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FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

SEPTEMBER 2014
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inc

**THE
BAND
MASTER**

*How Nick Rail Music expanded
its footprint to beat a tough
B&O market*

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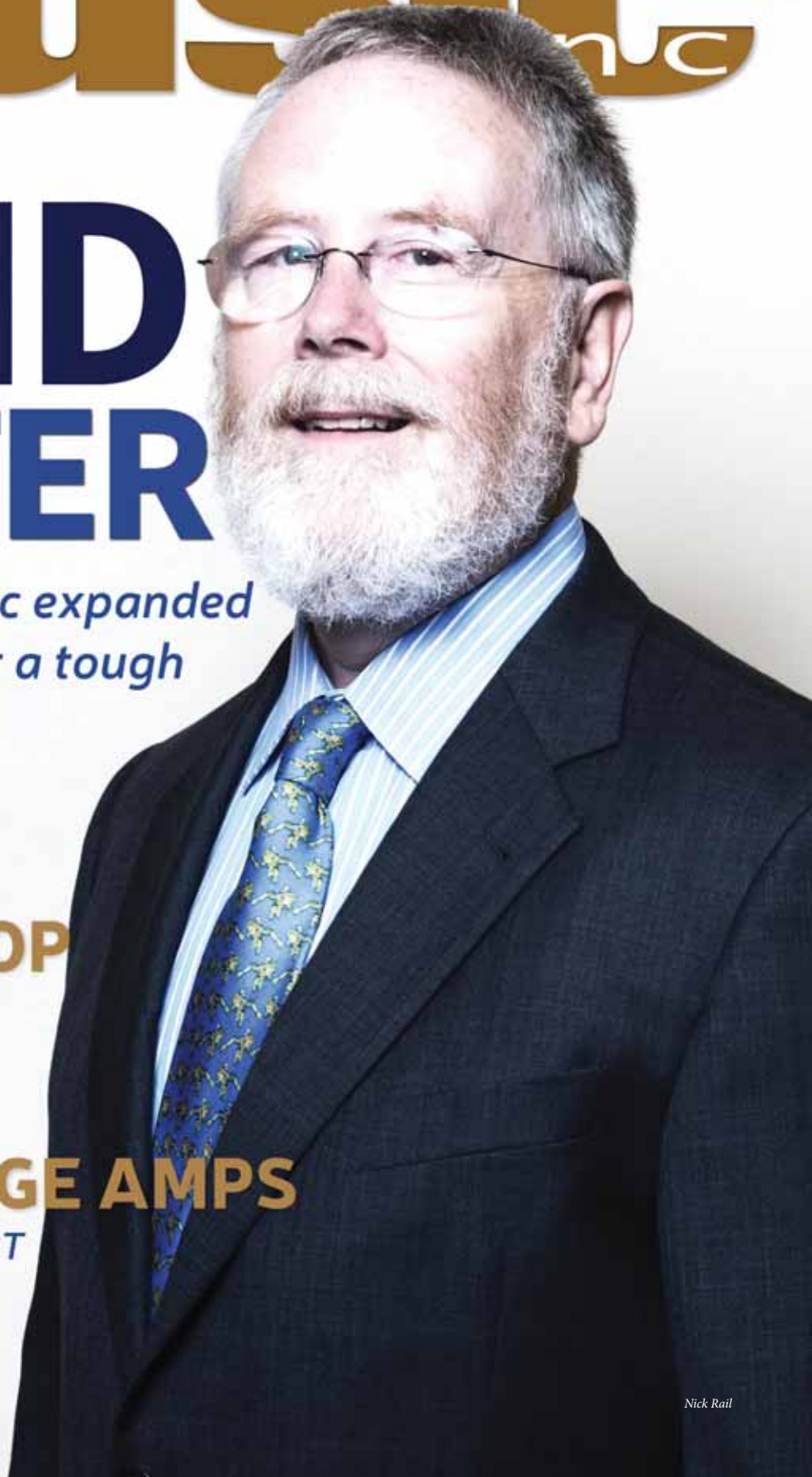
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$50 one year (11 issues), \$90 two years (22 issues) to U.S.A. addresses. \$75 one year (11 issues), \$140 two years (22 issues) to Canada and other foreign countries. Air mail delivery at cost.

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

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OTHER MAHER PUBLICATIONS:

DownBeat, UpBeat Daily

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

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

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

 American Society of Business Publication Editors 2005 Regional DESIGN Gold circulation less than 80,000	 American Society of Business Publication Editors 2007 Regional EDITORIAL Award Winner circulation under 80,000	 American Society of Business Publication Editors 2008 Regional Award Winner circulation under 80,000	 American Society of Business Publication Editors 2008 Regional EDITORIAL Award Winner circulation under 80,000	 BPA INTERNATIONAL
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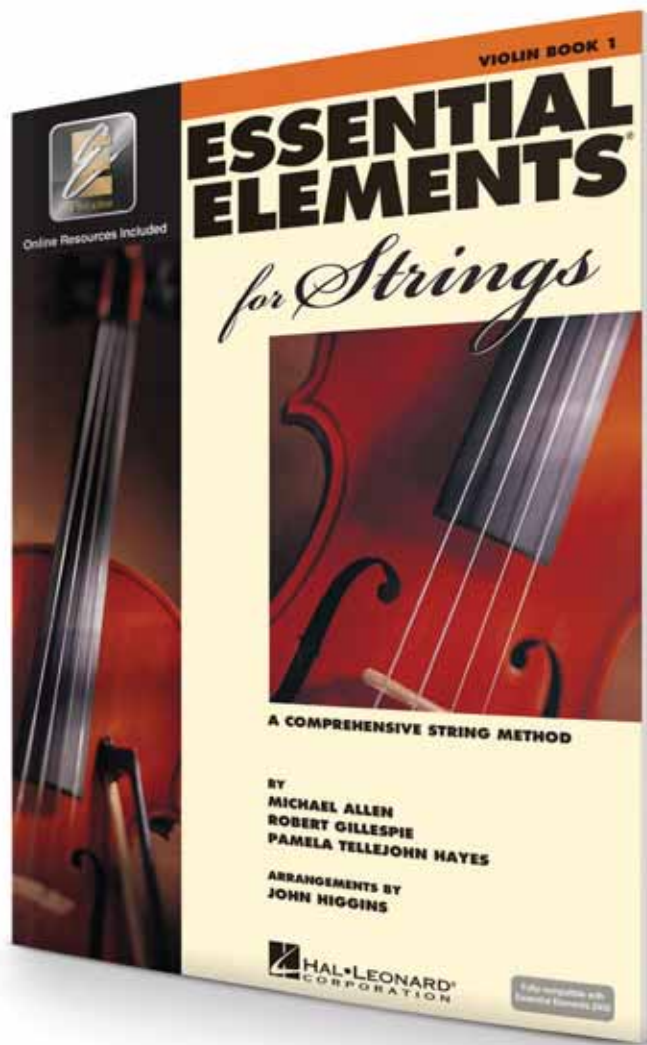
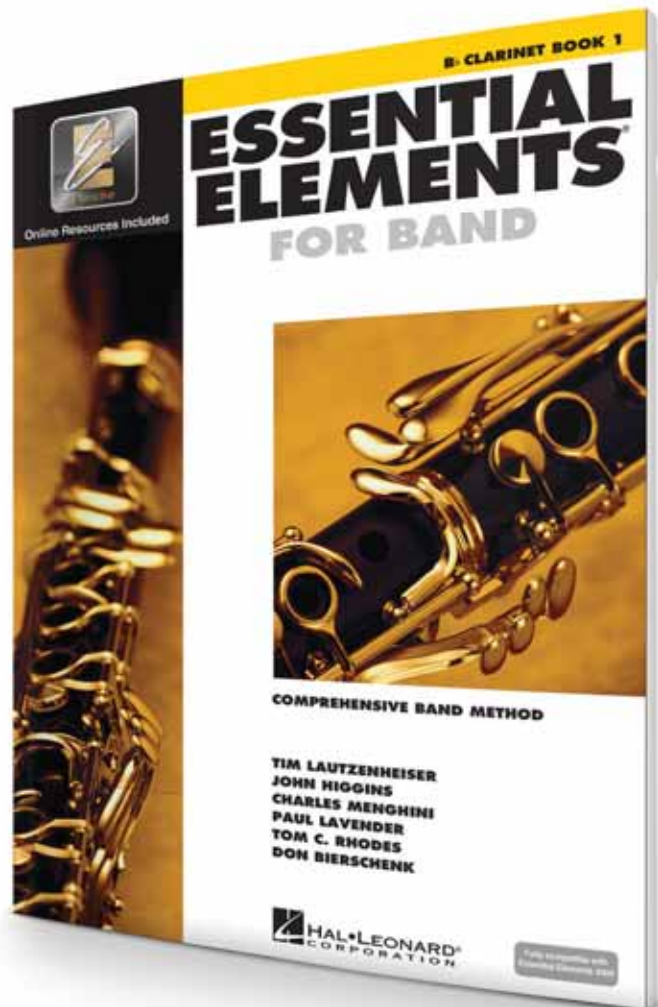


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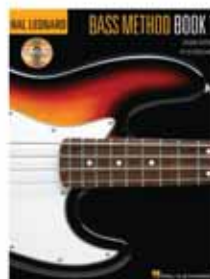
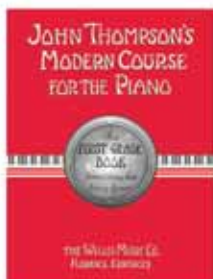
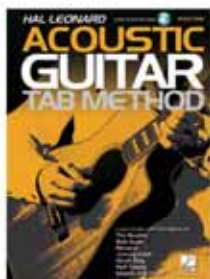


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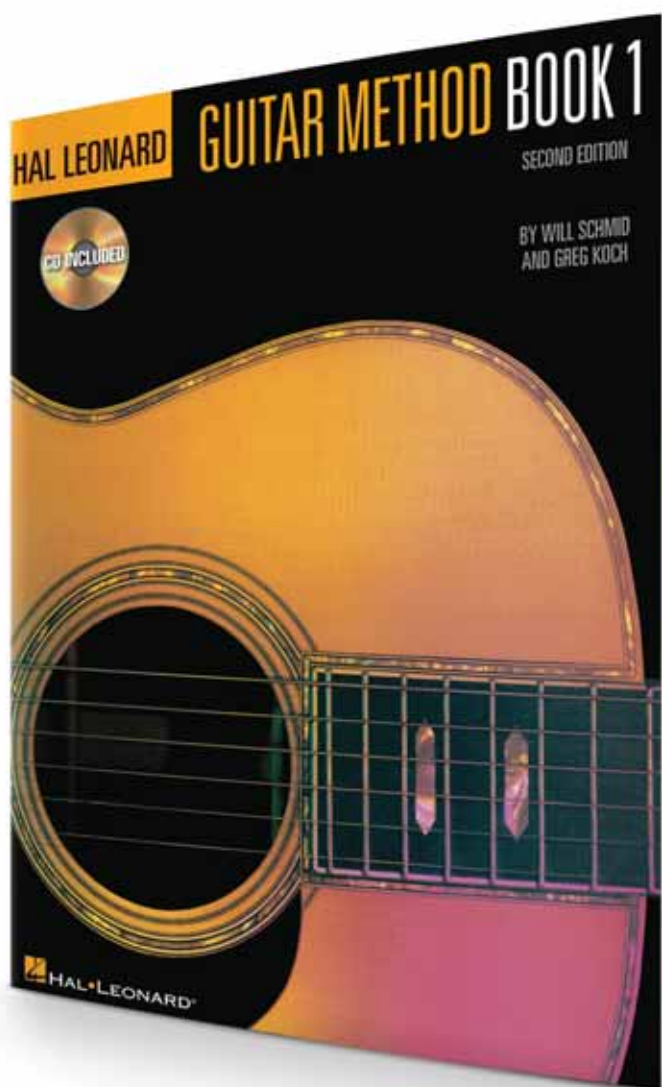
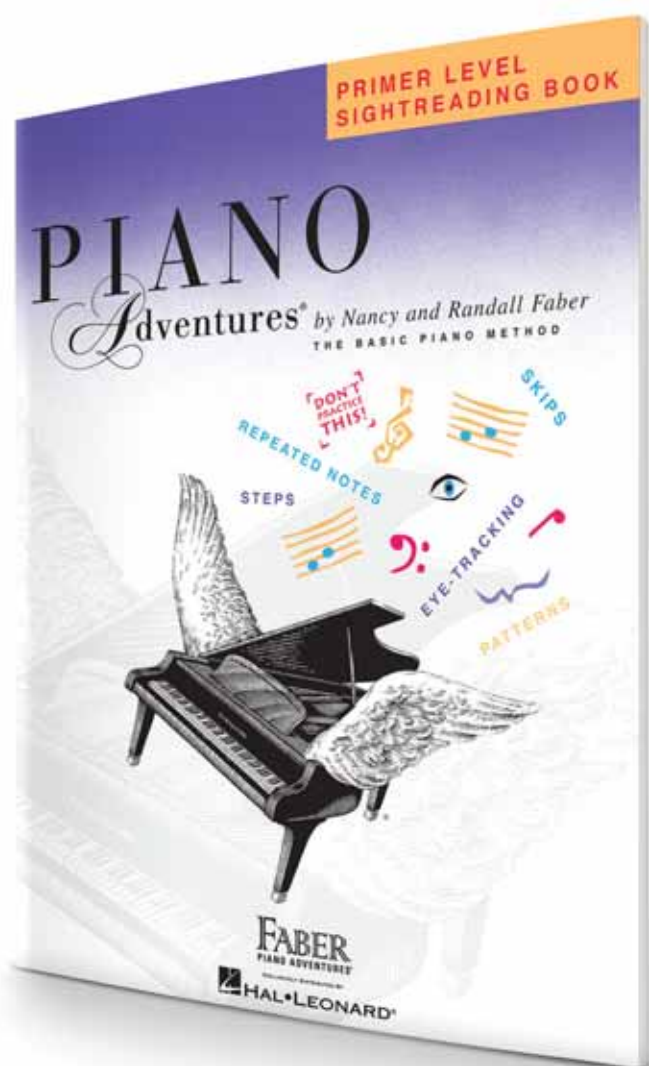


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Vinnie Colaiuta
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PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

WELL-OILED MACHINE

As I write this, I am watching a group of workers pave the street across the way from my office. Each member of the paving team has a specific job. A few are driving heavy machinery, a few are rolling the pavement flat and a few are overseeing the whole process. I'm no construction worker, but I can tell that without each person contributing to this process, the paving would not get done — or at least not as smoothly.

