is more conscious to what constitutes a great deal and being able to get an American-made guitar for such reasonable pricing has really struck a chord.

#### ▶▶ HOW DO YOU MERCHANDISE THESE PRODUCTS?

We stick with simple retail principles. A clean showroom, keep the guitars polished

and tuned, and organize them by manufacturer, model, and price point. I firmly believe that it is paramount to make buying easy for our retail customer. With logical organization of the gear the customer can experience everything a line has to offer from top to bottom, it makes it easy for my sales team to connect people with exactly what they need.

#### ▶▶ WHO'S THE CUSTOMER?

I find that everyone from the beginner to the mid-level player is finding a bond with those pieces. Not surprisingly, a lot of our pro-level clients have gotten into the inexpensive 2014 Gibson solidbodies because they are perfect for modding.

#### ▶▶ WHERE DO YOU SEE THIS TREND HEADING?

That is a great question and it truly remains to be seen. Can more more compa-



Martin's 000-15SM



# AUDIO

## ALAN MOON

Front End Audio  
Columbia, S.C.

### ▶▶ WHAT'S SELLING?

Anything that has to do with upgrading somebody's capabilities and the quality of their results. Honestly, what's selling well is still the same old product categories that we are known for: microphones, preamplifiers, compressors, equalizers, AD/DA converters, DAW software, plug-ins, acoustic products, and the studio monitoring path, including summing busses. Audio interfaces always sell well, but I don't think that it's any secret that the Universal Audio Apollo products have been very popular due to their unique features.



### ▶▶ WHAT'S DRIVING THOSE SALES?

Well, marketing by the manufacturers never really hurts, does it? But the market definitely has a sort-of collective unconscious about it, and products like the Apollo really cater to that shifting perception of what we all "need." Universal Audio has always been really good at providing all products that people want before they were even aware that they wanted them. It's like, "Where has this been all my life? I have to have this, now!"

A lot of it probably stems from the obsession with the way things used to be in production. Decisions were made in pre-production or even on-the-spot, and the engineers committed equalization and compression straight to tape. You had to be good. Music sounded so much more "real" when it was a complete take and you built the embellishments and

ear candy on top of "a performance." Apollo is unique as an interface in that it lets us all do that with near-zero latency, while using models of some of the most cherished gear ever. Others have had mixers in their software for years that have made their products exceptional. But Universal Audio releasing Apollo was like the planets aligned in a way that they never could have for anyone else.

But what drives sales in our classic categories is the reality that a box and a seemingly endless supply of plug-ins still never will be everything that somebody needs to record and mix music. Obviously, we provide that "box." But, there have to be transducers on both ends of the chain in order to do anything. And customers truly want someone they can trust, who has been there before, who has configured and used and speaks from experience about a lot of the gear being discussed.

### ▶▶ WHO'S THE CUSTOMER?

The common thing amongst everyone shopping is that they are looking for an improvement in the sound, regardless of genre. It's something that exists from entry level to professional level. The quest for better tools never really stops, though the understanding of what constitutes "great gear" along the way will definitely change many times over.

The resurgence of vinyl and now the emergence of Neil Young's coming Pono player really are bringing high-resolution audio as well as workflow practices into focus — at least for any smart engineer or studio who's paying attention. We're aiming to maximize our customers' impact with their clients. We're consultants. We've either been doing it professionally at their level or above for 10, 20 or 30 years. And we sincerely want for them to be successful.



Universal Audio's Apollo

# DRUMS

## VIC SALAZAR

Vic's Drum Shop  
Chicago



### ▶▶ WHAT'S SELLING?

Every category of instruments and accessories continues to sell very well. These include acoustic and electronic drum kits, snare drums, hand percussion, drumsticks, drumheads, cymbals and hardware.

Drumsticks, drumheads and cymbals are

the most popular sellers. Larger diameter cymbals have grown in popularity, especially large diameter hi-hat cymbals. Specifically, longer lasting drumsticks and drumheads have been popular sellers. These include Boso drumsticks made of bamboo and Vic Firth's new Titan model of carbon fiber drumstick. Specific popular drumhead models include Remo's Emperor X, Aquarian's Triple Threat, Hi-Energy, and Hi-Velocity and Evans' Super Tough and Heavyweight drumheads.

In general, drummers need to replace drumsticks and drumheads on a regular basis. They simply wear out and break.



Remo's Emperor X drumheads

### ▶▶ HOW DO YOU MERCHANDISE AND MARKET THESE PRODUCTS?

Regarding the popular new drumstick models, I have found that an effective way to make more customers aware of them is to leave several pairs out on display on our giant demo practice pad. Customers can't help but notice them when they use the pad to audition other drumsticks. We stock over 3,500 drumheads and 1,600 cymbals. So when it comes to drumheads and cymbals, we rely more on the expertise of our sales staff to make customers aware of the options they have. It does certainly help to have two cymbal rooms stocked with multiple walls of cymbals on display.



Vic Firth's Titan drumsticks

### ▶▶ WHO'S THE CUSTOMER?

The customers for longer lasting sticks and heads are customers on a budget and/or those looking to get the best value for their money.

For large diameter cymbals, the customer is anyone seeking the sound that larger cymbals produce. All of these customers range from the beginner to the seasoned professional.

### ▶▶ WHERE IS THIS TREND HEADING?

Perhaps more companies will expand their offerings to include more models that follow the current trend of more durable, longer lasting drumsticks and drumheads, and larger cymbals. We will continue to stock all new offerings as they become available in order to provide the best selection for our customers.

I continue to hear from customers visiting our shop that they appreciate the depth of inventory that we carry. Customers still prefer to see, touch, and demo a product before making a purchase. This is something that they cannot experience when shopping online.



Evans' Heavyweight drumheads

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*"The Lanikai TunaUke bridge system provides a simple yet affordable solution to the age old problem of ukulele intonation. It is truly an innovation that will be heard around the world, quite literally!"*

- John Gonzalez Del Sol, Fan Guitar & Ukulele

*"I find the TunaUke system to be a great innovation for uke players and I can't wait to see what Lanikai comes out with next."*

- David Hutto Jr, Zen Ukes

*"A simple ukulele with a revolutionary fine tuning."*

- Uke4U Review Blog

*"It's been well over 100 years the uke's been in Hawaii and besides exotic woods, pickup/preamp, and cutaways nothing has improved the overall intonation until this came along. The compensated nut and adjustable saddles are a must have for all uke players."*

- Ron Ravelo, Westside Music Hawaii

*"A very solid ukulele and the BEST one that could be grabbed up by a beginner without question."*

- Ukeconomics Blog

*"Chords and notes ring true. It will make any player sound better."*

- Shawn Steen, Jam Brothers Music

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PETE BIEDRON

Bandsource  
Downers Grove, Ill.



▶▶ WHAT'S SELLING?

One of the most exciting sellers for us is the new Selmer 40 series saxophones. They feature a Selmer Paris-made mouthpiece with a Tawainese-made body. The models are the AS42 alto and the TS44 tenor. They are the first Selmer Paris models that they make in

Tawain that play more like a Selmer Paris than anything else, and they come in at a really nice price point. They are built really solid and are probably the best product that Selmer has made in a while. Coupled with the Selmer Paris neck and the improvements they made to the key mechanisms, the saxophones actually have that Selmer Paris sound and response more than any other Tawainese-made Selmer product. Conn-Selmer has made a great horn at a great price point.

▶▶ HOW DO YOU MERCHANDISE AND MARKET THESE PRODUCTS?

We have a model on display that features a black nickel finish with a silver plate that really grabs peoples' attention. We remind the influencers like teachers and professionals in our area about the horn and tell them to try it out.

The other big thing that we do here is we carry extra necks. The reason the 40 series is so great has a lot to do with the Selmer Paris neck because Selmer Paris is actually making the neck that goes on the Tawainese body. So, we have found it helpful in our business to carry extra necks. Sax necks make it like you have two saxophones in the store, because when you change out a neck, it pretty much changes the way the entire instrument plays. It's very advantageous when closing a sale. Stocking these extra necks and even extra clarinet barrels is an area where you can inexpensively almost double your intermediate or stepup sales. It's not quite like having a second horn, but it's like having half of a second horn. It's always a good idea to have extra neck options that will cost a retailer \$400 instead of a new horn that will cost \$3,000. We've been very successful with offering several different options.

▶▶ WHO'S THE CUSTOMER?

I would say the main target for the 40 series are middle school or high school students who are ready to step up to a better instrument, but their parents aren't willing to buy them a top-of-the-line pro instrument. These models are also great for a student who wants to go to school to study music and be a band director, not a performance major. That student is looking for a horn that is better than a student model and will last them through their studies but be better than their current model. Lastly, the 40 series would be ideal for adults who play just for fun and want the instrument for its affordability and playability.