The same goes for a music store. While the operation of heavy machinery is not necessary in a music store, each person in the showroom is playing a part. It might be greeting a customer, booking a lesson, inspecting a broken trumpet or answering a phone call. The music store is a well-oiled machine that requires each employee to pull their own weight.

Many pieces regarding good customer service have graced the pages of *Music Inc.* magazine over the years. But one prime example is this month's cover subject Nick Rail Music (see page 32). Not only has the six-store chain perfected the art of expansion, it has managed to withstand a dry Southern California B&O market with the ever-growing presence of big box stores in the region. If you ask Rail how he has managed to stand his own for 28 years he'll tell you it's simple: through a solid staff.

"The value of your company is the value of the people working at your company," Rail said. "I feel very fortunate to have the

people working for me that are working for me."

And Rail's employees do more than just work at Nick Rail Music. They make shopping at the store a positive experience, no matter who the customer is.

"We have to connect with the customer no matter the age or knowledge," said Gary Francisco, director of sales for Nick Rail Music. "There is little difference from helping an adult or child find the right product for them. Then following up to make sure the customer receives the product promptly and is satisfied."

In his column this month (page 25), Ted Eschliman covers poor employee habits like slouched posture and employee-to-employee conversation.

"Slumping is an avoidable body signal violation on the sales floor," he writes. "Standing or sitting on a stool (even leaning on a counter) shoulders slumped, is an instinctually negative signal to broadcast to a customer."

In order for a business to be successful, it must have engaged employees that contribute. All employees need to be ready to help each person who walks through the door in a knowledgeable and friendly manner — with no slumping. Remember: your staff is a team. Help your store run like the well-oiled machine it is. **MI**



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Repair Shop Praise

Bravo to *Music Inc.* for the article “Repair Shop Tune Up” in its July issue, as well as to the four featured businesses for their excellence. For retailers who are not involved, there has never been a more advantageous time to expand what you offer to consumers by adding maintenance and repair services at whatever level of complexity you are comfortable with.

Most importantly, by offering such services you open the door to the golden opportunity of being able to show a consumer why they should have bought with you in the first place, along with why they should continue to make your business their first choice to fulfill all of their music-related needs.

Don Wiggins
Manager
Technical Support &
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Fender Musical
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Reflection on From the Top

I just wanted to send a big thanks to Editor Katie Kailus and the entire *Music Inc.* team for including me in last month’s “From The Top.” It was really fun!

We’ve come a long way — from rebuilding classic analog compressors once manufactured

by my father to a thriving company that’s constantly seeking to push recording technology forward.

Every day I’m so inspired by our talented team and excited to come to work to see what they’re coming up with next.

I never thought, when I re-founded Universal Audio in my garage over 15 years ago, that we would be so widely recognized by our dealers and the industry at large. I love being part of this industry that allows me to be around people who are passionate about music every day.

Thanks again for letting me tell our story to your readers. I can’t wait to see where it goes from here.

P.S. I’ve enclosed a photo of UA back in the day to share with your readers!

Bill Putnam Jr.
CEO & Founder
Universal Audio



Correction:

In the piece “Arts of Advocacy” (August 2014), the photo of Maria Voles Ferguson on page 46 was incorrect. *Music Inc.* regrets the error.

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GO BEYOND SOUND
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RETAIL

UPBEAT MUSIC | BY KATHLEEN COSTANZA

NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

Costview needed a music store. The quickly growing city in Florida's panhandle was expanding from the massive Elgin Air Force Base and young families were traveling over 40 miles to rent band instruments, take lessons and shop.

So in 2012, Dick Reinlie hopped on the chance and opened UpBeat Music.

"We weren't ready to open yet, we still had paper up on the door, and people were knocking on the window to get in," he said. Reinlie spent 25 years as a telecommunications executive before switching back into music retail about 10 years ago. "We had people coming to the store to help us set up. They were giving us displays. It was an incredible experience."

Sure enough, sales grew fast and Reinlie said by the end of the first year he was a year ahead of his business plan with 100 students and 100 rentals. Sales have increased nearly 50 percent annually. But like any retailer opening its doors in the post-recession era, trucking onwards has taken a number of strategies to navigate a new retail climate.

SERVICE ORIENTED

For one thing, the store is upping its focus on services



Dick Reinlie surrounded by John Giles and JC Murph, (top row) David Cadenhead, Kyle Boone (bottom row).

'What the Internet can't do — that's what I'm trying to do.'

more than Reinlie initially expected.

"About 60 percent of the dollars coming in are selling and 40 percent are services," he said. He initially predicted it would be an 80/20 breakdown, though he's aiming now for a 50/50 split. "What the internet can't do — that's what I'm trying to do."

To boost services, UpBeat recently started a promotion where customers get a free guitar when

they sign up for three months of lessons. He also has his sights set on a larger presence in the B&O market by forging relationships with the local schools and B&O programs.

THE LOCAL WEB

Originally, UpBeat launched a separate e-commerce site called PriceBeat, a move Reinlie called perhaps a bit "naive." ("It's tough to compete," he said.)

Now, Reinlie is leveraging the Internet with a more specific purpose: attracting local sales. He's steering online sales back to UpBeat Music and using the Web to catch the eyes of local business by paying for Google AdWords only within a 50 mile radius. The company also focuses on honing SEO keywords to

make the store to pop up.

"We want to be a major company in our geographic area," he said. "Everyone who's buying on the Internet? We want them to see us. We're going to pop up within a 50 mile radius. I don't care about popping up in Atlanta. I don't care about popping up anywhere else."

He's also restructured his website to target vertical markets. Houses of worship, band parents and commercial AV are clearly marked, rather than displaying general product categories.

"We're going to try to be in the minds of the local people," he said.

Meanwhile, PriceBeat will evolve to a password-protected site for customers that will list clearance and speciality items.

BACK TO BASICS

Although Reinlie is continually trying out new ways to compete, he said the root of the stores' success will be filling a niche bigger players can't and treating customers as if "they're coming into your house."

"It's one-on-relationships that make the difference for us," he said. "We're never going to be Musician's Friend or Guitar Center or Sam Ash. But we're going to be the best UpBeat Music there is." **MI**

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LOWE VINTAGE INSTRUMENT COMPANY | OPENING

Father-Son Team Open Lowe Vintage

After more than a decade of road tripping and selling their vintage finds online, father-and-son team Ed and Will Lowe have opened Lowe Vintage Instrument Company, a brick-and-mortar store in Burlington, North Carolina.

“That was the best week of my year when I was a kid, going out on this road trip,” Will said, adding sometimes the pawn shops and guitar stores he and his dad would end up in would be a disappointment, other times they’d be filled with hidden gems. “It was kind of just the thrill of the hunt for us.”

When Ed and Will were both at crossroads in their careers earlier this year, they crunched the numbers and decided to take the Web business a step further with a brick-and-mortar storefront. Specifically, Ed specializes in Gibson flathead banjos but the store carries a wide mix of vintage guitars, banjos, mandolins, accessories and pedals.

They still expect to do

the bulk of their high-end instrument business online, though, putting a heavy emphasis on social media and high-quality photography. Will has been building the company’s social media presence for about a year before the store opened, garnering about 7,000 Facebook fans.

“We took the plunge so we’re learning as we go, but we’re doing even better than we expected,” Will said. “But hopefully one day this will be on the map with the Gruhn Guitars and Carter Vintage Guitars of the world.”



IN MEMORIAM



DANNY ROCKS

Danny Rocks, who served as the emcee and helped manage the Idea Center at NAMM shows since 2006, passed away in July in Palm Desert, California. He was 64.

Rocks was the founder of The Company Rocks, a firm dedicated to education for business professionals, companies and associations. He took on a wide variety of projects, from working with NAMM to creating business instructional videos. Prior to forming the company in 2006, Rocks served a 26-year career in executive roles at Alfred Music as well as nine-years at G. Schirmer, Inc.

“Danny knew more about this business than anyone else I have ever met,” said Ron Manus, president of Alfred Music. “To watch him at a convention was a joy. He always knew everyone’s name and remembered everything about them. He was impressive. I loved Danny’s unique style and his exaggerated hand gestures when he was speaking to a group. His up-close and firm hand shake always made me smile and feel special, as if I was in Danny’s special club. Danny is one of the pillars of our industry, a proud face on the music industry’s Mount Rushmore. He was a colleague to some, a mentor to many and a friend to all.”

“He was the coach, he was the emcee,” said Ken Wilson, former NAMM director of professional development, who hired Rocks to work the Idea Center. “If somebody cancelled, Danny could be on the stage, do that session, and he could do a good one. He was incredibly conscientious. He took it very seriously. To me, he was the heart of that thing. He knew everybody. He coordinated everybody. He worked non-stop. He was just great. And he loved it.”

Rocks was an active member of the Music Teachers National Association, the American Music Conference and the Retail Print Music Dealers Association. He received RPMDA’s highest honor for lifetime achievement, the Dorothy Award, in 2011.

IN MEMORIAM



RON EDELMAN

Capital Music Center co-owner and co-founder Ron Edelman passed away on June 1. Ron Edelman and Cherrie Drutz co-founded Capital Music Center in 1988. Edelman was a salesman and a successful businessman, but possibly his greatest accomplishment was the impact he made on people's lives. Making piano lessons more fun was paramount to Edelman, and he believed that Capital Music could make this possible by becoming an education center with technology and group piano as its core.

ALFREDO L. FLORES

Alfredo L. Flores, founder of Alamo Music Center in San Antonio, Texas, passed away June 30. He was 105. Flores founded the The Alamo Piano company in 1929 and, from the front porch he shared with his mother and sister, transformed his piano technician skills into a successful business.

"My father's philosophy is to be involved in the community — and run the business in a common sense way," Alfredo Flores Jr., Alamo Music Center's current owner, told *Music Inc.* last February.

CALVIN R. GRAFTON

Calvin R. Grafton passed away July 11. He was 83. In 1963, Grafton opened Calvin Grafton Electronics Sales & Service, later incorporated as Grafton Piano & Organ Co. Inc. Under his leadership the company grew from a small shop in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, to its present location in Souderton, carrying a complete range of pianos, organs and keyboards. The company also installed and serviced hundreds of Allen church organs in the tri-state area.

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LONG & MCQUADE | AWARD



JACK LONG RECEIVES ORDER OF CANADA

Yorkville Sound and Long & McQuade founder Jack Long has received the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honors.

Long is being recognized as a pioneer in Canada's music retail and manufacturing industry. Other appointees this year included astronaut Chris Hadfield and comedian Richard Mercer.

"Making music is a lifelong passion," Long said. "Music is something that can improve peoples' lives."

Long founded Long & McQuade in 1956 after he started selling instruments to friends in the industry. Fifty-eight years later, the chain has 65 locations across Canada. Long also established Yorkville Sound as a separate manufacturing and distribution company in 1963. Yorkville Sound continues to manufacture Yorkville Pro Audio, VTC ProAudio and the Traynor guitar and bass amp brands at its facility in Pickering, Ontario.



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NRF | ADVOCACY

NRF Adds Business Council, Revises Retail Forecast

The National Retail Federation is forming a Small Business Retail Council "to organize, recruit and engage Main Street merchants and independent community retailers in grassroots advocacy activities." The Council will represent the needs and interests of local retailers and will give the NRF's small business members a forum to discuss public policy issues.

The NRF also recently revised its retail sales forecast for 2014, lowering the expected growth from 4.1 percent over 2013 to 3.6 percent. It cited severe winter weather, along with other factors, for slowing down the year's growth trajectory.

"There is plenty of evidence that the second half of the year will be better for the industry as consumers begin to feel more optimistic about their spending decisions," said NRF President and CEO Matthew Shay.

TED BROWN MUSIC | ACQUISITION

Ted Brown Music Acquires Capitol Music

Ted Brown Music, based in Tacoma, Wash., is expanding to a new frontier: Seattle.

The 83-year-old company acquired Capitol Music Center (CMC), a popular Seattle music store located in the University District. Established in 1919, CMC was known for having the biggest selection of

sheet music in Seattle.