Selmer's AS42 alto

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# DJ

## CRAIG MERRICK

Astro Audio Video Lighting  
Glendale, Calif.



### ▶▶ WHERE DO YOU SEE THIS TREND HEADING?

It all started with the Serato/laptop revolution. You still get pockets of strictly vinyl enthusiasts and purists and they will always be around but the numbers don't compare to all the "new" DJs who just want to play a backyard boogie or house party. Small controllers that do it all is where I see the business is going, if we're not already there. Smaller, faster and more powerful.



American DJ's Micro Image RGB

### ▶▶ WHAT'S SELLING?

The main items selling at Astro AVL are the all-in-one intro level controllers. The Pioneer DDJ-SB is by far the hottest controller we are selling. However, we're also selling lots of control signal vinyl from Stokyo and Rane used exclusively on turntables. All the entry level lights like the Micro series lasers by American DJ and Chauvet's EZMiN RBX and EZMiN FX are selling, too.

There's a much greater request by clients of wedding and corporate DJs to supply lighting,



Pioneer's DDJ-SB

so sales have grown for LED battery and wireless lighting.

### ▶▶ HOW DO YOU MERCHANDISE THESE PRODUCTS?

The price is just so ridiculously accessible, and they don't look cheap. Back in the day you could tell what was good and what was cheap just by the materials. Now even the lower-end items are way more aesthetically pleasing.

### ▶▶ WHO'S THE CUSTOMER?

Advances in technology have made it possible to get features and function at a fraction of the price it was just a few years ago, making gear available to more DJs at every level. It's not just a cult. The working DJ is part of the mainstream.



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# PIANOS

## JAMES HARDING

Gist Piano Center  
Louisville, Ky.



### ▶▶ WHAT'S SELLING?

We've done very well with Roland digital pianos — especially the HP-500 series and the interactive HPi-50 — as well as with decorator cabinet baby grand pianos, such as the Knabe WGS-54. Our clients are encouraged by the continued positive economic news. They are still cautious to spend excessively, but their desire to own a piano is finally starting to override their financial concerns. Thus, we are getting more and more requests for piano lessons and beginner instruments like Roland digital pianos.

The increase in decorator baby grands is also a part of this trend. Folks who have wanted a baby grand are reaching out to find the best piano they can afford for under \$15,000. This has led us to offer more pianos in this price range.

### ▶▶ HOW DO YOU MERCHANDISE AND MARKET THESE PRODUCTS?

We are very fortunate to be a Roland Foresta dealer. This means that we linked arms with Roland to create a special display space for Roland digital pianos in our

**FLY RIG**  
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store. The display space is branded as a premium digital piano showplace, including a computer with access to every Roland product video and manual, a Web camera for specialized factory training or in-store Q&A sessions, specialized lighted displays for easy browsing and, most importantly, a quiet place to explore each model. Our grand pianos are displayed in our upstairs showroom and are arranged so clients can view them easily from all angles.

As for marketing, we have a new website that is specifically designed to be mobile friendly. It's easy to navigate around our page with large buttons, and we have also included our own "ads" on each page that promote a certain related service or promotion. Finally, we have created a number of special product overview YouTube videos that explain how a client could use a Roland digital piano for lessons. We find that we're selling online now more than ever and our in-store clients have all seen our Web videos, which average about 10,000 views per video. They come in warmed up to our products and excited to experience them in real life.

▶▶ WHO'S THE CUSTOMER?

Thanks to the design of our new website, we can track the clients that visit our page and determine both their level of musical expertise and their familiarity with piano shopping. A very large majority of people who walk in our stores have a student who wants to learn to play. They have never purchased an instrument before and they were pretty nervous until they watched our Web videos. They come in excited to try a Roland and see how its interactive software, wireless iPad connection and USB flash drive port can connect them to learning software and a wealth of exciting play-a-long music from Hal Leonard and Alfred. Using these interactive features, they reasonably expect to learn faster and have more fun.

▶▶ WHERE IS THIS TREND HEADING?

Digital piano sales overtook upright piano sales in the United States in 2003 and they continue to rise. Clearly, technology is a powerful tool to capture the imaginations of new piano students. As our partner teachers

grow to embrace these tools, they too are seeing an increase in student retention and enrollment. In short, it's turning our business around, and I think we're just beginning to see where this trend can take us.

Decorator baby grand pianos are a slightly different story. They are strong right now but that is a product of two things: pent-up demand from cautious buyers and the lack of competition. As more piano manufacturers begin to offer these decorator models, the competition will continue and it will no longer be a novelty. If that happens, I think this trend will mellow out in the next few years.



Roland's HPI-5



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# FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

## STEVE SKILLINGS | JAMHUB

### HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

I start my day with a planning session. I look at what I didn't get done yesterday and I sort, sift and sequence. I have the "A's", which have to get done today, the "B" category of what should get done today, and "C" is what I really wish I could get to. As you can imagine, the "C's" keep getting pushed until I finally get the courage to say that I'm never going to get to them and delete them. [Laughs.]

### WHERE DID YOU GET THE "SORT, SIFT AND SEQUENCE" IDEA?

It's a Japanese thing. I'm a mechanical engineer by schooling and I used to be in the automotive industry, which is very intense and high-paced. When I first started, I worked at a company that was supplying Toyota, so I got steeped in the Toyota production system, that lean manufacturing process, and how they think about product development, design and quality. There are a lot of cool paradoxes that Toyota brought to light.

### LIKE WHAT?

The idea that high quality leads to lower cost. A lot of people thought that increasing quality would lead to increased costs, but Toyota was able to prove otherwise, thanks to some research that came out of Harvard after World War II. If you create high quality, you can drive costs down because you're standardizing what you do and you can rely on the processes you create. It's also one of their principles that great structure can lead to amazing flexibility.

### HOW SO?

Think about the blues progression. There's the I, the IV, and the V. It's structured, but because you know what to expect and when, you get this amazing flexibility within that structure.

### HOW DOES THAT MANIFEST IN YOUR CURRENT WORK?

Managers spend so much time talking about "meeting expectations," but if those expectations aren't defined in a way that people can deliver on — and exceed — there are going to be some bad conversations come review time.

With my team, I try to define what absolutely must get done, what our must-have's are. With that structure and ba-

sic understanding in place, people have the ability to know when they're exceeding expectations — or when they're not quite there. If you're clear about what you're trying to accomplish and your timetable, you give people an opportunity to excel.

### WHERE DID THE IDEA FOR JAMHUB COME FROM?

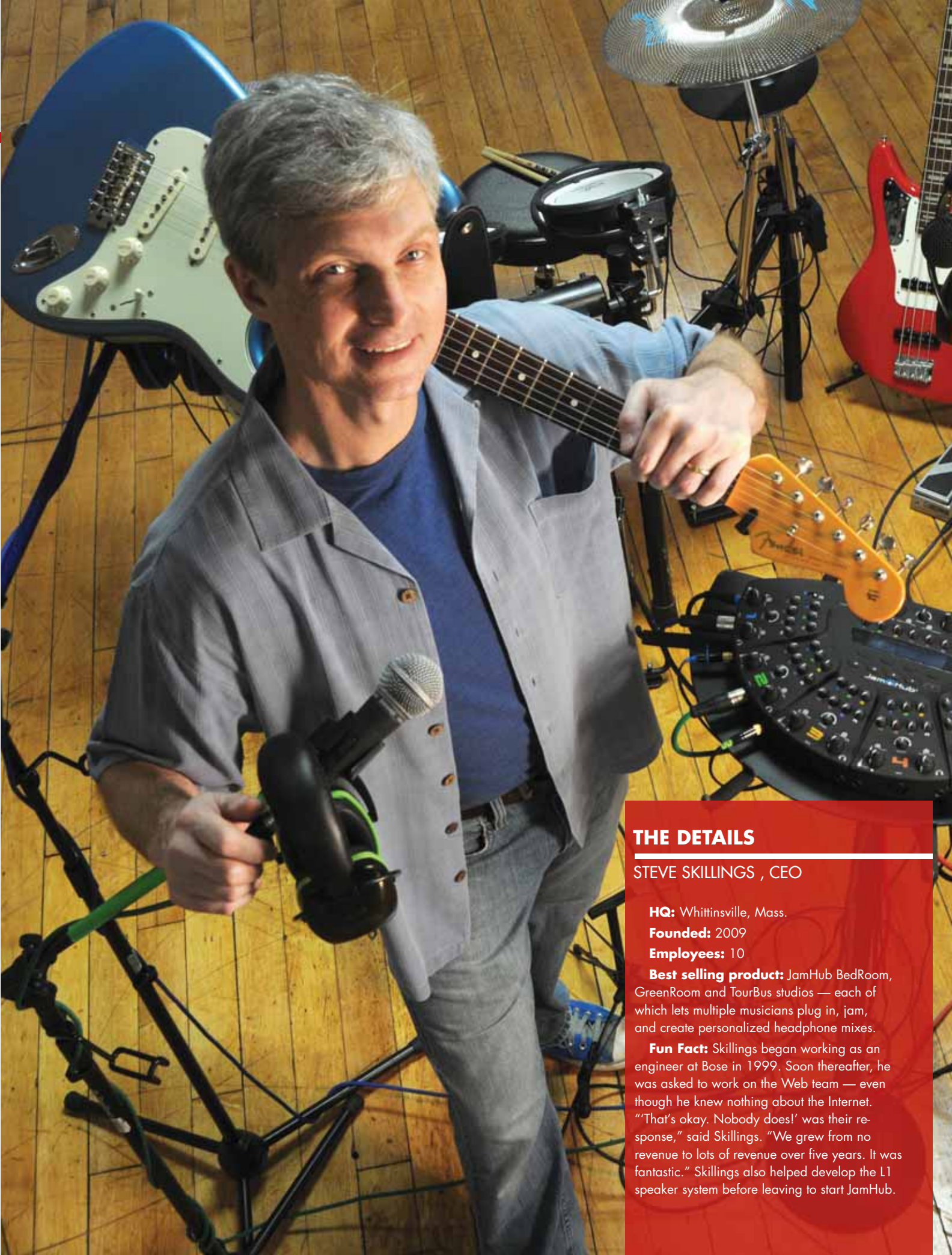
I was at an indoor soccer game in 2008 with another dad who's a great guitar player. In between whistles, we talked about music. He mentioned that his older son had joined a band and that they were going to come over and jam at his apartment — the neighbors had agreed to leave for an hour, so the noise wouldn't be an issue. My reaction was, first, what a great bunch of neighbors, and second, wouldn't it suck to play for only an hour a week? He looked at me and said, "They don't get to do it every week, Steve."

When I was driving home, I started hashing things out. If I'm a guitarist playing into a Pod, my drummer has an e-kit, and my keyboard player has a keyboard with an output jack, we could all plug into a mixer and throw on headphones so we could play and hear each other without having to crank it up — but that wouldn't work because you'd only be able to create one mix that nobody would love, right? The easy solution would be to create a little hub. Everybody plugs in and can easily dial up his or her own mix, so you can jam where you want, as late as you want. I thought, "This must exist."

### BUT IT DIDN'T.

I obsessed over the idea for the whole weekend, searching the Web, but nobody had done it before. I started working on electrical schematics, drawing out the remarkably simple circuit that could make it work. With my wife's agreement, I bought \$800 worth of mixer parts and soldered them together. By the time I was done, I had 12 power supplies and it looked like spaghetti on the floor. It was a mess. I told my band to come over and not bring anything but their instruments. I plugged everybody in, gave each of them their individual, hot-rodded mixers, and covered everything but four knobs on each with black paper. Each knob was color coded. We started jamming and it sounded to me like we were playing in a recording studio. After the first song, my keyboard player took off his headphones and said, "I don't care what it took for you to set this up. From





## THE DETAILS

STEVE SKILLINGS , CEO

**HQ:** Whittinsville, Mass.

**Founded:** 2009

**Employees:** 10

**Best selling product:** JamHub BedRoom, GreenRoom and TourBus studios — each of which lets multiple musicians plug in, jam, and create personalized headphone mixes.

**Fun Fact:** Skillings began working as an engineer at Bose in 1999. Soon thereafter, he was asked to work on the Web team — even though he knew nothing about the Internet. “That’s okay. Nobody does!” was their response,” said Skillings. “We grew from no revenue to lots of revenue over five years. It was fantastic.” Skillings also helped develop the L1 speaker system before leaving to start JamHub.

now on, this is how we're rehearsing."

### WHAT APPEALED SO MUCH TO HIM?

One of our tag lines for a while was "get lost in the music, not in the mix," and that's what I was seeing that first time we set things up. You could have set off a bomb next to my bandmates and they wouldn't have noticed, because the listening environment was so good that they lost themselves in the music.

### ARE MOST OF YOUR CUSTOMERS' BANDS LIKE YOURS?

In the U.S., we do sell to many individual customers, but in the U.K. and Australia, lots of schools are using JamHubs for music classes and rehearsal spaces. The silent rehearsal concept is what a lot of people latched onto, but our customers are also very smart. They've been using JamHubs for monitoring in live performance.

### WHAT HAS THE RESPONSE TO JAMHUB BEEN OVERSEAS?

In England, our distributor once told me, "You know, Steve, we're building the JamHub generation over here." He pointed out that there were many schools and studios that were starting to serve people who may not be the most highly proficient, but are enthusiastic bedroom players — "doinkers," I call them, and I'm a proud doinker myself. We believe that we're a little reason why this class of musicians continues to grow, and that's so exciting to see.

### HOW HAS THE INDUSTRY REACTED IN THE U.S.?

Well, we've won three Best In Show awards at NAMM. You can't imagine a better feeling than seeing people like John Grabowski from Sweetwater standing up there saying how wonderful this funny little idea of yours turned out to be.

### WHAT'S NEW AND EXCITING?

One of the most requested features from JamHub owners has been multi-track recording, so we created a little device called the Tracker MT16, which you can plug into the back of any JamHub in existence. It records up to 16 tracks, 96kHz, 24-bit.

We also wanted to connect JamHubs to the Internet and, with the Tracker, we now have a way to do it using a built-in Wi-Fi. When you're jamming, if you register it with a software product we currently have in private beta called

BandLab, it will upload your tracks individually to the cloud. Then you'll be able to access them and do basic editing and mixing. It's not just a DAW — it's a collaborative system.

### WHAT'S THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS BEEN LIKE?

When we rolled out the private beta, we thought we had made it simple to use, but the feedback we got was to make it even more simple. There were features that literally nobody clicked on. Parametric EQ, for example.

Most JamHub users don't know what it's for. I use my band as an example for things like this. There are four guys, all professional, intelligent people. If I sit down at a computer and open Pro Tools, three of the four run away to get beer. They're intimidated, and just don't want to deal with it.

### SO SIMPLICITY OF DESIGN IS A COMPANY VALUE.

Absolutely. It is the core to our product development. My favorite quote of all time is: "It is a simple task to make things complex, and a complex task to make them simple." That's our design tenant.

### HOW DOES THAT MANIFEST WITH BANDLAB?

If you want to add complexity to your song, project, or mix later, you're more than welcome to, but we want to get users going quickly and easily. That philosophy comes back to how JamHub is being used in schools. When young musicians are playing through one of our studios and the Tracker is in place, they can go home at night and access the project that they recorded, as easily as signing into Gmail. There's nothing additional to have or buy.

Because it's a simple system, students will be able to review what they've played and learn from the recordings, whenever they want, and parents can hear how the kids are progressing. And because it's on the cloud, any editing of the tracks is non-destructive.

### IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

I'm a cars and guitars guy, so I'd be working in an automotive company on technology and high-quality automobiles.

Regardless of industry, though, a buzz, for me, is looking at the idea of leverage, where you figure out a small trick that takes the quality of something and [whistles] makes it jump up. It's like getting an egg to start to crack. The challenge is finding just how and where to make that first tap, but if you get the right point at the right time, the whole egg can crack open. Amazing things start to happen.

"ONE OF OUR TAG LINES FOR A WHILE WAS 'GET LOST IN THE MUSIC, NOT IN THE MIX,' AND THAT'S WHAT I WAS SEEING THAT FIRST TIME WE SET THINGS UP."



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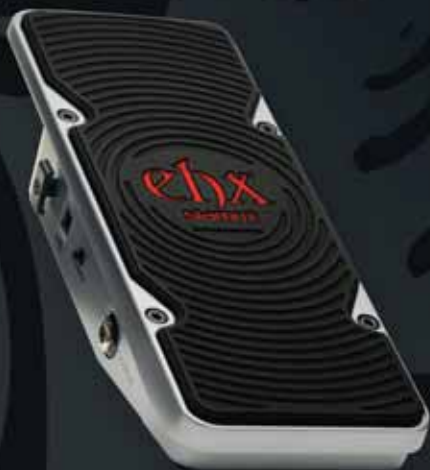
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**FOCUS:**

# ELECTRIC GUITARS AND BASSES

## *Super Charged*

### **10 Guitar Lines You Should Stock Now**

Electrify your inventory

page 58

### **The Art of the Guitar Wall**

Six displays that demand attention

page 62

### **Geared Up**

The newest electrics and basses

page 66

by Katie Kailus

# 10 GUITAR LINES YOU SHOULD STOCK NOW

Everyone stocks and shops Fender, Gibson and PRS, but *Music Inc.* has compiled a list of additional electric guitar lines that are sure to grab some attention on your guitar wall. Here are 10 brands to consider stocking — if you haven't yet.