While the store location and staffing will remain the same, Capitol Music customers will see an even better selection of sheet music along with Ted Brown Music's musical instrument rentals and services.

The new store joins Ted Brown Music's flagship Tacoma store, as well as other

locations in Puyallup, Silverdale, Yakima and Richland. This is the company's first opportunity to reach a large potential market in the middle of Seattle.

The acquisition comes right at the heels the company receiving NAMM's Support-Music Advocacy Award and being recognized as a NAMM Top 100 Retailer.

MIDWESTERN MUSICAL CO. | CLOSING

Midwestern Musical Co. Closes its Doors

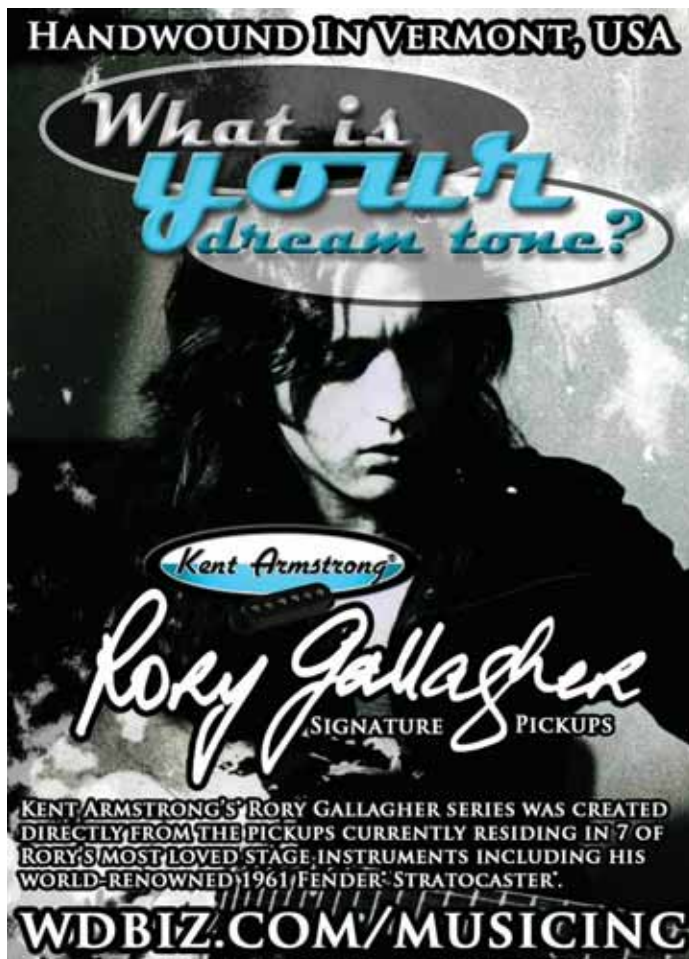
Midwestern Musical Co. in Kansas City, Missouri, closed its doors in early August after 25 years.

Matt Kesler co-founded the store in 1989 with Jim Strahm, who passed away in 2000. Over the years, the store

added a repair shop, recording studio and practice space for local bands.

"This has been a labor of love and more of a hobby than a business, as far as definitions of business and hobby go," Kesler told local arts and music

publication *The Pitch*. "Don't get me wrong — it's been a lot of fun, and I'm sad, but it's time to move on. Honestly, I was really pushing to get to 25 years, and I'm there, and now I'll be able to concentrate on a lot of other things."



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SUPPLY

T-REX ENGINEERING | BY JOHN JANOWIAK

PEDALS WITH BITE

T-Rex Engineering may be a small boutique manufacturer of guitar pedals, but as its carnivorous name might suggest, the company has a big bite when it comes to chomping out market share in its niche.

“Everybody is talking about T-Rex at the moment,” said Lars Dahl-Jørgensen, company co-founder and co-owner. “There’s a lot of fuss on the Internet.”

With less than a dozen full-time employees, T-Rex is headquartered in the unlikely town of Vejle, Denmark, the place co-founders Dahl-Jørgensen and Sebastian Jensen call home. The longtime pals had both studied electronics and engineering, and Dahl-Jørgensen was, and still is, an avid guitarist. They started out in their garage the 1990s making switching systems modeled after the legendary designs of Bob Bradshaw.

“It was pretty hard to sell because we weren’t well known,” Dahl-Jørgensen said. “I thought, if we can make switching systems, we can make pedals, and that’s what started T-Rex, more or less.”

MONSTER GROWTH

T-Rex Engineering officially debuted in 1996. In the crowded market of guitar-effects pedals, what would set their products apart? Using quality components,



Lars Dahl-Jørgensen and Sebastian Jensen

T-Rex sees monster growth by setting itself apart from the herd

for one thing — even if it meant spending more and passing that cost onto the customer.

“Consumers may just be more willing to spend a little more money for the reassurance that they’re getting a well-designed, high-quality piece of gear that will last,” said Erik Lind, product manager for Musiquip, the company’s U.S. distributor.

They also made a point to solicit feedback from guitarists of all styles and levels.

“We spend a lot of time sending them back and forth to

different guitarists to get their opinion,” Dahl-Jørgensen said.

From these guitarists, they’ve learned the importance of keeping their pedals simple.

“We hate having too many knobs, actually,” he said. “We try to make some innovative things, but still simple to use.”

Another thing they learned was to give their pedals a splash of color. In the middle of solos, when guitarists want to switch effects quickly, they need to distinguish their pedals easily. Hence the panoply of colors in T-Rex’s array.

“We never make a black pedal, because that’s pretty boring,” Dahl-Jørgensen said.

T-Rex pedals are now distributed in dozens of nations and are sold by independent retailers

as well as the largest MI operations in the world. They first appeared in North America in the mid-2000’s. Then, in 2010, T-Rex partnered with Musiquip for distribution in the United States and with SFM in Canada.

“We have around 100 North American retailers carrying the pedals — a mix of independent dealers, pedal specialty retailers, and some larger chains,” Lind said. “We’ve been fortunate to have a lot of really great top-level American artists use T-Rex effects, and that has helped the line catch on in the United States.”

This year, the company launched an unprecedented 10 new pedals. The new products include a number of compact pedals that diverge a bit from T-Rex’s traditional square-box design.

“One of the most exciting releases is the SoulMate multi-effect board, which gives the user five T-Rex effects in one unit, plus a tuner, effects loop, programmable effect combinations, and a number of additional features,” Lind said.

With its growing cachet and widening distribution, perhaps “boutique” is an inaccurate label to apply to T-Rex Effects.

Or as Lind put it, “You might say T-Rex is a boutique company that has been fortunate enough to achieve a more mainstream level of success.” **MI**

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PROGRAM

MPTF Launches MI Sponsorship Program

The Music Performance Trust Fund (MPTF) supported by the major labels and Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), including Sony Music, Universal Music Group, Warner Brothers Music and Disney, has launched an innovative sponsorship program geared to connect instrument manufacturers and retailers with working musicians called MPTF's Instrumental Partners.

The new Instrumental Partners initiative will also expand the MPTF's primary goal of providing free music events to communities across North America.

"Our goal is to create a greater connection between various factions of the music industry, and to expand the number and impact of our events," said Dan Beck, MPTF trustee. musicpf.org



CONTEST

Pearl River Offers Trip to China

Celebrating 30 years of North American distribution, Pearl River Piano Group has announced a special incentive program for Pearl River dealers. Top performers can qualify for a trip to Guangzhou, China, which will include a tour of the company's new 12,000,000-square-foot factory.

Over the last 30 years, Pearl River has established a solid dealer network throughout North America. The company has introduced the Pearl River brand, as well as Ritmuller and Kayserburg to its product line in North America.

The 30th Anniversary program will extend through Dec. 31. pearlriverusa.com

HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

HAL, HAMILTON TEAM UP

Hal Leonard is now distributing the entire portfolio of Hamilton Stands and accessories in the United States and Canada. Headquartered in Dayton, Ohio, Hamilton Stands has historically relied on strong wholesale distributors who offer retailers a diverse array of products.

"We're thrilled to have Hal Leonard as a partner," said Bob Jespersen, director of marketing and sales for Hamilton Stands. "A marriage between the leader in print music and an iconic music stand manufacturer is practically poetic. Hal Leonard has a terrific sales team with an impeccable record of customer service. The new markets and channels Hal Leonard is addressing will be well served with the innovative new products Hamilton is adding to a portfolio of practical support."

"Hamilton offers a wide range of prod-

ucts for professionals to hobbyists in schools, churches, concert stages, studios and homes," said Brad Smith, senior sales and marketing manager for Hal Leonard. "They not only have a broad line of well-respected and established products, but also continue to seek solutions for music makers in all markets, including emerging ones."

halleonard.com; hamiltonstands.com



WEB NEWS

Altus Redesigns Website

The Altus team at KHS America has launched its new website. The new homepage gives the consumer a quick glance of all things Altus, including the company's latest products, history, news, artists and events. Altus has also simplified its product navigation to be more intuitive and responsive to the way today's Internet users prefer to search for information. Consumers will now

be able to easily navigate through the site to find the available flutes, headjoints, tubings and metallurgy along with other Altus events and offerings.

Altus also expanded the artist section of the site. Visitors to the site can now learn about Altus artist's activities and their feelings about the instruments, as well as find links to their personal Web pages. altusflutes.com

DAISY ROCK | ARTIST APPROVED

Daisy Rock Announces First Artist Endorsement

Daisy Rock Girl Guitars has announced The Sledge Grits Band as the first musicians to receive exclusive artist endorsements from the company.

In addition to signing an exclusive artist endorsement agreement, Daisy Rock will be producing custom-made instruments for band mates and sisters, including a guitar for Keiko and bass guitar for Ella. The decision to exclusively endorse The Sledge Grits Band was made to continue supporting female musicians and to further the Daisy Rock creed of inspiring girls to play guitar and enjoy music.

“Never before have we exclusively endorsed an artist and outfitted them with custom guitars and basses. But



because of Keiko and Ella’s exceptional talent, we couldn’t pass on this opportunity to move into the next phase,” said Tish Ciravolo, president and founder of Daisy Rock. “We have been a part of The Sledge Grits Band since the beginning and have watched them become the amazing musicians that they are today.” daisyrock.com

PMC | EVENT

PMC TEACHES KIDS TO PLAY

For the fifth consecutive year, Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) and local music retailers provided free first drum lessons at its Lesson Lab Tent during the Vans Warped Tour in Houston; San Antonio; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Mansfield, Massachusetts; Camden, New Jersey; Wantagh, New York; Hartford, Connecticut; Cincinnati and Milwaukee.

The self-contained educational Play Drums tent puts drumsticks in the hands of more than 60 first-time drummers during each stop of the tour that features a Lesson Lab. Each tent is fully equipped with an acoustic or an electronic drum set, including cymbals and sticks, to provide a positive and professional learning experience for first-time players. Many drummers from performing bands stopped by the PMC tent to help generate excitement for the project.

“We have seen a surge of interest from concert-goers at every city where we participate,” said Billy Cuthrell, a PMC advisory board member who

coordinates the Lesson Lab Tent. “The key to our program is partnering with local percussion stores that also offer drum lessons. The store operates and coordinates the tent’s operations with one or more of their drum teachers conducting the free lesson.” playdrums.com



ORANGE | OPENING

Orange Celebrates New Factory

Orange Amplification opened its new factory in Zhejiang Province, China on July 7. The new facility covers 3,000 square meters and increases manufacturing capacity.

The special opening event was attended by Chinese government officials, dignitaries, employees, suppliers and customers and was hosted by Damon Waller, MD and Orange’s founder and CEO Cliff Cooper. The ceremony featured traditional Chinese musicians performing along with Chinese dragons — a symbol of good fortune.

The new factory represents a continuing investment in global expansion with the company now manufacturing on three continents. To ensure consistent high levels of quality control, Orange opened a state-of-the-art training school for the staff at all levels of manufacturing.

“The opening of our new factory will increase production and enable us to reduce lead times,” said Cliff Cooper. orangeamps.com



APPOINTMENTS

FISHMAN EXPANDS SALES TEAM



Gary Lopez

Fishman has added two to its sales force.

John Polino joins the Fishman sales team from First Act where he spent the last six years as a warehouse manager, sales sample coordinator, consumer relations

manager and product manager.

Gary Lopez has been involved in music industry retail sales for over two decades working with Daddy’s Junky Music and Cambridge Soundworks.

“We are genuinely happy to have these two very skilled sales representatives working for us as Fishman is continuing to grow at an amazing pace,” said Bill Norton, vice president of retail sales. “John and Gary bring a high level of expertise into our new category entries, including TriplePlay and Fluence electric guitar pickups.” fishman.com

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IDEAS

Inside**IDEAS** > The Lesson Room Page 26 > The Customer Whisperer Page 28

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

BEATING A SLUMP

“You can trust your car to the man who wears the star. The big bright Texaco star!”

If you were to spontaneously hum the above jingle’s melody it would betray your age. It was big in the 1960s, this major corporation’s image pitch was of unrestrained service onto a generation of motorist consumers. Snappy uniforms and sparkling metal equipment, overt and pains-takingly honest technicians who went out of the way to assure your freshly fueled car worked not only in the station but many miles outside of it.