## REVEREND

*Penny Haas, public relations*

**THE HISTORY:** "Reverend started in 1997 in the garage behind a bicycle shop by Joe Naylor, an industrial designer and luthier. Ken Haas and I purchased the company from Naylor in 2010 and hired him back as the designer letting him do some of his best work yet, since he can focus on creating guitars."

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "Ken and I are big on helping dealers market the guitars and the basses. We love to do clinics and events. We've supported dealers who want to do contests or other promotions, and we've done a bunch of artist in-store appearances, dealer exclusive colors, and anything else the dealers can come up with!"

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "A player with a creative mind and an independent spirit. If you look over our roster, many of the artists are known for pushing boundaries and breaking new ground. Most of the customers that I've met are like that, too. They are bold people who aren't afraid to show up to a gig with something that looks a little different from what their buddies play."

**TOP SELLER:** Tricky Gomez in Satin Red Burst

**GET STOCKIN':** Ken Haas, khaas@reverendguitars.com, (734) 953-6984





## THE LOAR

Ashley Atz, *public relations*

**THE HISTORY:** "The name The Loar is a tribute to master luthier Lloyd Loar, who designed what are considered to be the gold standard of classic mandolins and arched top instruments in the 1920s. Our designs are inspired by his originals, and we focus on delivering classic details of sought-after vintage instruments, while using the benefit of modern technology to add upgrades for today's players."

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "Vintage style is hot, and The Loar captures that vintage look and feel while keeping the price within reach. We support our products with excellent end-user advertising, social media outreach and we put them in the hands of highly-respected, up-and-coming artists for credible exposure. The Loar guitars offer great margin for dealers and are all backed up by our excellent customer service."

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "We've really connected with players who are into modern and traditional Americana music, as well as indie rock, jazz and garage. Any guitarist who appreciates a unique classic-style electric and has a strong reverence for tradition, but doesn't want to spend thousands will connect with what we're doing."

**NEWEST ADDITION:** LH-301T

**GET STOCKIN':** Misha Guiffre,  
sales@theloar.com, (888) 552-5465

## TAYLOR ELECTRICS

Keith Brawley, *vice president of sales*

**THE HISTORY:** "Taylor introduced its first electric guitars in 2005 with the introduction of the T5 model — a hybrid semi-hollowbody that offers players an acoustic-electric guitar tone and some really compelling electric guitar tones, too. This was the first popular guitar that could do both acoustic and electric tunes without changing guitars. There were many other companies that jumped on that idea and offered their version, but most are gone while the T5 continues on."

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "The Taylor electric guitar product line is small. We don't build a million different models. It's easy to have a good selection that will satisfy an interested player. Also, Taylor offers the best value in an affordable, American-made semi-hollow body guitar in its T3 model with beautiful appointments, legendary playability and a street price of less than \$1,500 with case and a healthy dealer margin."

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "The main prospect for a Taylor electric guitar is a Taylor acoustic player because they already own and love the brand. We have hundreds of artists that play them, but we don't sell guitars by promoting artists. We sell them based on their intrinsic value and excellence."

**TOP SELLER:** T5

**GET STOCKIN':** (619) 258-1207

## GODIN

Richard Brunze, *media and artist relations*; and Mario Biferali, *vice president of sales and marketing*

**THE HISTORY:** "Robert Godin built his first guitars in a small shop in Montreal more than 40 years ago. The success of the shop in Montreal eventually afforded him the opportunity to open a dedicated guitar building facility in La Patrie, Quebec. [Today], Godin guitars are distributed in more than 60 countries, employs over 600 people and operates five factories in Quebec and one assembly plant in Berlin, N.H." — Brunze

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "We work closely with our dealers. We constantly product train the sales staff and make sure the dealer has the best product mix so that our dealers can maximize sell through. Our sales reps are factory trained and are a huge resource for the dealers. Also, you won't find a Godin next to a washing machine or DVD player at some big box electronics store as we only sell to music stores." — Biferali

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "Guitar players and musicians of every genre and playing levels, from beginner to the top pro players from around the world." — Brunze

**TOP SELLER:** Godin Montreal Premiere TriplePlay

**GET STOCKIN':** info@godinguitars.com,  
(514) 457-7977



## WASHBURN

*Bill Henshell, web developer/copywriter*

**THE HISTORY:** "Washburn began in 1883 as the stringed instrument division of the Chicago Lyon & Healy company, selling guitars, mandolins, zithers and banjos."

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "Our instruments feature high-quality hardware from recognized industry leaders like Seymour Duncan, Fishman, Grover, Graph Tech and many others. We're so sure of our quality that we offer a limited lifetime warranty on all our instruments. We stand behind our products with a fine customer service staff. Our

dealer and freight programs feature reasonable buy-ins and excellent margins. We support our dealers with in store POP, marketing and social media campaigns geared to driving consumers to their stores, and the new Washburn website makes it easy and fun for both dealers and consumers to explore our brand."

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "The hardworking everyday musician, from buskers on the street to studio cats to weekend warriors to international superstars and musician's musicians."

**TOP SELLER:** Original Classic Series

**GET STOCKIN':** [cservice@usmusiccorp.com](mailto:cservice@usmusiccorp.com)

## SUHR

*Travis Tingley, guitar product manager*

**THE HISTORY:** "JS Technologies was co-founded in 1997 by John Suhr and Steve Smith to produce Suhr Guitars and Custom Audio Amplifier brands. All products are crafted in the United States at our 27,000-square-foot facility in Lake Elsinore, Calif."

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "Suhr guitars are highly customizable, giving retailers the ability to tailor instruments to meet the unique needs of their market at a wide range of price points, while retaining a rich dealer margin proposition."

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "The Suhr customer is a professional who has played for many years, and has owned many instruments and appreciates good design, craftsmanship, and has discriminating taste."

**TOP SELLER:** Modern Pro

**GET STOCKIN':** Chris Clarkson, [clarkson@suhr.com](mailto:clarkson@suhr.com), (951) 471-2334



## SCHECTER

*Dave Hager, national sales manager*

**THE HISTORY:** "Established as Schecter Guitar Research by David Schecter in 1976, the company began repairing guitars and selling parts. In 1987, Hisatake Shibuya and Michael Ciravolo reinvented the company's approach. In the following years, Ciravolo took the reins as CEO, and brought knowledge, ideas, original models, and new body shapes — catapulting the company into what it is today."

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "Schecter's pioneering spirit coupled with the dedication to high quality and great value offers any dealer an exciting opportunity."

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "Schecter has a model for every type of player, but the majority of players are 17 to 30 year olds typically playing music with a harder edge."

**TOP SELLER:** Hellraiser Hybrid

**GET STOCKIN':** Dave Hager, [dave@schecterguitars.com](mailto:dave@schecterguitars.com), (818) 846-2700 ext. 316

## PEAVEY

*Michael Smith, product manager*

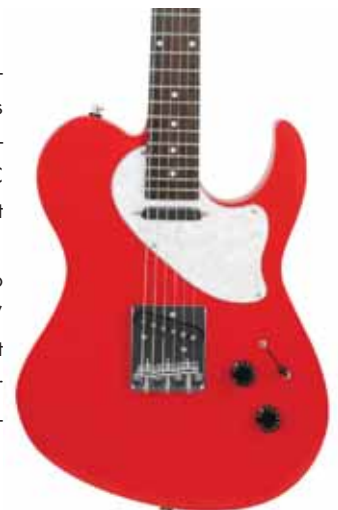
**THE HISTORY:** "In the mid- to late-'70s, Hartley Peavey revolutionized guitar making when he looked into how gun manufacturers mass produced wood gunstocks with so much consistent accuracy, while guitar necks were quite inconsistent. After researching, he bought a CNC machine and designed a guitar that could be manufactured with perfect consistency time and time again."

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "In a word, profit. Peavey has always strived to be a brand that a retailer can have as a cornerstone for their business."

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "Peavey designs guitars for different players. We offer instruments for the beginner, as well as for the collector through our licensing program, and for the more advanced player that understands that playability and quality doesn't have to cost over a grand."

**TOP SELLER:** Riptide

**GET STOCKIN':** Michael Smith, [michael.smith@peavey.com](mailto:michael.smith@peavey.com)





## ESP

Jeff Moore, senior vice president

**THE HISTORY:** "The ESP Guitar Company had its beginnings as a custom shop in the rear of a Tokyo music store. In 1975, ESP founded a chain of retail stores called Electronic Sound Products, or ESP for short. In 1983, ESP began making replacement parts and accessories for the booming guitar market, and by 1985, ESP's guitars had gained such a reputation that the company opened an overseas division in New York City, now known as the ESP Guitar Company."

**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "ESP offers retailers a wide selection of models that cover many types of genre and price points. With literally hundreds of SKUs to choose from, and profit margins that are consistently higher than most, ESP and LTD guitars are a wise investment for any retailer."

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "The ESP guitar player ranges from the highest level of professional to the novice, first-time musician."

**TOP SELLER:** The Eclipse/EC-1000

**GET SSTACKIN':** Mike Brinker, mbrinker@esp guitars.com, (818) 209-4284



## IBANEZ

Shogo Hayashi, president;  
Tom Appleton, Ibanez sales  
strategist; Bill Reim, CEO

**THE HISTORY:** "The Ibanez brand has its roots in the early 20th century as a highly respected builder of classical guitars. But the more modern — and American — chapter of the company's story started in the mid-1960s. The company was forced to develop its own identity as quickly as possible and by the

mid-70s an era of intense creativity followed." — Hayashi

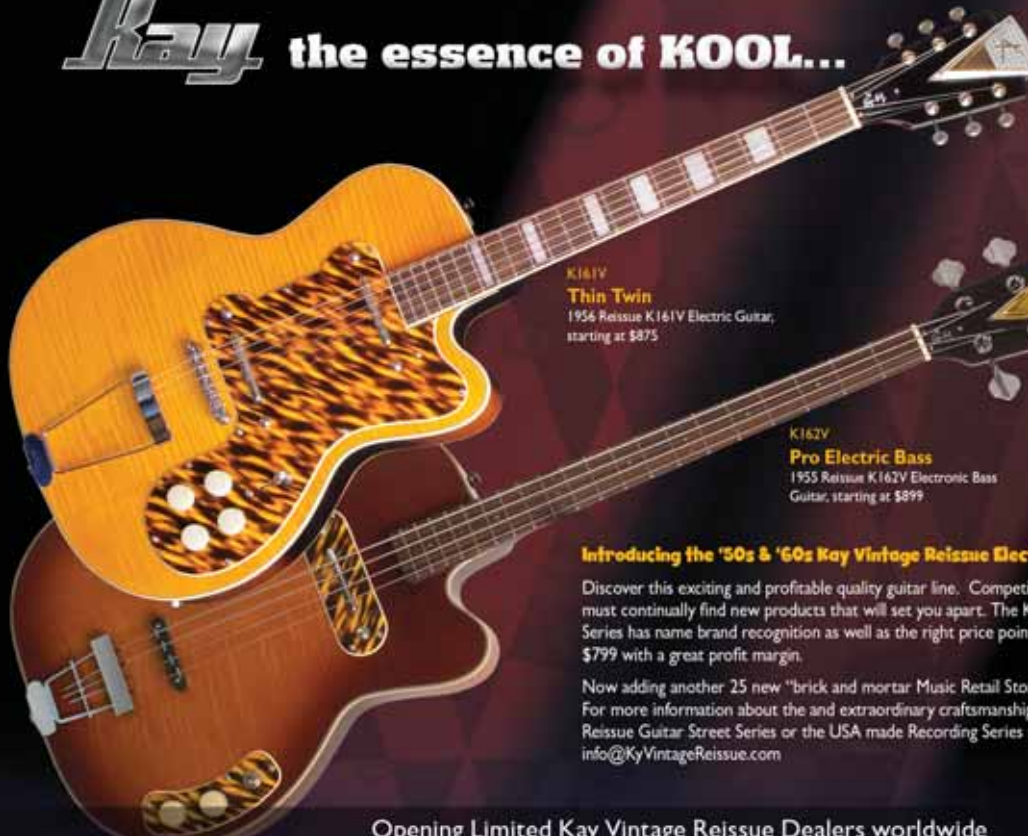
**WHY STOCK 'EM:** "Much of the consumer demand in the retail stores is derived from music trends. Ibanez stays on top of these trends by watching the scene and working closely with the artists that drive new trends." — Appleton

**WHO'S THE CUSTOMER:** "The compliment that we hear most often is that we build amazing guitars and basses for the money. What many Ibanez players have in common is that they are savvy consumers. In this age of accessible information, that describes more and more consumers." — Reim

**TOP SELLER:** S-Series 7721PB-NTF

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The Art Of The

# GUITAR WALL

By Kathleen Costanza



The Music Zoo's two-floor showroom.

In the hands of performing musicians, electric guitars are mesmerizingly cool.

But these six retailers have transformed their guitar walls into eye-catching displays

that let electrics command just as much attention on the showroom floor as they do onstage.

## The Music Zoo Roslyn, N.Y.

In 2011, The Music Zoo switched from a store with 750-square feet of retail space in Little Neck, Queens to an approximately 5,000-square foot space within a refurbished industrial building in Roslyn, N.Y.

"I had the canvas to build my dream store, so what would I do?" said owner Tommy Colletti.

He and an architect drew up plans for a corner guitar wall made with corrugated metal. The metal wall and color scheme of greys, mint greens and oranges give the space an industrial vibe which Colletti said fits the guitars that typically populate the wall.

On the second story are Fender and Gibson custom shop rooms and the only Taylor "Find Your Fit" showroom on the East Coast.

"We had a small store in Little Neck and it had the white slat board and the cheap carpet and the florescent lights. But we had these beautiful custom shop guitars on the walls — it just didn't match," he said. "If anything, we matched the guitars and the store together now so it all makes sense."





## Austin Bazaar Music Austin, Texas



When e-commerce dealer Austin Bazaar Music set out to build its 3,500-square foot retail storefront into its 50,000-square foot warehouse three years ago, founder and CEO Suman Singh teamed up with Fender rep Eric Langenhahn to create a massive, 15-foot tall Fender wall that displays 100 different models. The backdrop is a photomontage of old Fender images and pictures of Austin. For an interesting texture, every other row of guitars juts out at a different length.

"We try to find unique pieces as well as hot sellers to fill the inventory in the store," said Brandon Tuber, director of retail sales. "We want to give everybody the chance to get the red or black or blue, but also some of the more unique things that maybe our competitors wouldn't have and mix all that product together on the wall."



## The Guitar Works Evanston, Ill.

It didn't take The Guitar Works owner Terry Straker very long to envision the sprawling, bare-brick guitar wall as he was moving his 35-year-old shop to a new location in 2000.

"The idea of that guitar wall was in my head the minute I saw the space," Straker said. "The other stuff? I was open. But I wanted that wall to be completely covered with guitars so that when you walk in it just pulls your eye all the way to the back of the store."

Making that vision come to life meant knocking off three inches of peeling plaster to expose the aged brick as well as partnering with an architect to slant the wall. Today, the 50-foot long, 14-foot tall wall is covered with about 100 guitars. Instruments with the highest price points are showcased at the top and are highlighted with track lighting. Using String Swing hangers, each guitar is hung at an angle that lets customers get a clear view of their faces when they walk in the store.





## Guitar Emporium Louisville, Ky.

Last spring, Sherman Buschmeyer bought Guitar Emporium from previous owner Jimmy Brown, who was retiring after running the shop for 38 years.

A long-time customer himself, Buschmeyer called the minor tweaks and upgrades he's made to the store since then, "like putting a new suit on an old friend."

The 90-foot, cedar guitar wall is packed with about 120 guitars. Signed memorabilia from artists who have bought from the store, including Keith Richards and Bob Dylan, hangs above the instruments.

Along with encouraging customers to pick up guitars to connect with them, Buschmeyer said a key to keeping people interested is switching up the display.

"What [customers are] more drawn to and focused on is what is first on the wall," he said. "After a couple months you have to rotate things through so people have a fresh concept of what's going on in your store."



## Guitar Riot Cleveland

Guitar Riot owners Brent Ferguson and Tim Parnin opened their shop in 2012 with one simple rule — no slatwall.

The store today has 14-foot ceilings, a black floor, muted colors and a wall that holds mid- to high-end guitars like Fano and Reverend. The overall color scheme corresponds with Guitar Riot's website to keep its brand cohesive. Plus, its location in the Cleveland Artcraft building and its open floor plan give the store a "gallery vibe."

"We have had people just come and sit on the bench and view the wall for a while," Ferguson said.

But the gallery feel doesn't mean the shop works like an art museum, as customers are free to pick up the guitars on the wall and floor.



## George's Music Orlando, Fla.

George's Music has nine locations in Pennsylvania and Florida, but its Orlando store's electric guitar wall is one of a kind. The company worked with architects to create a specially fabricated galvanized steel for Guitar Gallery by George's Music, a store in Disney World's Downtwon Disney that ran as a seven year lease. When the lease ended in 2006, the company incorporated the concept into its Orlando location.