Earnest? Arguably. Nonetheless, it was a multi-million dollar ambition to romance us to Texaco’s turf. Really, it’s absurd for gas stations to stay that kind of clean. Wouldn’t you be more suspicious of a spotlessly uniformed mechanic over one greased from sleeve to cuff?

Things change. Today, there’s no employee at a station that is remotely an expert on car maintenance. Gas stations are now convenience stores minimally manned by dispassionate minimum wage clerks. Though we understand



Posture and friendliness are key to good customer service

it’s a different world, our hearts still long for that ’60s mythos.

Music stores have a whole different set of service expectations than gas stops. Our product is lifestyle — infinitely more aesthetic and complex. Really, those commercials are more fitting for us than the gas stop. When a customer enters, we have a deeply genuine opportunity to enhance lives through music. Though to-

day’s culture hardly expects a spotless uniform, we could still be neat and friendly (emphasize that last part). Most important, we need to register this with our body language and posture.

PHYSICALITY & FIRST CONTACT

Slumping is an avoidable body signal violation on the sales floor. Standing or sitting on a stool (even leaning on a counter) shoulders slumped, is an instinctually negative signal to broadcast to a customer. Throw the shoulders back and bring both the center of the chest and chin up — your impact is starkly different. This might not feel natural for many, but a conscious effort will have a visible impact on customers, especially in making a first impression. Managers, take heed. Never have stool behind the sales counter. Standing equals attention!

THREE’S A CROWD

Imagine a customer is allowed to slip through employees and roam through the store alone for several minutes. They almost have one foot out the door. You stop her and ask, “Did you find what you were looking for?” Her

response is she was looking for a very specific “mission” item. It turns out it is something you stock. You narrowly avoided missing that sale.

Customers don’t like “bothering” sales crew. They especially don’t want to ask an employee that’s busy or comfortable in conversation with a fellow employee.

Some might be bold enough to ask a single employee for help. If two workers are talking to each other, there’s a significantly less chance he will interrupt. If three are talking, the conversation is perceptively closed to “outsiders,” impossible to barge in on. It’s great to have social employees that like each other, but fraternizing must stop when a customer is in earshot.

It takes little more than eye contact, upright shoulders, and a smile to make folks feel welcome. Yes, dancing around like a vintage Texaco commercial today would be way overboard, but at minimum we need to make the drive to a brick-and-mortar an experience worth the gas. **MI**

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

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Avoiding the Dead Zone

We all have them. Those times when we can't seem to get any students in the door — 8 p.m. Tuesday night, 11 a.m. Monday morning, Saturday afternoons. Lesson rooms sit empty that could be providing revenue for both your store and your teachers. And what's worse is you are probably turning possible lessons away that can only do certain times. Here's a few ways to remedy this situation:



Eliminating dead times in your lesson program is as easy as taking a second look at your schedule

1.) DEVELOP A LESSON SCHEDULE PLAN

Develop a plan for what the best times are for certain lesson demographics. For example, most 6 year olds don't do well at 8 p.m. and most teens can't do lessons at noon during the week. Make a plan that uses that approach.

Here's an example: Weekdays from 7—9 p.m. for older teens and adults; 5—7 p.m. for pre-teens; 2—5 p.m. for elementary school students; 12 —2 p.m. for adults, seniors and homeschooled students. Saturdays work for all ages. Train your staff to use this plan to route students into these times.

2.) STOP ASKING: "WHAT TIME WORKS BEST FOR YOU?"

Why? Because everyone wants your prime times, and if you're successful those times already aren't available. Here's your new approach to lesson times: "I have a fantastic teacher at 8 p.m.!" or "We've got some really awesome teachers on Saturdays!"

Many times your dead times are dead because you or your staff haven't made them sound "alive" and awesome. They are made to sound like leftovers.

3.) THE "BOOK SATURDAY FIRST" CAMPAIGN

When is the last time you and your staff offered your lessons on Saturdays? I teach at two retail locations. At "Store A" lessons on Saturdays are anemic and at "Store B," lessons on Saturdays are booming. It's not the teachers, because the teachers teach at

both locations on different days. What's the difference? The staff at "Store B" presents lessons on Saturdays first, not as a leftover choice. The end result: more Saturday lessons, and more prime-time availability during the week.

4.) DEVELOP PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS

Promote this special time spot for seniors when the store is less crazy. Have teachers who have great results with this age group come in during these times. You will find that retired students can come in earlier than everyone else. These seniors will see other students their age. They will pass the word around with their friends, creating even more lessons at your store. Note that this time also works well for moms who want to take lessons.

5.) SPIFF THE DEAD SPOTS

That's right. What if you offer a "spiff" for every "dead" spot booked? As little as \$5 can buy a coffee at Starbucks. It sends the message to your staff that you want these times booked with lessons. If you charge a registration fee for your students, try a "No Registration Fee" policy for these those who choose these times. **MI**

Pete Gamber is a 35-year veteran of music retailing and music lessons. He specializes in music lesson programs and music retail consulting. He can be reached at petegambermusic@gmail.com.

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THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

Mono-Tasking 101

We had a wonderful rep back in the 1980s. His name was Herb Holt. He covered the upper Midwest for Currier Pianos and Ovation Guitars. Like so many memorable people who cross our path, Herb left us a lasting lesson. “People can only pay attention to one thing at a time,” he would say. I don’t even remember the the first time he said it. We were probably in a bar having a deep, metaphysical discussion on sales psychology. I lost track of Herb after he retired and I moved to Florida, but I never forgot that little gem of wisdom he gave us. One thing at a time.



‘Only when we break the cycle of letting ourselves be constantly distracted we will be able to focus intently on our clients.’

Today, unfortunately, we pay attention to a lot of things at once. We call it multi-tasking. For example, we might drink coffee, text and eat a sweet roll on our morning drive while listening to the radio and looking at a GPS screen. In Washington for the NAMM Fly-In, we saw not one, but two D.C. policemen staring at their phones while walking their beat and monitoring the little radio receiver on their epaulets. During this year’s recital season, parents seemed content to let one child play games on their iPad while their older sister or brother performed. Recently, in a theater to see Jersey Boys, we noticed several faces reflecting the glow of little screens. Some people consider their ability to multi-task a virtue. But, is it?

In 1956, psychologist George A. Miller of Princeton University, in what has become one of psychology’s most cited papers, argued that the number of objects an average human can hold in working memory is 7 (+/- 2). Whether Miller’s Law predicts an exact number has been debated endlessly, but the point is, there are limits to how much information we can process, and the threshold is pretty low. Another psychologist, Sarah Ransdell, found that just listening to music could reduce students ability to write by as much as 60 words per hour. Simply stated, as we increase the quantity of things we are doing, we reduce the quality of how well we do them.

HARNESSING PERSONAL HABITS

As employers we must ask: Do we really want our employees staring at their phone, their tablet or their laptop during meetings? As merchants we should ask: Do we really want that clerk juggling two phone calls and scanning an email while tuning a customer’s guitar? As customers we will ask: Am I entitled to that salesperson’s complete and undivided attention?

And isn’t that what each customer really wants and deserves — our full attention. There is certainly no virtue to multi-tasking if I am the one being multitasked. Whatever chance we have of establishing a meaningful engagement with a customer can be instantly destroyed by just one glance at our phone.

Becoming a mono-tasker starts with our own personal habits. Can you ignore a cell phone that rings when you’re driving? Or, that beep telling you an email just arrived? Can you watch an entire TV show without a tablet in your lap? How about a movie? When was the last time you had an uninterrupted conversation that lasted 20 minutes? We are not slaves to our electronic devices. Let’s train ourselves to ignore them until a time of our own

choosing. Only when we break the cycle of letting ourselves be constantly distracted we will be able to focus intently on our clients.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to let your customers know that your entire attention is devoted to them:

- Silence your phone and put it in a drawer before you greet a customer. Every time!
- Establish a never-interrupt-a-salesperson-who-is-with-a-customer rule. (My dad had this rule in his store when I was a kid. How we lost it is a mystery.)
- Eliminate distractions in your store and train yourself to ignore the distractions you can't cure. If you don't get distracted, your customers won't get distracted.
- If there is background music, turn it off.
- If there are TV screens with product demos running, get rid of them. They really don't work and your store is not a saloon.
- Don't let customers' kids run wild. Their parents will thank you.
- Demand your customers full attention just as you are giving them yours. If their phone rings, and they are rude enough to answer it, or even if they are just texting, excuse yourself. Let them know where you will be when they are ready to resume.



The first President Bush may have lost his chance for re-election when he glanced at his watch during a 1992 debate after a voter asked a question related to how the deep recession had hurt his family. Bill Clinton took a different approach. "Tell me how it's affected you again," he said as he walked up and looked straight into her eyes.

Our clients deserve that same empathy from us. Let's disconnect from the countless distractions around us and let our client know — for at least this moment — they are the most important person in the world. **MI**

Greg Billings whispers to customers at the Steinway Piano Gallery in Naples, Florida. He welcomes questions and comments at greg@steinwaynaples.com.

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Note From Joe Promoting Music Making!

Music is everywhere in our world—just try to picture even an hour of your day without it. But as an industry, we want more people to PLAY music themselves, right?! The end zone is clear: get more people to play music and fewer to quit. We all have a part in that, including your association. While you promote your brands and products, NAMM has the unique role of promoting the whole concept of music making. We reach out to the general public about the benefits of making music, whether it's fighting to keep music in schools or encouraging people of all ages to "just play" an instrument.

Through our "Circle of Benefits" business model, Membership dues and support of the NAMM trade shows go directly back into our industry through the NAMM Foundation, which works year-round to promote music and advocate for music education. These funds also support important music/brain research and public relations efforts that grow the pool of music makers. So far, 2014 has been an exciting year with national media spotlighting NAMM and the NAMM Foundation's growing list of activities.

In March, the NAMM Foundation unveiled its newest public service announcement in the "Just Play" campaign (YouTube.com/NAMMorg), focusing on the benefits of playing music for all people. This multi-media, international PSA campaign has already received \$10 million in free air time—spreading our universal message about the joy of making music through inspirational radio, TV, digital and billboard messages. Many NAMM Members are also using these messages in their stores and marketing efforts—and so should you.

Other recent examples include the Best Communities for Music Education in April, which resulted in more than 1,000 news articles and TV spots. We've heard dozens of times that

being named to this list has saved programs from the chopping block, meaning more kids had music this year because of this program and the resulting publicity.

You've probably heard a lot about our industry's Advocacy Fly-In in Washington, D.C., this past May promoting music education to our nation's leaders. And with a robust PR effort, *The Washington Post*, *Access Hollywood*, *People Magazine*, *CBS Evening News* and dozens of other media outlets covered the Fly-In and helped our message reach millions of parents, teachers and administrators nationwide.

Make Music Day on June 21 is becoming a very important date on the calendar as our global industry promotes the fun of playing a musical instrument. Here in the United States, dozens of major cities got in on the act, including New York City, Chicago, Boston, Denver, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Events that showcase the power of music appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Billboard* and other media outlets across the country. The event was a success—and our job was to ensure that the world heard the news.

March, April, May and June. The efforts during these four months are just a few examples of NAMM's relentless promotion of music that encourages more people to start playing and fewer people to stop. We are grateful to the NAMM Members who help to make these efforts a success, especially those who utilize and share these messages through their own networks. Together, we are making this a more musical world!



Joe Lamond

NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



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THE BAND MASTER

A tough SoCal B&O market has nothing on Nick Rail Music. The indie chain has managed to scoop up a large school base by expanding its footprint all across the southern half of the state using strategic acquisitions and lots of planning.

By Katie Kailus

Photography by Sabrina Hill

Seven hundred miles is what separates Nick Rail from all six locations of his Southern California B&O dealership Nick Rail Music. For some owners, this might be the perfect excuse to not visit a shop in San Diego when you are based at the Santa Barbara location — nearly 215 miles north. But Rail has no time for excuses.

“I make a strong point of spending at least one full day in every store each month,” he said. “And once a month I do this quick little 700-mile triangle [trip] that comes down to San Diego, a day in Redlands, a day up in Bakersfield, and then back home to Santa Barbara.”

It’s this sort of dedication and hands-on business model that has kept Nick Rail Music going strong for the past 28 years in the notoriously tough Southern California B&O market.

“Our famous sunny weather means there are many more outdoor activities year round, which may compete

with a child’s interest in or time to play music,” he said.

However, that hasn’t stopped the chain retailer from nabbing business from nearly 1,000 different schools across the southern half of the state.

“During the school year, we’re probably visiting 150–200 schools a week between all the stores,” Rail said.

Expansion Plan

So, how has Rail maintained its stronghold? Through constant innovation. He and his team change all the showrooms around regularly so they don’t become a “static environment” for visitors.

“When the customer comes in and everything looks the same all the time, they just get tunnel vision to the one little part they need to go to and — we don’t want to inconvenience them persay — but we want to give them the opportunity to discover something new.”

A drive to innovate is also what helped Rail launch his business into

new markets across the state. The first Nick Rail Music opened in 1986 in Santa Barbara but moved locations in 1994 and was remodeled and expanded in 1999. And that was just the start.

Over roughly the next 15 years, Rail would open five more shops, close a few, move a few and remodel a few (see sidebar on page 34) — all to keep his look fresh while finding new, stronger markets along the way. Two of Rail’s stores were acquisitions, the now defunct Kearney Mesa store and the San Bernardino location — which has since moved to nearby Redlands. Aside from market assessment, Rail said when acquiring a business it is important to assess the acquired store’s employees.