"It almost gives the illusion that the guitars are suspended in air," said Bill Trevena, company sales manager of George's Music. At about 20 feet high and 40 feet long, the guitars at the top are visible anywhere in the store.

"Guitars are cool," he said. "You want to do as much as you can to accentuate that and bring that out. The guitars themselves are the focal point."





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# ELECTRIC GUITARS AND BASSES

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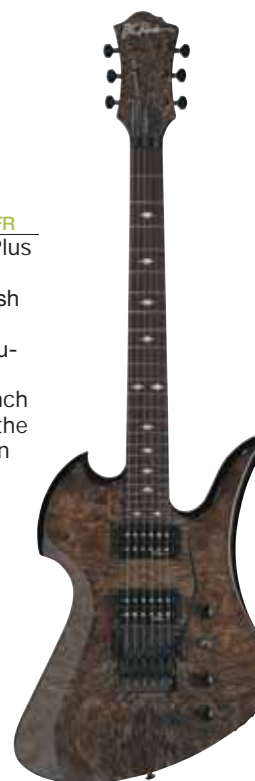
### EASTWOOD GUITARS | AIRLINE '59 NEWPORT

Eastwood Guitars Airline '59 Newport guitar has a light-weight, tone chambered mahogany body and a bolt-on fret bound maple neck with a rosewood fingerboard. Available in

either sea foam green or black, the two NY Mini Humbuckers and the Piezo bridge pickups have individual volume and tone controls with a master volume. [eastwoodguitars.com](http://eastwoodguitars.com)

### B.C. RICH | MOCKINGBIRD PLUS FR

B.C. Rich's Mockingbird Plus FR features a mahogany body with a black vapor finish to highlight and detail the figured maple top. The instrument also features a 24-fret ebony fretboard with a 12-inch radius, diamond inlays and the traditional B.C. Rich three on three headstock. The new set-neck design features a contour delivering the sonic advantages of a set-neck design with a comfortable neck joint normally only seen on neck-thru designs. MSRP: \$640. [bcrich.com](http://bcrich.com)



### MICHAEL KELLY GUITARS | 1950'S SERIES

Michael Kelly Guitars' new 1950's series line of single cut guitars is available in five models. The line pays tribute to the '50s offerings features and sonic capabilities of the memorable sounds of the era but with modern day appointments and production techniques. All five models feature an exotic wood top and contoured arm cut, master volume and master tone controls, a three way pickup selector, and coil taps for sonic range and versatility. [michaelkellyguitars.com](http://michaelkellyguitars.com)

### GRETSCH | CENTER-BLOCK SERIES

Gretsch has expanded its Center-Block series with the additions of the Gretsch G5620T-CB Electromatic, G5655T-CB Electromatic and G5622T-CB Electromatic guitars. Available in black, Rosa Red and Georgia Green gloss finishes, the models offer the "center-block advantage." The interior solid spruce center block running the length of the guitar's body makes for a lively, high gain-friendly tone. [gretschguitars.com](http://gretschguitars.com)







**REVEREND | MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO**

Reverend's Meshell Ndegeocello Fellowship Bass comes in Satin Black with a reverse headstock. It's based on the Reverend Thundergun, with a set-neck and a raised center ridge. The controls are stacked into one knob for volume and tone. [reverendguitars.com](http://reverendguitars.com)

**IBANEZ | BASS WORKSHOP**

Ibanez new Bass Workshop products combine unusual concepts with the Ibanez bass-production. The Cross-over is a six-string guitar-bass hybrid and the SR Portamento is a fretless bass designed for players who want the voice of an upright bass. [ibanez.com](http://ibanez.com)

**KAY | JAZZ SPECIAL ELECTRIC BASS**

The Kay Jazz Special Electric bass is a reissue of the famous bass from the 1960s that Paul McCartney used. The K5970V is known for its characteristic subsonic low-end sound and slim neck as well as its woody tone. [kaybassguitar.com](http://kaybassguitar.com)

**DEAN MARKLEY | SIGNATURE SERIES**

Dean Markley has debuted its Signature series strings for bass. The series utilizes a nickel-plated steel, slowly wound over a hex core with a unique core-to-wrap ratio. The series is available in an assortment of gauge sets for four- and five-string players. MAP: Four-string set, \$14.99; Five-string set, \$18.99. [deanmarkley.com](http://deanmarkley.com)

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### CÓRDOBA | NEW PARLORS

## Perfect Parlor

Córdoba has increased its offering of parlor size guitars with the introduction of the C10 Parlor — a new size option for the best-selling C10. Featuring a solid Canadian cedar or European spruce top and solid Indian rosewood back and sides, the C10 Parlor has a slightly reduced body size and scale length. The guitar features Savarez Cristal Corum strings and includes a deluxe Córdoba humidified archtop wood case. [cordobaguitars.com](http://cordobaguitars.com)

### CRAFTER | DRAGON ROSE

## Dragon Swag

The Dragon Rose celebrates 42 years of guitar building from Crafter. It features a dragon inlay on the neck which is handcrafted from mother of pearl and abalone. A ring of fire sound hole design complements the dragon on the rosewood neck. The guitar boasts a grand auditorium body with a solid Engelmann Spruce top, solid rosewood back and rosewood sides. [crafterguitars.com](http://crafterguitars.com)



### MOKU | VINTAGE SERIES MV-20T

## Vintage Vibes

The new Moku Vintage series MV-20T tenor ukuleles are styled after the 1930s-era vintage ukes. These 18-fret models are handmade and constructed of solid Sapele mahogany with an ebony nut, saddle and bridge pins. The models also feature a three-point headstock with hand-inlaid abalone rosette. [mokuukes.com](http://mokuukes.com)



### LANIKAI | SPTU SERIES

## Go Fish

Lanikai's new SPTU series draws its inspiration from Lanikai's classic spruce line with solid spruce tops, and improved intonation with Lanikai's TunaUke compensated nut and saddle onboard. In addition to TunaUke Technology, this series features a solid spruce top, mahogany back and sides, rosewood bridge and fingerboard, geared chrome tuners, and genuine Aquila strings. [lanikaiukes.com](http://lanikaiukes.com)





RECORDING KING | DIRTY 30'S TENOR BANJO

## Classic Sound

The Dirty 30's Tenor Banjo offers a narrow 19-fret neck making it easy to hold, while the 23-inch scale delivers an ideal combination of feel and clarity. The open-back rim features 16 brackets holding down a Remo Fiberskyn head. [recordingking.com](http://recordingking.com)



LM | CABIN FEVER SERIES

## Catch the Fever

LM's new Cabin Fever series takes on the feeling of flannel shirts and leather belts and has instilled it into guitar straps. The final product is a reversible strap with flannel on one side and leather on the other. [lproducts.com](http://lproducts.com)



ORANGE AMPLIFICATION | OB1-K

## First Ever

Orange's OB1-K is a 1000-watt solid-state bass amplifier. The OB1-K is Orange's first rack-mountable amplifier — with optional sleeve mounting available — forged by the demands of the modern bass player. The OB1-K splits the signal into two separate paths. One side produces a tight, clean bass sound with thunderous low end. The second side features two stages of controllable gain rich in upper harmonics. [orangeamps.com](http://orangeamps.com)



CROSSROCK | 06 SERIES

## 'Foamitable' Cases

Crossrock's improved 06 series of gig bags offers five, 10, 20 or 30 millimeters of high-density foam, letting players choose how much protection they want. Each tier adds useful features, such as additional pockets, a security reflective strip and a neck block at the 306 level. Black fabric with grey accents give a stylish look, and is a great alternative to basic black. [kingstarintl.com](http://kingstarintl.com)



D&A | HEADLOCK

## Lock Down

D&A Guitar Gear has debuted the Headlock, a hanger designed to display the guitar and cradle it away from the wall and off the floor, turning the instrument into a secure, wall-mounted piece of art. It boasts polycarbonate see-through gates that permit one-handed removal and return in just one second. [heydna.com](http://heydna.com)



### PRESONUS | MUSIC CREATION SUITE

## The Suite Life

The new Music Creation Suite from PreSonus is a complete music-creation solution ideal for educators, students or home studio enthusiasts. The package includes the AudioBox USB/MIDI interface, Studio One artist recording and production software, Notion notation software, a PS-49 USB 2.0 MIDI keyboard, the M7 studio condenser mic, HD-3 studio monitoring headphones and USB 2.0 hub. [presonus.com](http://presonus.com)



### GENELEC | 8010 ACTIVE MONITOR

## Anytime, Anywhere

The 8010 Active Monitor from Genelec is the smallest member of the 8000 product range which makes it ideal for small studios, OB vans and as a companion for portable recording devices. It features a balanced XLR input, 3-inch bass driver, 3/4-inch tweeter and Class D power amplifiers. MSRP: \$440. [genelecusa.com](http://genelecusa.com)

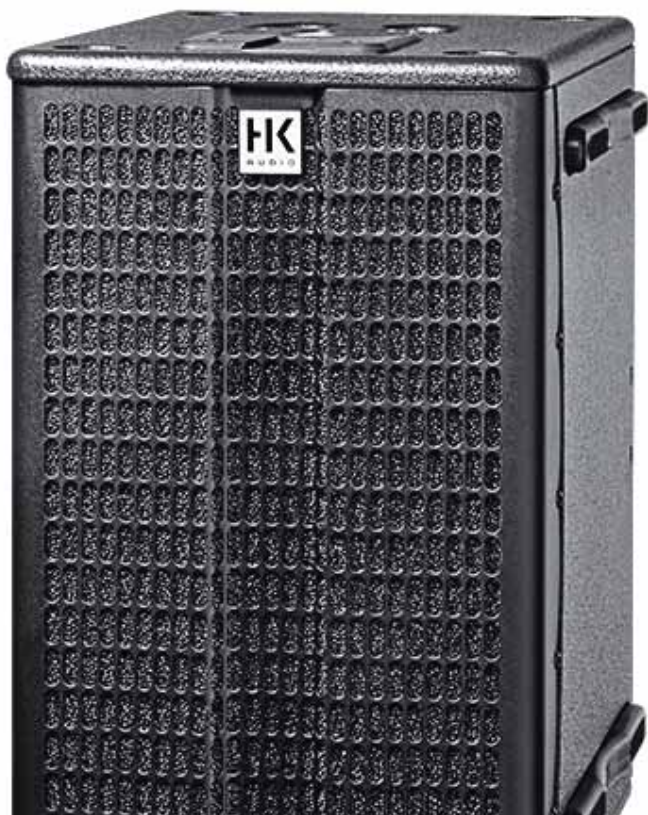


### POSITIVE GRID | JAMUP PLUG HD

## iOS Jamming

Positive Grid has introduced the JamUp Plug HD, a studio-quality guitar and bass interface for use with recording apps on the iPad, iPhone and iPod touch. The pocket-sized device improves on the original JamUp Plug by offering a 24-bit/48 kHz USB audio solution. The improved resolution enhances signal-to-noise ratio and eliminates feedback issues. [positivegrid.com](http://positivegrid.com)





HK AUDIO | E110 SUB AS POWERED SUB

## Packing Power

HK Audio has added the E 110 Sub AS bi-amplified sub to its modular Elements Line Array series. The sub packs two 600-watt class D power amps into a portable 2-foot by 10-inch subwoofer, letting it power an Elements passive E 110 Sub in addition to up to four Elements series E435 (or two E835) mid/high units. The Elements system combines the benefits of modern line array technology with the easy-handling P.A. systems. [hkaudio.com](http://hkaudio.com)



MIC STAND GUITAR HANGER | ON-STAGE STANDS

## Hanging Out

The Mic Stand Guitar Hanger from On-Stage Stands turns any tripod mic stand into a guitar stand with its u-mount elliptical clamp and a self-adjusting swiveling yoke. The single knob clamp secures to stands up to 3/4-inch in diameter and the yoke accommodates most headstocks, adjusting automatically so the instrument hangs straight. The yoke is lined with velveteen foam and solid metal construction handles instruments up to 8 lbs. MSRP: \$16.95. [onstagestands.com](http://onstagestands.com)



SBS DESIGNS | SP-1PRO

## Dynamic Range

SBS Designs' SP-1PRO is a vacuum tube device with seven front panel controls that let the user sweeten up and improve the dynamic range of any full-range source. The expansion process brings out detail that's often masked by recordings that are compressed and engineered to be mono compatible. The SP-1PRO features a bass expander and an extended range of top treble expanders which are fully analog and add dynamic range by controlling the target frequencies. [sbsdesigns.com](http://sbsdesigns.com)



GON BOPS | HAND CRASH CYMBAL

### Three's Company

Gon Bops has added the Hand Crash cymbal to its new line of Latin-inspired cymbals. It has three playing surfaces — two for playing with a stick, one for playing by hand. The raw bell is best for playing Clave while the unlatched, medium-weight center is ideal for playing dry ride patterns. The lathed, extra thin outer half is the cymbal's sweet spot and is designed for making bright, dirt-tinged sounds by hand. The cymbals come in 16 and 18 inches. [gonbops.com](http://gonbops.com)



ZILDJIAN | GEN16 CYMBALS

### Next Generation Volume

Zildjian made subtle but important changes to its original Gen16 nickel-plated cymbals when developing the new, reduced-volume Gen16 buffed bronze cymbals. Additional lathing has been applied on the larger models to increase the lower fundamental overtone structure and the buffed bronze finish produces a warmer tone than the original models. MAP: \$189-\$449. [zildjian.com](http://zildjian.com)



KAT | KT3

### Deluxe Digital

Kat Percussion has expanded its kt electronic drum kits with the kt3, a six-piece digital drum set. The kt3 features 11-inch dual-zone white floor tom and snare drum pads, a 12-inch hi-hat cymbal, two 12-inch crash cymbals and a 14-inch ride cymbal with a new bell trigger. Its sound module is preconfigured with 550 drum, cymbal, DJ, FX and percussion sounds along with 45 preset drum sets. The kt3 includes USB 2.0 and MIDI connectivity. MSRP: \$1,549. [katpercussion.com](http://katpercussion.com)



LATIN PERCUSSION | OCTO-SNARE CAJON

### Eight Sided Sound

The Octo-Snare Cajon from Latin Percussion is a handmade, eight-sided drum that's fitted with fixed internal snares and dual playing surfaces. Its 5-inch deep shell is constructed out of 9-ply Baltic birch and it's available in either a 10-inch diameter with birch top surface or a 12-inch diameter with hardwood sapele top surface. [latinpercussion.com](http://latinpercussion.com)





SAKAE | CELESTIAL SERIES

## Celestial Body

Sakae Drums' Celestial kit includes sound-enhancing technology throughout the kit and hardware that's customized for each drum in the series. The two-ply shells are constructed of African bubinga wood on the outside for superb attack and North American maple on the inside. The drums all feature Sakae's Chamber Specific Technology which consists of specialized shell thickness, harder woods, sharper bearing edges on smaller drums and rounded bearing edges on larger drums. [sakaedrums.com](http://sakaedrums.com)



SABIAN | SAFE AND SOUND  
CYMBAL CLEANER

## Squeaky Clean

Sabian has made its in-house cymbal cleaning solution available to cymbal players everywhere with its new Safe and Sound Cymbal Cleaner — part of Sabian's new accessory division. The organic, scent-free cleaner is acid free, solvent free, biodegradable and formulated to effectively clean cymbals and protect their performance. [sabian.com](http://sabian.com)

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# GEAR >

## PIANOS & KEYBOARDS



KORG | LP-180

### Slim Style

Korg's portable, battery-powered LP-180 combines the sounds and action of the affordable SP-170 stage piano with the LP-380 lifestyle piano. It's equipped with Korg's Natural Weighted Hammer Action keyboard and all three concert grand pedals are included. Ten sound variations including electric piano, vibraphone, pipe organ and strings round out the onboard offerings. [korg.com](http://korg.com)

YAMAHA | CP4 STAGE

### Distinct Voice

Yamaha's lightweight, CP4 Stage piano features 45 voices from Yamaha's grand pianos, 47 vintage electric pianos with Virtual Circuit Modeling effects and a variety of 321 sounds based on the flagship MOTIF synthesizer. MSRP: \$2,999. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)



HOHNER | REY AQUILA ACCORDION

### King of Accordions

Hohner has added the El Rey Aquila Accordion to its line of Anacleto Accordions. The instrument comes in either black or white with a gold colored metal winged grill and crystal designs that glisten. It is constructed with handmade, high quality reeds which are fabricated from the fine ribbon reed stock and placed in hard aluminum frames with tight tolerances. [hohner.com](http://hohner.com)







CHAUVET | STRIKE 324, STRIKE 882

## Two Strikes

Chauvet's new Strike strobe series combines the output of SMD LEDs with rugged, roadworthy die-cast casing. The series features two models, the Strike 324 and the Strike 882. Designed to fit a wide spectrum of rigs and venues, the Strike 324 is shaped like a low-profile par can and contains 324 white 1-watt SMD LEDs, while the Strike 882 is configured like a panel and equipped with 882 white 0.5-watt SMD LEDs. [chauvetlighting.com](http://chauvetlighting.com)