“We interview the staff to get a sense of how their store culture compares to ours and who will transition well to our style of doing business,” Rail said. “As a school music dealer, we are particularly interested in rentals, so this area gets a lot of scrutiny.”

Acquisitions aside, Rail said adding



Director of sales Gary Francisco, Rail, and general manager and vice president Winston Dutton.

a location to your retail operation can be viewed as “a pleasure, an opportunity and an exercise in patience.”

“As we’ve added locations over the years, it’s been a considered move each time as we weigh the many factors at play which can lead to further success or something less if not planned,” he said.

Some of the factors Rail takes into consideration include potential retail, rentals, lessons and repairs.

“We review who has been, is and may be doing business in the area, the cost of the move, the lease, the availability of capable staff and the overall health of local school music programs,” he said.

Rail said it is also important to judge the impact a new location will have on the existing infrastructure of your business as well as the stores’ vendor and banking relationships.

Rail has kept his showrooms fresh by doing remodels at the Agoura Hills, Santa Barbara and San Diego locations. He said he has learned with every remodel and has greatly benefitted from using Yamaha’s Dealer Development Services.

“We’ve create[d] an environment where the customer has more freedom to self shop,” Rail said.

VocalBooth mobile lesson studios

are also included in his stores to make for easy showroom changes. “They’re good looking, quiet and the fact that they’re portable allows us to change floor plans if and when we choose with relative ease.”

Overall, when making changes to any business plan, Rail advocates looking into all aspects of the company.

“The better we do our homework, the less we see the future through rose-colored glasses,” Rail said.

Part of the future for Nick Rail Music includes expanding the store’s online presence and lesson program. (Rail’s repair business is going strong with the chain performing about 15,000 repairs annually.)

All six locations of Nick Rail Music offer lessons in all instrument categories including voice, drums and guitar (which Rail stocks only a few lines of). Each location sees about 75 students a week and each store has roughly five lesson rooms.

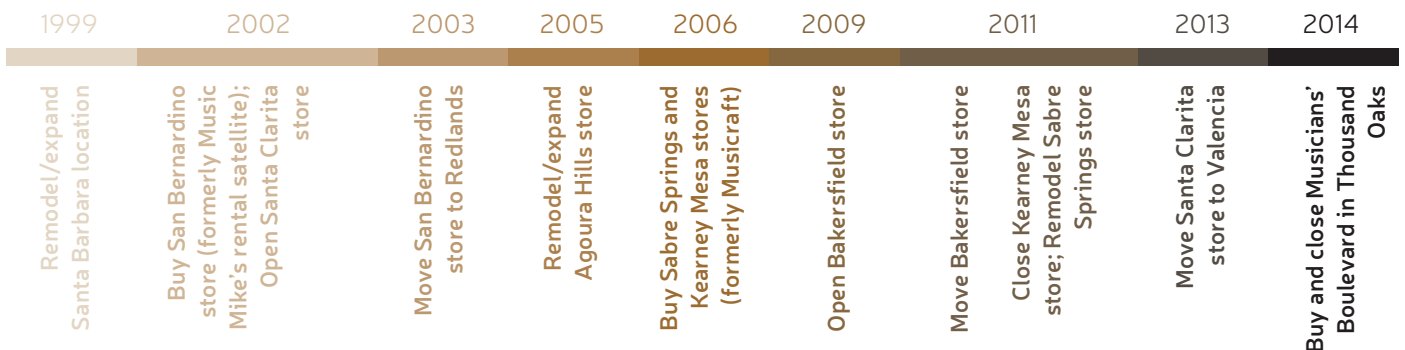
“Lesson programs still represent a growth opportunity for us,” Rail said. “It’s an area that we’re concentrating on more now. The concentration the past 15 years has been adding, refining stores, gaining territory, that sort of thing. Now we’re going to get our studio numbers up. We do well enough with them, but we have room to grow.”

CHANGE IS GOOD

Over the past 15 years, Nick Rail has kept busy acquiring, opening, closing, moving and remodeling his six locations. He said adding or acquiring a new company can be viewed as an opportunity but is also a big responsibility.

“[Adding a location] can be a pleasure for doing past business well, an opportunity to grow and strengthen the company, [but also] a responsibility to not overstep your ability to expand and an exercise in patience as you work on bringing the new acquisition up to profitability,” Rail said.

Here is a timeline of Nick Rail Music’s major milestones.



Good People = Good Returns

Despite more big boxes entering the area, Nick Rail Music has managed to maintain its stronghold on the SoCal B&O market. Rail said one factor that makes his stores stand out amongst the competition is its employees.

“Our people are loyal, dedicated, and believe in our motto of ‘responsible partners in music education,’” Rail said. “[Our employees’] longevity builds consistency, both within the company and for our customers.”

While visiting each store every month, Rail works directly with the managers, introducing promotions and doing training, but, he said most of all, he aims to preserve and promote the company culture of service.

“The value of your company is the value of the people working at your company,” Rail said. “I feel very fortunate to have the people working for me that are working for me. I appreciate their backgrounds, what they bring to the job, their loyalty, their dedication.”

Due to the distance between stores, Rail relies heavily on his staff (which is up to about 50 employees across all locations). One main aspect he looks at when hiring is his future employees’ backgrounds.

“I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that we hire people who are familiar with school band, so they understand the passion of what we do,” Rail said. “People that have not grown up in school band don’t tend to understand it as well. They can have an academic appreciation, but they don’t appreciate it as a past participant. In the hiring process, I’m not only looking for the usual things — motivation, intelligence, good presence — I’m also looking for a great sense of humor. If we don’t have humor, I wouldn’t ever make it out of bed. If I can’t laugh, it’s not a good day.”

Gary Francisco, director of sales for Nick Rail Music, agrees that personalizing the experience for the customer is important, including asking the right questions to get a

feel for what best fits their individual needs.

“We have to connect with the customer no matter the age or knowledge,” Francisco said. “There is little difference from helping an adult or child find the right product.”

With strong customer service intact, Rail looks ahead to the future, stating he doesn’t plan to add new stores any time soon, but instead work on the existing locations.

“We’ve been very active the past fifteen years,” he said. “It’s time to pause, catch our breath, and give our infrastructure the chance to catch up with our external growth.” **MI**



 An advertisement for Kyser Guitar Straps. On the left, a close-up of a light-colored acoustic guitar with a dark, patterned strap. The strap has a green and black paisley-like pattern. The background is white with a dark border.

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WALK THROUGH

Nick Rail Music moved its Santa Clarita, California location to its current space in Valencia in 2013. The 2,200-square-foot space includes three lesson studios and a brass room. Here is a snapshot of the showroom:



MAIN SHOWROOM

Rail said he and his team like to move the showroom around occasionally. "The thought is next time you come here, it shouldn't be where it is now," he said. "We don't move everything all the time, but on a rotating basis. We want departments to move or be redesigned so the store doesn't become a static environment."

GUITAR SELECTION >

Rail focuses the majority of his business on B&O, but stocks a few guitar models including Yamaha and Ibanez.



FRONT DESK

With the checkstand located at the front of the store, staff can greet customers as they walk in.

▼



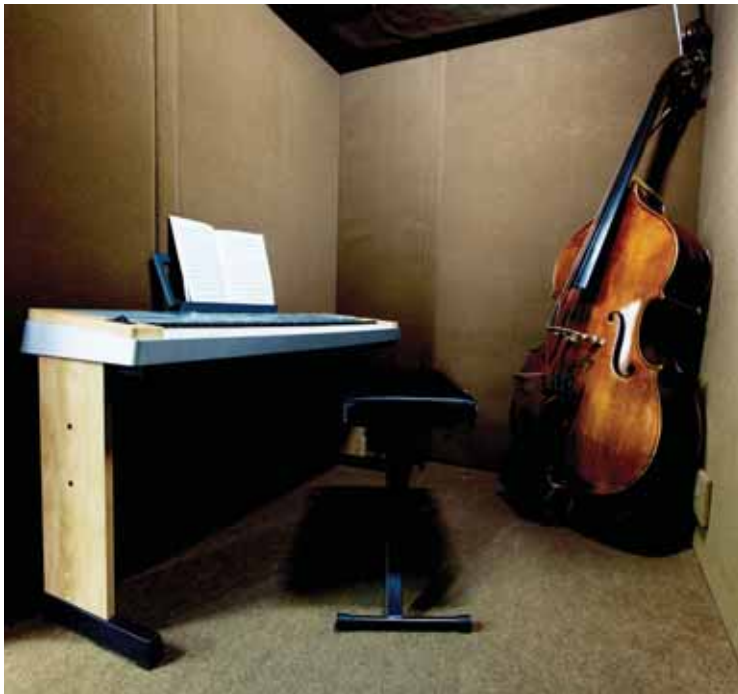
BRASS SHOWROOM

Nick Rail Music's brass showroom gives the customer a separate area to try out the selection away from the buzz of the rest of the store.



< CYMBAL SELECTION
The stores offer a few cymbal lines and do a large amount of marching drum rentals.

PRINT WALL
“We’ve had piano stores go out of business in the neighborhoods of several of our stores,” Rail said. “The students haven’t gone away, the teachers haven’t gone away and while we don’t handle pianos past electronic stuff, we’ve had quite a boost in our print music sales because of store closings.”



^ LESSON STUDIOS
“We’re big fans of VocalBooth lesson studios,” Rail said. “They’re good looking, quiet and the fact that they’re portable allows us to change floor plans if and when we choose with relative ease.”

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FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

LARRY FISHMAN | FISHMAN

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

First off, a lot of coffee and some quiet time. I spend a couple hours reflecting on what's been going on at work, preparing myself for the day, and taking care of correspondences. If I have a patent application that I'm writing, I'll take advantage of that time to work on it. Once I get to the office, I'm very accessible — it's an open-door company.

YOU'VE BEEN RUNNING FISHMAN FOR OVER THREE DECADES. HOW HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT SHIFTED?

The company started in my house, so early on, I was always at work. I would be up all night and get up at the crack of dawn. I love what I do and couldn't get enough of it. But about 10 years ago, with the company growing, product managers in place, and my COO and manufacturing running well, I decided that, as owner and founder, I needed to get out of the central, every-bit-of-information-passes-through-my-fingers mode that the company grew up on. I found that the best way to do that was to arrive at the office about two hours after everyone else did. If I showed up at 8 a.m., I'd inherit everybody's issues and problems during the day. [Laughs] So now, I show up at 10.

WHY THE SHIFT IN MANAGEMENT STYLE?

It's really funny — when you start a company, and you're the owner and head designer as well as the guy that sweeps the floor, the culture of the company grows like a wheel with you in the center. That was great for the formative years of the company, but it wasn't serving us well as we grew larger. Something had to break the mold, and I decided to do it by changing my schedule. Also, I started traveling and spending a lot of time in Asia, so I just wasn't in the office as much.

HOW DID IT GO?

It's been very successful and it set a good precedent for people being responsible for their own tasks. I have a very capable team working with me who take care of business on their own schedules now.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE?

I try to make people more entrepreneurial. One way of doing that is telling them to take risks. Don't clear every-

thing with me. If you're off track or having problems, by all means, come ask for help. But otherwise, take the dive and learn how to swim.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO TAKE RISKS LIKE THAT?

It happens all the time. We're product development nuts here. We do a strategic product plan for the year and, at all times, there are about 26 products at various stages of development. It's a rotating plan where, as products move out the door, others are being developed at the other end of the line. Obviously, we can't put out 26 products every year, so there's a lot of triaging involved. With so much going on, I look for our product development managers and engineers to work on minimal guidance.

WHAT SORT OF GUIDANCE DO YOU PROVIDE WHEN IT COMES TO PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT?

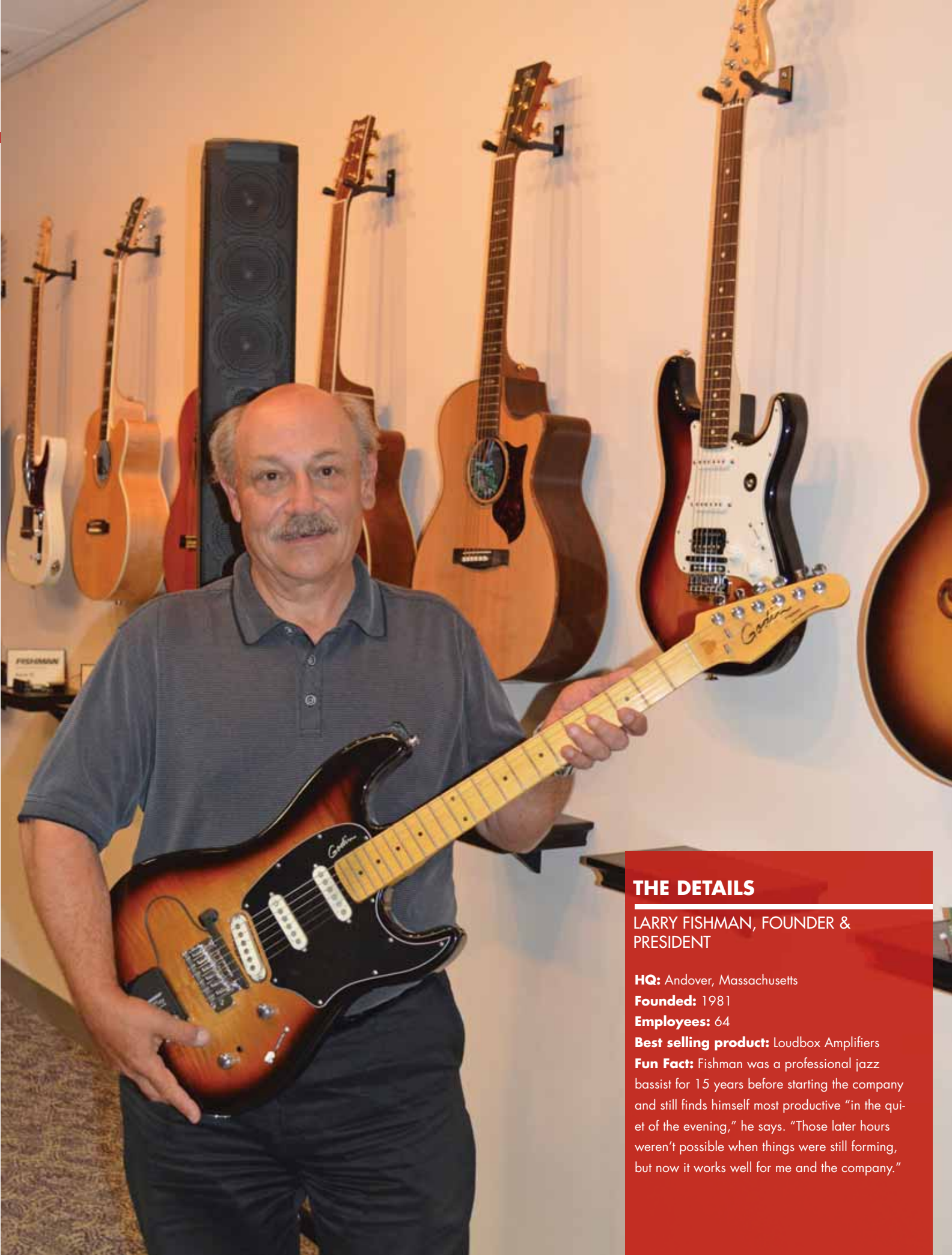
We'll do a very organized product vision statement and a product requirements document. Once we get that on the table, I'll say, "Go for it. Let's see what you can come up with." I'm constantly surprised at the creativity and ingenuity that come back to me. You put the tools in people's hands, give them a budget and say, "Let's see how cool you can make this thing." The results can be great.

WHAT'S AN EXAMPLE?

We just went into a major development of electric guitar pickups, a new product line for Fishman that we had stayed out of for 30 years. We are experts in acoustic guitar amplification and didn't think we had a lot to offer that was new in electric guitar pickups. But about two years ago, we came up with an idea that completely eliminated the wire-wound coil, thanks to a very beautiful piece of hardware. It's basically a fifty-layer stack of extremely thin circuit boards with printed coils on them. It was a major development that helped us produce very precise and repeatable magnet coils without all the variances of wires — but it was only the first step.

HOW SO?

We know a lot about electrical circuits at Fishman, because that's our stock and trade, but the whole magnetic field structure surrounding electric guitar pickups like this



THE DETAILS

LARRY FISHMAN, FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

HQ: Andover, Massachusetts

Founded: 1981

Employees: 64

Best selling product: Loudbox Amplifiers

Fun Fact: Fishman was a professional jazz bassist for 15 years before starting the company and still finds himself most productive "in the quiet of the evening," he says. "Those later hours weren't possible when things were still forming, but now it works well for me and the company."

one was sort of a mystery. We realized early on that we were going to have to conquer that understanding to really make a revolutionary product.

My head of R&D, a very bright MIT PhD named Ching Yu Lin, is one of those guys who grabs any problem by the throat and wrestles it to the ground. He was struggling with the fact that we were making all of these prototype of pickups with different strength magnets, but not really understanding the magnetic field that each created.

SO HE DOVE IN.

He took it upon himself to design and develop a three-dimensional magnetic field-mapping device that let us take a vintage pickup like a great PAF Humbucker and, by putting it into this rig that's connected to a data collection system and run through a mathematical analysis program on a computer, have the results graphically displayed. He basically invented a tool that lets us get a very striking visual representation of the magnetic field interactions of classic pickups against a string. If that's not taking a deep dive, I don't know what is. [Laughs.]

YOU MENTIONED TRAVEL TO ASIA.

About 10 years ago, we transitioned a lot of our manufacturing to China. Originally, we had fully-integrated manufacturing here in the United States and were very proud of our capability. Our transducer work is still done here, since it requires very special skills and equipment. But when we started producing large volumes of effects pedals, amplifiers and such, we realized early on that price pressures in the market were going to prevent us from profitably producing in the United States, which was a damn shame. But the handwriting was on the wall.

HOW DID OUTSOURCING EFFECT FISHMAN?

It was critical in our ongoing success because it let us actively expand the brain side of the company — R&D and product management — without having to worry about budgeting in a new wave soldering machine this month, or some other piece of machinery the next. And frankly, the Asian manufacturing monster is far better than anybody else on the planet right now. All kinds of consumer devices are made in that part of the world. They have structures and supply chains in place. Apple makes iPhones in China for a reason, and it's probably not because they just want to. That 50-layer circuit board coil I mentioned — there's not a manufacturer in the United States that will produce that level

of density at anything approaching a price that could go into a consumer product.

ESPECIALLY GIVEN OFF-SHORE MANUFACTURING, HOW DO YOU GUARANTEE QUALITY?

We are fanatical testing maniacs. Quality is absolutely paramount to Fishman, and quality is really how we got into the business. Our first major customer was Martin Guitars and the reason we secured our business deal with them, which we still have after 33 years as their sole supplier of amplification electronics, is dependability. They were starting to offer acoustic-electric models and on-board pickup systems. Their supplier had huge dependability issues, and they were getting lots of field returns and upset dealers. I understood why they were looking for a new supplier, so

I made the decision that we were going to do 100-percent testing of every piece of electronics that we manufacture. And that's what we've done for the past 28 years.

CAN YOU SHARE SOME SPECIFICS?

We spend a lot of money on getting the best testing equipment to make sure that everything per-

forms properly. When we design a product to be manufactured in Asia, we custom design in our labs here all of the test equipment as well. We finish two sets of test fixtures. One stays here and the other goes to the manufacturer in China. We send an engineer along with to get them set up with proper procedures so there's no question of what we're getting. We can reproduce tests here in our laboratory and can assure that the quality of our products.

CREATING TESTING GEAR SOUNDS PRICEY.

It's driven the company to the success that we have today. The general failure rate that's accepted when you're talking about consumer electronic components is three percent. For us, that level is unacceptable. We have a running failure rate of one-half of one percent of everything that we make. We have a pretty amazing machine shop and the ability to build sophisticated test equipment, so we build machines that make testing painless, repeatable and quick. Because of that, we're able to test one-hundred percent of our products and screen out that three-percent failure rate.

IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

When I was younger, I spent a lot of time racing cars and motorcycles. I love music, but I also love going fast and doing things a little dangerously.

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Pearl Drums' Bob Sabellico and Steve Armstrong



Vince Gill (center) rocks the Music City Center on Wednesday night.



Tracy Leenman and Joe Lamond discuss during the Retail Summit breakfast session on Thursday morning.



Zivix's Patrick Gevas

Heating it UP

By Katie Kailus & Kathleen Costanza

New exhibitors and high numbers of attendees at this year's Summer NAMM bring strong traffic and optimism to the show floor

This year's Summer NAMM hit the Music City with force, seeing the highest number of exhibitors since 2006 and the highest attendance in six years.

The larger crowds at this year's show — held July 17–19 at the Music City Center in Nashville, Tennessee — kept exhibitors in high spirits all across the show floor.

“There has been steady traffic coming through our booth the whole show,” said Bedell Guitars' Erika Mohr. “Compared to Nashville shows in the past, I definitely feel that there has been more interest coming in. Last year was probably our most successful Nashville NAMM Show, but we grew on that this year.”

All those additional attendees had a few more booths to check out at this summer show as the show floor increased in physical size, adding half a hall over last year to span a full two halls.

“The Nashville show has struggled a bit over the

years,” said Greg Zeller, regional manager at Sabian. “But I walked in during set up and there were noticeably more vendors here. The vendor side is probably a leading indicator. The more vendors, eventually the more dealers.”

Overall, Summer NAMM 2014 saw 438 exhibitors representing 1,510 brands. Of that, 112 exhibitors returned to Summer NAMM after a hiatus from the show, including Pearl Corporation and Orange Amplification. CruzTOOLS also returned to Summer NAMM in 2013 after a four year absence and was encouraged to sign up for this year's show.

“This year, floor space was noticeably larger and traffic was strong all three days,” said Dan Parks of CruzTOOLS. “I saw national account customers for the first time in many years, and it's a bonus to meet local musicians as well. We're already booked for the 2015 Summer NAMM and are looking forward to it.”



The Alfred Music crew.



Reverend Guitars' Penny and Ken Haas



Jody Jazz's Jody Espina and Colin Schofield



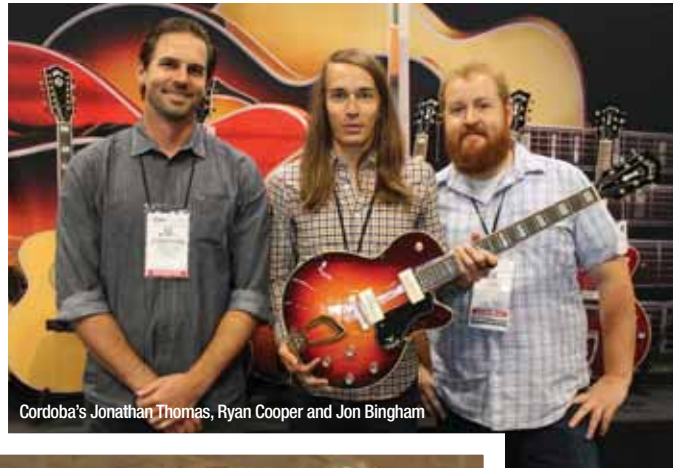
Hohner's Ronnie Shellist and Scott Hile



Billy Cuttrefell discusses Walden Guitars during 'Best in Show' on Saturday morning.



IMS Technologies' Jeff Millar-Sax



Cordoba's Jonathan Thomas, Ryan Cooper and Jon Bingham



Dixon Drums' Jim Uding



D'Addario's John Pizz

First-time Show-goers

Adding to buzz were 103 new-to-Summer NAMM companies including Hogjim Music Imports which showcased its new Hogjim Pik Tik, a pick holder that lets guitarists transition from strumming to pickless play.

“As a small player in the industry, we were able to connect and organically develop leads with established companies and many buyers,” said Kyle Koster, president of Hogjim. “The exposure and opportunities provided from the show have already far outperformed our expectations.”

Zivix had a productive first-show. In addition to seeing steady booth traffic, the company nabbed a ‘Best in Show’

nod for its new wireless MIDI guitar tool jamstik. (For more on “Best in Show” see page 48.)

“Summer NAMM was an all-around huge win in our book,” said Chad Koehler, vice president of Zivix. “We met some very talented people who also loved our product, so it was great to have exposure with our core audience — passionate music lovers and so many more who see how the jamstik is a gateway to improve learning.

“We think Summer NAMM not only moved the sales needle, but gave us a chance to make meaningful connections with potential partners and get involved with charitable endeavors.” **MI**



St. Louis Music's Chris Meikle



Fishman's Bill Norton, Bob Valyou and Rayne Marden



Levy's Leathers' Harvey Levy, Danica Levy and Glen Booth



Taylor Guitars' Mike Ausman



Yamaha's Armando Vega






CruzTOOLS' Dan

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NAMM | RETAIL SUMMIT

Thriving in the 'Next Phase'

Summer NAMM started off on a high note with the Retail Summit breakfast session which focused around prospering in the ever-changing business climate.

"I don't believe the next phase, this new normal, is going to be about thinking small or hunkering down," said Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO and moderator of the session. "Surviving isn't the goal anymore. Now, the goal is growth."

Lamond spoke with four retailers who have adapted to change and grown their businesses. Here's what they had to say:



Brian Reardon, Monster Music, Levittown, New York

"I got 25 spots on a local radio station. Our March sales were up 50 percent, better than any December we ever had. Our guitar sales doubled. Our used sales doubled. The point is people took a bit of pride in thinking, 'Wow, that's my store that I shop at on the radio.'"

"This June, the station came back to us and said 'We have a pop station in this market.' Once a week they let us do a Monster Music Minute where the DJ interviewed me, and I got to talk about the lesson program and the importance of music education. Also, once a week they play a version of the national anthem recorded by a Monster Music student."



Paul Decker, Music Villa, Bozeman, Montana

"Social [media] is a huge part of business now. It's another avenue of business besides brick-and-mortar sales, lesson and repairs. We do a couple music videos and [links to] websites that drive traffic to the store, as well as community building on our social media. We get 20 percent of our business from social media. We have two full-time Web guys, and they are basically doing that all day — videos and social media."