RELOOP | TERMINAL MIX 8

## Intuitive Control

Reloop has developed Terminal Mix 8, a four-deck pad-based performance controller designed to work with the Serato DJ software. The controller was developed in cooperation with Serato, and it features a clearly laid-out and intuitive PAD performance section where 16 touch-sensitive RGB drum pads can be used to trigger cue points, loops, samples and a slicer effect. [reloop.com](http://reloop.com)



GEMINI | GMIX

## Versatile Mix

Gemini's GMiX is a versatile multi-format media controller for DJs who desire portability and multi-functionality. Users can playback tracks from a single USB drive or from a laptop as a software controller. The eight large performance pads on each deck and the newly designed touch-sensitive mechanical jog wheels ensure intuitive control over every aspect of playback. [geminisound.com](http://geminisound.com)





### CANNONBALL | MIO M 8 PROFESSIONAL FLUTE

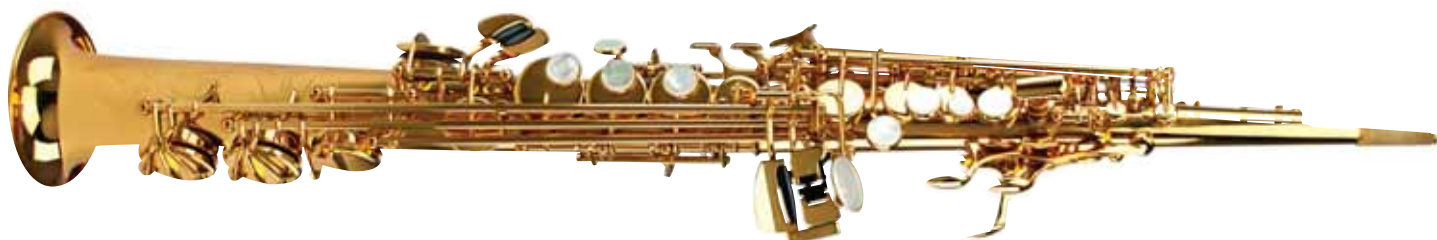
## Pro Flute

The handcraftsmanship of Mio's M 8 Professional Sterling Silver Flute ensures clarity and consistency. The tubes are manufactured in the U.S. and the handcrafted headjoints are fit and customized for optional air flow in Salt Lake City. Pointed arms come standard as well as options for inline or offset G. G models can also be paired with a split E design. [cannonballmusic.com](http://cannonballmusic.com)

### ZONDA | REBRANDED REEDS

## Classic Elegance

Zonda has rebranded their reed line with an elegant new look and an array of options. The reeds are made from Argentinian cane and no pesticides are used in the harvesting of the quality woods. Zonda reeds are available for soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophone as well as bass clarinet. They're also available in two different cuts for Bb clarinet — Supreme and Classico. [stlouismusic.com](http://stlouismusic.com)



### ANTIGUA | PROONE SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

## Rich Soprano

The Antigua ProOne soprano saxophone combines the features of the alto and tenor models with a new one-piece neck and body design. The saxophone has a warm, rich sound characterized by strong, low overtones without sacrificing clarity in the upper register. The Hybrid Rolled Tone Holes, found on all ProOne saxes, give it an even response throughout the entire range of the instrument while the ergonomic layout of the keys keeps players' hands comfortable. [antiguawinds.com](http://antiguawinds.com)

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### YAMAHA | YBH-831S NEO BARITONE HORN

## New Neo

Yamaha has completed its Neo line with the addition of the YBH-831S Neo Baritone Horn. Designed in conjunction with British brass band soloist Katrina Marzella, the horn achieves a rich tonal character with more dynamic range as well as optimal comfort and playing ergonomics. The new model is the first custom level Yamaha baritone horn with a four-valve compensating system. MSRP: \$8,302. [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)





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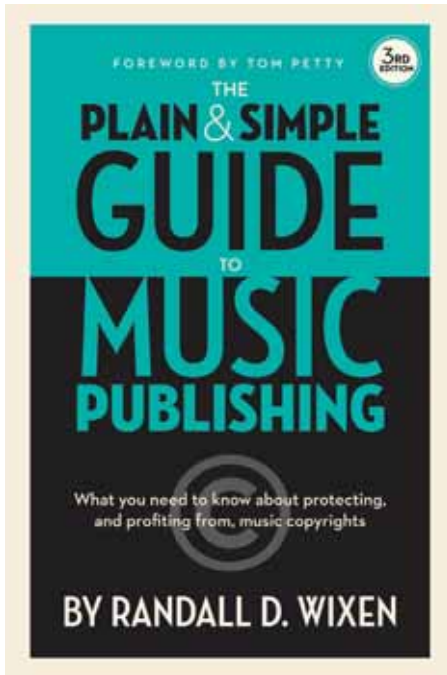
# MAY 2014 IS INTERNATIONAL DRUM MONTH

For direct links to all our members and their products visit the PMC's website: [www.playdrums.com](http://www.playdrums.com)



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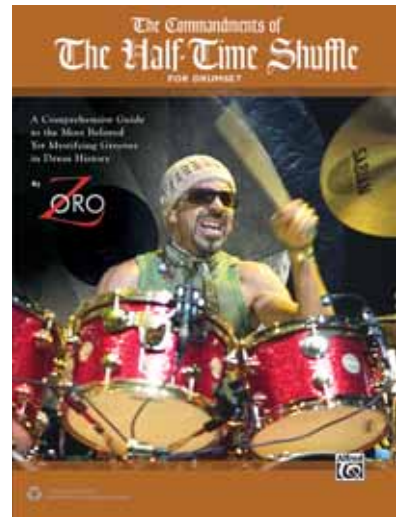
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## Amateur's Guide

The third edition of music publisher Randall Wixen's book, *The Plain & Simple Guide to Music Publishing* includes a forward by Tom Petty and covers topics such as monetizing YouTube, access vs. ownership models, the success of new distribution models. The book is written for the lay person with enough substance to be useful for those already in the business. [halleonard.com](http://halleonard.com)



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**Roland Belloir**

The Fretted Frog

Los Angeles

We had a Q&A with the Irish guitar maker George Lowden in January. I was really surprised by the quality of the questions; they went from business to technical to questions about relationships with musicians. I took a lot of information myself.

In terms of turnout it was not that big, but the way it went and the way people reacted to it — by sharing on Facebook — and the way the word spread after the event was pretty unique. The new customers shared all the information online because the quality of the event and the event itself was unique — you don't often have a Q&A in a guitar store.

I saw people were impressed and the information spread. Out of 15 people there I may have had about 500 people [end up] knowing about the event all in a very specific circle — all people who are interested in that kind of guitar and that maker, people who are really passionate. I've had far more calls and requests on the guitars in the last two months, just after the event.

>>>

**Ryan Larsen**

Roots Music Shop

Lincoln, Neb.

We teach a class for kids called Roots Music Education and we basically teach them different standards like Marty Robbins or Willie Nelson and then a blues tune from Muddy Waters or early or rock 'n' roll — everything that makes up the American culture. Then we use musicians' life experiences to help explain social conditions.

Last November, the class played a food bank benefit here where we raised money for the local food bank. When kids realize they can use their talent to play music and give back to the community it's hugely gratifying — especially to them.

My shop is not that big; it's a lot of work to have shows. I would say there were 60 to 75 people. It brings awareness anytime I have a concert and kids tell their friends at school. It's a marketing event as well, but first and foremost it was about raising money for people who need the Lincoln Food Bank.



>>>

**Cris Behrens**

Summerhays Music

Murray, Utah

## What's **the best event** you've ever held?

The one event that I really like the best is called the November Clinic Series. We partner up with our manufacturers and we bring in seven or eight clinicians during the first two weeks of November. The thought process behind it is, obviously, creating musicians for life. The kids come to it and they're wowed and they learn something that will make them a better musician.

The second part of it is they get wowed and impressed and want to upgrade their instruments right around Black Friday. They circle that flute in the catalogs we hand out at the clinics and then hopefully Santa brings it for Christmas.

Last November, about 1,000 total people came to the clinics. We've done it for three years in a row now and we've had very successful fourth quarters that track back to these clinics.

To market the clinics, we have a poster that has a calendar on it. It shows, for example, Yamaha Saxophone artist Mindi Abair on this date at this time. It's distributed and put up on the board at every junior high and high school. A week before the first clinic and every Monday we'll send out an email saying what next week's clinics are. Then, we go and create an event on Facebook for each clinic and invite

everyone on our page.

The most important thing is booking your artists well in advance. Right now I'm already starting to go after artists for November. Plus, if you book artists far in advance, the artist nine times out of 10 has enough time to book another event in town, thus reducing your costs.

The key is always make sure there's a call to action to go along with your clinic. We do ours in November so there's increased sales at Christmas time. Or you might want to do one for a summer sale. Use it as a launching pad to sell products. The other key is do press releases — make it a big deal.



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