Tracy Leenman, Musical Innovations, Greenville, South Carolina

"We don't necessarily visit all of the elementary schools every week, but we work with a lot of the elementary school teachers. Because we are working with them, we are able to go into the schools and do demos, access those kids and get them hooked onto our company before the rental money and the time to buy starts. So, we are kind of involved with them from first grade on and that makes a difference."



Mike and Andrew Nehra, Vintage King Audio, Detroit

"We facilitate these great events at our [two] showrooms. We really get to engage with a lot of the people that inspire us and that are continuing to inspire generations. We hold panels and events all the time. The community is embedded. It's really more of a lifestyle. Yes, we have to support the business and earn a living, but it's more about being entrenched in this passion and bringing artists in and hanging out and taking it to new levels."



CANDYMAN STRINGS & THINGS NABS DEALER OF THE YEAR

Rand and Cindy Cook, owners of The Candyman Strings & Things in Santa Fe, New Mexico, accepted the Dealer of the Year award on July 18 at Summer NAMM's Top 100 Dealer Awards. They also took home the Music Makes a Difference award.

"We're just so very lucky to be in the business we are in," Rand Cook said. "Every six months we head to a NAMM Show and get lifted up by our peers. There's just nothing like our industry, and we have a great time doing it."



Retailers Report for Boot Camp

Retailers kicked off Summer NAMM a day early at Retail Bootcamp, NAMM U's all-day, interactive seminar. Nick Failla, founder of Collected Concepts, broke down how to improve every detail of day-to-day customer interactions.

Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe of CPA firm Friedman, Kannenberg & Co. spoke for the second half of the day about tools for better inventory management and the keys to better cash flow.

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2014 SUMMER BEST IN SHOW >



BEST IN SHOW returned once again to spotlight the most buzzworthy products, services and companies on display at Summer NAMM 2014. On the morning of July 19, *Music Inc.*

publisher Frank Alkyer moderated a panel of six retail-buying experts who scoured the show floor and revealed their top choices to a packed breakfast session crowd.

THE PANELISTS



BILLY CUTHRELL
PROGRESSIVE MUSIC CENTER
Raleigh, North Carolina



SHANE KINNEY
DRUM CENTER OF PORTSMOUTH
Portsmouth, New Hampshire



TOM MENRATH
VINTAGE KING
Detroit



GABRIEL O'BRIEN
LARRY'S MUSIC CENTER
Wooster, Ohio

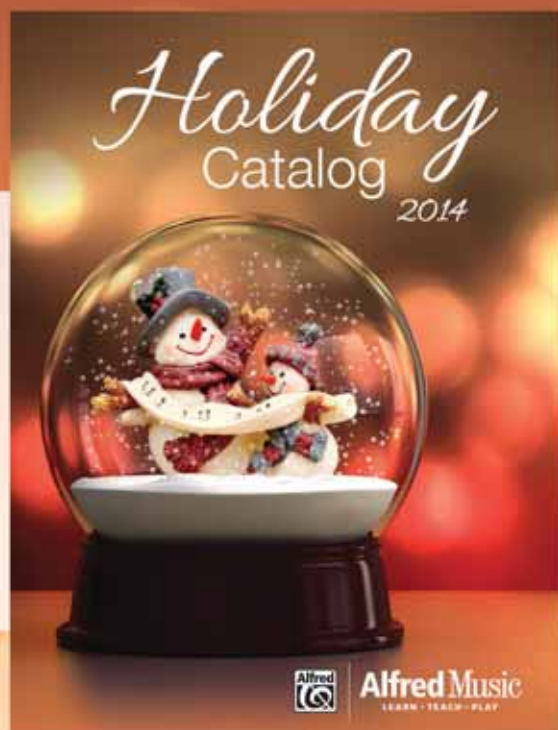


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BEST IN SHOW



SHANE KINNEY

Pearl Crystal Beat Drum Series

"The shell is very strong all the way through and there are no weak points. I never really liked the sound of acrylic drums, but when I walked by the booth, they actually sound great. My first instinct was, 'That's gonna sell.'"

BILLY CUTHRELL

Ultimate Ears In-Ear Monitors

"They've got these great UE 900s. They come in really nice packaging and it's basically set-up for the retail store, there's no audiologist involved. Ultimate Ears has figured out a gateway headphone that would lead your customer into doing custom in-ear monitors."



MYRNA SISLEN

Samson Expedition XP106w Rechargeable Portable PA

"This is a battery powered P.A. system that you can take anywhere. You can work it with your phone, you can also plug a guitar or a mic into the back of it or you can go wireless."

We sell a lot of these, they're so affordable."



RYAN WEST

Zivix jamstik

"It's a wireless MIDI guitar controller. The sensors are all infrared so it gives you the opportunity to interface with an iOS device directly. The great example is if a teacher is teaching, the student can actually get that visual feedback."



TOM MENRATH

EarthQuaker Devices Afterneath Guitar Pedal

"It's got six parameters and it breaks the parameters of what creates a reverb effect into the individual delays and other effects that make the reverb happen."

GABRIEL O'BRIEN

Taylor 814ce Acoustic Guitar

"In search of better tone they've made a thinner finish guitar and completely redesigned the bracing from the ground up. It's really lively and has a great dynamic. I'm really knocked out by a company that, at the top of their game, will redesign their best-selling product for the sake of making it better."





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TOM MENRATH >

Griffin PowerMate Wireless Programmable Controller

"They've made a little control that you can assign to any function on the computer that you want. Whether it be volume or scrubbing or changing applications. They came out this year with a wireless version. It's a beautiful design. It's the only one that's Bluetooth, and you can put it to any function you want on your computer — with up to six functions. You can turn, click it or hold it down."



MYRNA SISLEN <

Tuners by IMS Technologies

"These are for kids. They have animal shapes, and they're so cute. One button turns it on and it will do chromatic, guitar, bass, ukulele, and the price point is fabulous."

SHANE KINNEY >

Tune-Bot by Overtone Labs

"You put it over the tension rod and it measures your note across the drum and then you can store your settings. So if you find the settings you like, you can store it and use it for different sets. It has a great little price point and nice display on the wall and it's easy to ship, too."



BILLY CUTHRELL >

Porter & Davies BC Gigster

"What happens a lot is when you play you kind of lose the bass drum. This actually uses your bones to conduct the real sound through your body. Even at low volume, it's there. It doesn't disappear, there's no lag time. The guys at the booth, they told me it's like in-ears for your butt."



GABRIEL O'BRIEN <

Henry Heller Guitar Straps distributed by OMG

"They have great price points, great profits, and they're still hungry and want to do business with more stores. It's such a no-brainer add-on for guitar sales and they're really easy to move."



RYAN WEST <

Dixon Cajon Pedal Plus

"The pedal itself has phenomenal construction, the cable is fantastic, but what it can do besides just attaching to the cajon is you can easily convert it to a secondary stand or cymbal stand."

GOTTA STOCK IT



SHANE KINNEY

Dixon Bright Key

"It has the key, but what's really noticeable about this is it has the light on it. It also has a handy little bottle opener. If you put this on your counter with the bright light and bottle opener and tell a drummer that, I think he's going to buy it."



← BILLY CUTHRELL
Age-Specific Print Music

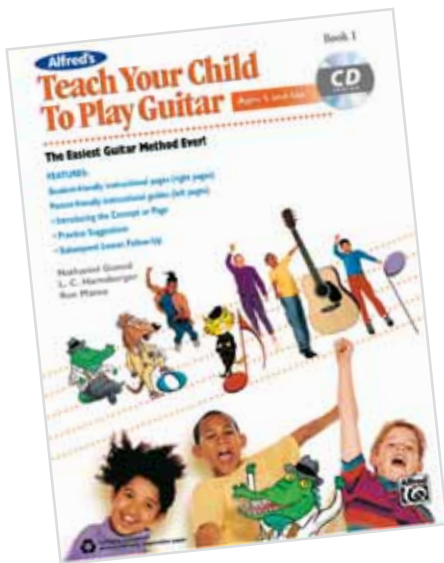
- Modern Drummer's "Rich Redmond's FUNDamentals"
- Hal Leonard's "Guitar For Kids"

"What happens is we get all these students who bring in a the wrong version for adults. What we do is put them in an actual book that's really specific for the kid. You can't just take a one-size-fits all approach."



△ TOM MENRATH
Blackbird Pedalboards

"These guys have come up with three sizes of pedalboards that come with an ATA flight case at an unbelievably shocking price point. They have a little tiny one that will still fit a power supply underneath, a medium one and a large one."



MYRNA SISLEN

Alfred "Teach Your Child To Play" Series

"On one side of the page is the script the parent can use. On the other side is what the child will actually do to play the piano. In addition, you can use it for those parents who know nothing about the piano or guitar, because they have one for guitar as well. It can educate them. These books will really answer a burning question."

GABRIEL O'BRIEN

Earthquaker Devices

"EarthQuaker devices are hand-built guitar effects pedals, and they're built Akron, Ohio. They're really hot, and I love companies that put their money where their mouth is. They've been doing a lot of advertising in guitar magazines and they've been getting a lot of reviews and write-ups — a lot of famous guitar players are using them."



RYAN WEST

D'Addario NYXL Guitar Strings

"They've done a phenomenal job of developing this product as well as putting together a super compelling marketing campaign, so customers are going to be coming into the store asking for this. This is one of the strongest strings out on the market."

COMPANIES TO WATCH



< **BILLY CUTHRELL**
Walden Guitars

"We took a chance on them and brought them into the shop. We gave the guitars to our teachers to start using in lessons and they just loved them. You get a really nice gig bag, everything's included and they're well built at a terrific price point. The biggest thing about Walden is they've got amazing customer service."



< **RYAN WEST**
Hal Leonard

"They do a phenomenal job in print. But they also have additional agreements they're doing in regards to distribution like the addition of QSC and Hamilton Stands. They're always there to pick up the phone, and they really are a company that continues to grow, evolve and set the pace for the industry."



< **SHANE KINNEY**
Ayotte Drums

"Ayotte was a very prominent brand in the 1990's. It had ups and downs over the years, but it seems very invigorated. The product looks really great and they seem to be really aggressive in terms of getting into the higher-end retailers. Ray Ayotte is back as the founder and I'm really looking forward to seeing what they're going to be doing in the future."

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COMPANIES TO WATCH



REVEREND

< **GABRIEL O'BRIEN**
Reverend Guitars

"There's nothing more boring than a music store filled with the same four guitar shapes. Reverend has such a strong presence. They really stand out on the wall, they have great designs, they're incredibly well made, and when's the last time you picked up a phone and got the CEO on the line?"



< **MYRNA SISLEN**
Giannini USA

"They are putting out some really wonderful and well-priced instruments — for instance, the Craviola. Also, for the entry-level acoustic customer, there are these electric acoustics. To be able to put something in their hands that's affordable for me and that's going to work well with them, at this price point, is amazing."



< **TOM MENRATH**
Supro USA

"Supro USA is reissuing the legendary Supro amp. They sound amazing, they look completely original and authentic. Much more importantly, the signature sound Supro is famous for, that vintage collectors have been looking for, is now available at a very reasonable price point."

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3. AXE



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AMPS

RISE OF THE SMART AMP

How these babies of the iRevolution translate on the showroom floor

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AMPING IT UP

The hottest amps on the market including new releases from Orange and Fargen

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Line 6's AMPLiFi



RISE OF THE



Yamaha's THR10X

TC Electronic's BG250-115



SMART AMP

By Kathleen Costanza

A handful of manufacturers have started connecting amps with mobile devices that give players more options than ever before. But how do the innovations translate on the showroom floor?

If you've walked the floor of a recent NAMM show, it's hard to miss the increasing influence of iOS and Android devices in the development of cutting-edge products. Now, suppliers are increasingly adding that connectivity to a category as important as the instruments themselves: amps.

Manufacturers have introduced a wave of amps that connect with mobile iOS and Android devices along with apps that let players do everything from download thousands

of tones to slow down backing tracks. They're functions consumers might be used to seeing elsewhere, but suppliers and retailers say selling those innovations in the old-school amp market takes a shift in thinking and a willingness to embrace new technology.

RE-THINKING THE AMP

Marcus Ryle, co-founder and chief strategy officer of Line

6, said the inspiration for AMPLIFi, which debuted at last January's Winter NAMM, was multi-faceted. But part of it was driven by seeing fewer and fewer players willing to hassle with a complicated setup just to jam along to music. They wanted to create an amp that's as intuitive as the mobile devices that have become so pervasive in our everyday lives.

"When we invented digital modeling amps in 1996, it led to a wave of record-breaking guitar amp sales because they did things that were previously impossible. We saw the market really explode, and now that has started to wane since so many guitar amps have similar capabilities," Ryle said. "We wanted to reinvent the category and give people a reason to go into a music store and check out something that's inspiring and new."

The result? AMPLIFi, an iOS-controlled, Bluetooth streaming, full-range guitar amp with five speakers. The AMPLIFi Remote app lets players connect to the cloud and share their tones with guitarists around the world. Plus, the "tone matching" technology automatically matches tones with any track in player's music library.

Line 6 made the AMPLIFi Remote app an integral part of its amp. But at the Summer NAMM Show, VHT went a different direction with the debut of its brand new i-16, the first combo and head from the iSeries.

"The whole point here is to take your favorite app and bring it into a live setting," said Scott Thompson, vice president of sales

for The Music Link. "There's not many ways to do that in an amp, and we've made it really simple."

The iSeries combines real tube tone with connectivity to any app. Meaning, a player could switch between dozens of apps, including Apple's GarageBand, IK Multimedia's AmpliTube or Positive Grid's JamUp.

Both AMPLIFi and the i-16 don't fall in line easily with other amps on the floor. Neither does Yamaha's THR series, aptly tagged "your third amp." The line was kicked off in 2012 and four more lightweight, battery operated models have been released since. Armando Vega, marketing manager at Yamaha's guitar division, said it was designed "as an audio player first and then designed to play guitar." The THR Sessions app slows the tempo of songs up to 50 percent without messing with the pitch.

The THR's portability is a major selling point, reflecting the upsurge in lunchbox amps across the board. Portability was also key in Roland's newest release: the CUBE-10GX.

But an even bigger selling point is the amp's new CUBE KIT app which lets users upload new amp types into it.

Paul Youngblood, VP of Roland U.S., said that development of that capability was driven by the explosion of electric-acoustic guitars, which now make up about 50 percent of the market, according to Youngblood.

"We thought wouldn't it be great if you had an amplifier that is sold as an electric guitar amp initially but then, knowing there are so many acoustics being sold, a user could say, 'I'd like to replace one of those amp models in there,'" Youngblood said.

TC Electronic's BG250 series for basses also uses technology to give players more flexibility than was possible before. Their TonePrint technology and app lets players instantly "beam" tones to amps.

"In the past you could have one or two effects built into an amp if you were lucky," said Morten Ehlers, product manager at TC Electronic. "With the two Toneprint knobs you're able to design your own amp with the effects you want, from the seven categories we provide, whether you beam them from your phone or get them from our website."

SELLING THE SMART AMP

As iOS and Android connectivity in amps continues to spin out in all directions, retailers have to wonder how these innovations will translate to the retail floor.

"So far, the feedback has been very good. But at the same time, retailers are asking that same question, 'How am I gonna pitch this in my store?'" Thompson said at Summer NAMM. "I think it's a really important question. But what we're finding is a lot of people who own the store or who are a buyer are seeing kids with these apps. Now they just need to couple them up."

For Will Evrard, store manager at Easy Music's Kapolei, Hawaii location, coupling the two has been part of successful sales of Yamaha's THR series.

"It's not surprising to younger people," Evrard said. "Maybe they've started playing guitar within the last few years and they've almost come to expect some sort of connectivity to iPhones or computers."

Pew Research Center puts the number of American smartphone users ages 25 to 34 at a whopping 81 percent. So while millennials might carry that expectation, what about generations of guitar players who might not have the same love affair with apps and mobile devices?

"I don't worry about people not buying something for the technology," Evrard said. "I show them another reason they would like it."

Gregg Lewison, combo sales specialist at Heid Music's Appleton, Wisconsin, location, said the company was propelled to recently purchase iPads to let customers dive into amps and other iOS-connected products.

"I think companies have shown there's definitely more interest in having more control over tone," Lewison said.



Easy Music's Will Evrard



Heid Music's Gregg Lewison

“There’s always going to be people who just want a straight tube amp and want a more classic sound, but there’s definitely a growing segment of guitar players who want to connect to a computer or have that transition from amp to app.”

NEW BUSINESS MAGNET

Instead of taking away from other amp sales, Ryle suggested that AMPLIFi creates new business all together by introducing technology to consumers who might not even know they want a new guitar amp. Plus, products with Bluetooth streaming could give music retailers the chance to take a bite out of the rapidly growing Bluetooth speaker market, which the Consumer Electronics Association expects to grow 12 percent over last year with estimated total revenues at \$430 million for 2014.

“Smart mobile devices have become such a pervasive part of our lifestyle that I think they’re just going to continue to grow in how they influence almost every area of our lives, whether it’s healthcare or home automation or music making,” Ryle said.

No matter which direction amp connectivity goes, though, retailers and suppliers agree sound and tone remain paramount for any amp sale, big or small.

“They have to sound good or nothing else matters,” Youngblood said. “It’s got to sound great. And then when you lay the technology on there? Wow, is that a spectacular experience.” **MI**

SALES TIPS FROM THE PROS

- Make it real

“I’ll ask them if they have an iPhone and if they do I’ll grab the correct cable and let them hear their own music,” said Will Evrard from Easy Music. “It makes it more real for them. I think that’s always the way to go.”

- Switch it up

Terry Buddingh, Senior Manager/Designer Electronics at The Music Link, suggested turning people’s price-checking habits into a sales tool. “When people pull out their phone to check prices on Amazon and Ebay, this is where the store owner can say, ‘Hey, you’ve got an iPhone? Why don’t you plug it in here and play some of your apps?’”

- Hit the phone

“I call customers I know really well and say, ‘Hey I have this great new amp. I want to get your opinion on it,’” said Evrard. “I’m genuine when I ask that but what ends up happening more often than not is I get them directly involved right away and they end up being the buyer.”

- Set it apart

“As an amp, it does a great job. But if it’s just retailed as an amp it’s in a very crowded category,” said Yamaha’s Armando Vega. “The best way is to connect it to a laptop. People can see not only how well it records but how well it plays back from your library and its deep level of control.”



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ROLAND | BLUES CUBE

Get the Blues

Roland's new Blues Cube Artist and Blues Cube Stage are two 1-by-12 combo amplifiers with a genuine tube tone and feel. The Blues Cube Artist features 80 watts of power, while the Blues Cube Stage is equipped with 60 watts. Designed for performing pro guitarists, both amps have open-back cabinets built from poplar plywood, which provides an acoustically vibrant tone for enhanced presence on stage. Each amp is outfitted with a custom 12-inch speaker that's specially designed for maximum tonal response with Tube Logic. rolandus.com



TRAYNOR | SMALL BLOCK SERIES

Perfectly in Tune

Traynor's new Small Block series bass amplifier line features a low frequency expander letting the player perfectly tune the bottom end response of any Small Block series head or combo to suit their playing style. Solid plywood cabinet construction on the Small Block combos ensure reliability

under even the most extreme playing schedule. The Small Block SB200H Ultra Compact bass head is less than 7.5 inches wide and weighs under 1.5 lbs., while the Traynor Small Block SB200H is built using an all-metal chassis with front mounted handles to protect the knobs and jacks. traynoramps.com

FARGEN | TOWNHOUSE 20 COMBO

Two-in-one Amp

Fargen's new Townhouse 20 combo amplifiers are hand-built in the United States. The Townhouse 20 features a new 2 x 6V6 20-watt power amp in a compact 1- by 12-inch grab-and-gig compact combo design. The two-way decade switch features a 1950s setting with vintage tweed-inspired tones, and a '60s setting inspired by brownface tones essentially providing musicians two-amps-in-one with boutique quality and tone. MSRP: \$1,599. fargenamps.com



VOX | AC4C1-12

Robust Sound

VOX has released the special edition version of its AC4C1-12. This 4-watt AC4 combo amplifier provides a simple and convenient way to enjoy the rich sound of a tube-driven amp. Previous models were equipped with a 10-inch speaker, but the AC4C1-12 features a 12-inch Celestion speaker that delivers even more robust sound levels. With diamond grille cloth and basket-weave vinyl exterior, it also carries a classic look. voxamps.com

SCHECTER | HELLRAISER USA 100 HEAD, HELLRAISER USA 100 2X 12 COMBO

Raise More Hell

Schecter has added the Hellraiser USA 100 Head and Hellraiser USA 100 2 x 12 Combo. The Hellraiser 100's features include a "focus" control that works as a "global tweak" for the amp's input frequency response in order to custom tailor the low frequency response for different styles of guitars. In addition, both amps feature "normal" and "active" input configuration, unlike many amps which simply reduce the input signal to compensate for an active pickup. schecterguitars.com





GEAR >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

D&A | STARFISH, STARFISH+

True Star

D&A has launched the D&A Starfish and Starfish+, a five-legged instrument stands that ensures twice the stability. Increasing the number of legs gives the Starfish and Starfish+ twice the stability of traditional stands. The new stands hold strong at a full 30 degrees of tilt and are designed with the GRIP Neck System that virtually eliminates the possibility of instrument slippage. heydna.com



CRUZTOOLS | STAGEHAND COMPACT TECH KIT

Lend a Hand

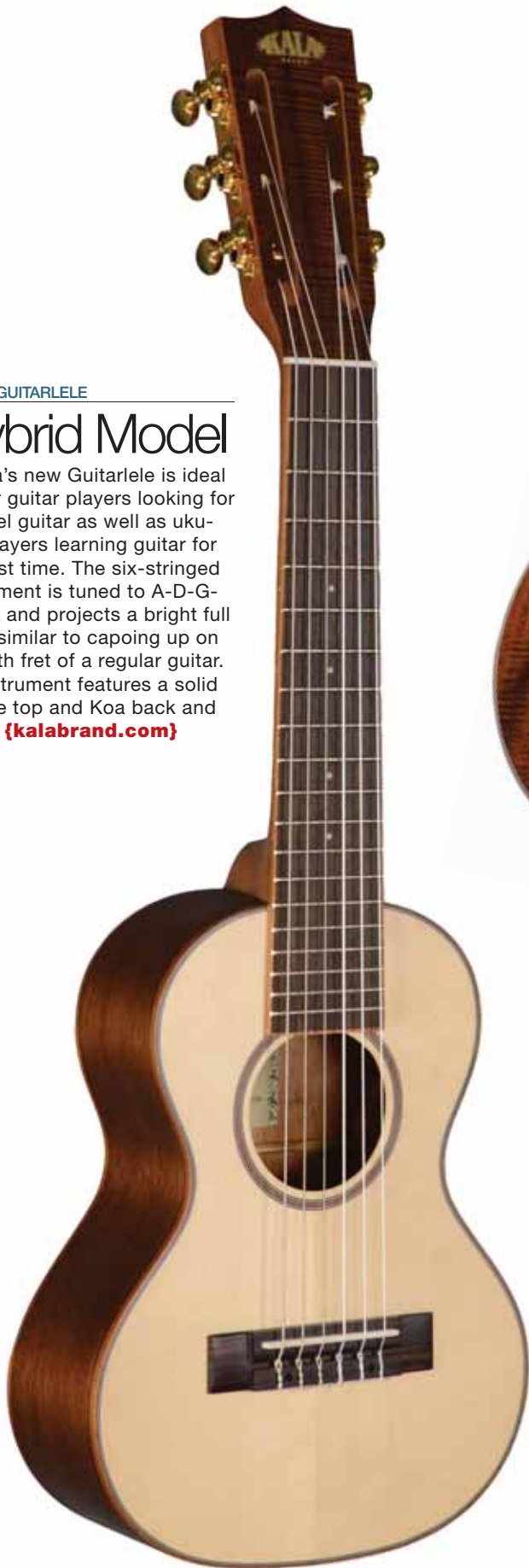
CruzTOOLS has debuted its Stagehand Compact Tech Kit that helps guitar and bass players keep their instruments in top playing shape. Central to the Stagehand is a 19-piece magnetic bit set and screwdriver-style bit holder. The set includes hex wrenches, screwdrivers and sockets in both inch and metric sizes to cover virtually all makes and models of guitars and basses. This provides a wide range of capability including bridge, truss rod, tremolo system and jack nut adjustment while consuming little space. cruztools.com



KALA | GUITARLELE

Hybrid Model

Kala's new Guitarlele is ideal for guitar players looking for a travel guitar as well as ukulele players learning guitar for the first time. The six-stringed instrument is tuned to A-D-G-C-E-A and projects a bright full tone, similar to capoing up on the fifth fret of a regular guitar. The instrument features a solid spruce top and Koa back and sides. kalabrand.com



EASTMAN GUITARS | 00 SERIES MODELS

Decade Darlings

Eastman Guitars continues its 10th anniversary celebration with the introduction of the new 00 series models. The E1000-M is lightweight and strong with a big sound emphasizing clear, bright and airy trebles. The guitar features a solid mahogany top with hand-carved scalloped-X bracing, mahogany back and sides, and mahogany neck with ebony fingerboard. The E2000 features a solid Adirondack spruce top, hand-carved scalloped-X bracing for a powerful yet balanced and mellow sound, and solid rosewood back and sides for resonance. MSRP: E1000-M, \$1,375; E2000, \$1,500. eastmanguitars.com



SCHECTER | BLACKJACK ATX

Blacked Out

Schecter has introduced the Black-jack ATX. This series is offered in a mahogany body and a swamp ash body in two different body shapes: the classic C-Series shape and the new Solo-II shape. The Blackjack ATX is offered as six-, seven- and eight-string models all loaded with Seymour Duncan Blackout pickups and equipped with glow-in-the-dark side dot inlays. schecter.com



SEYMOUR DUNCAN | 805 OVERDRIVE

Expanded Gain

The Seymour Duncan 805 Overdrive pedal is designed using the 808 chip, but with an expanded gain range and an active 3-band EQ. Its versatility lets it be used for a smooth, lyrical bluesy overdrive one minute and a modern metal crunch the next. seymourduncan.com



EARTHQUAKER | PALISADES PEDAL

Perfect Palisades

Earthquaker's new Palisades pedal is a versatile take on the classic 808 overdrive. It boasts six different clipping voices, five bandwidth settings, a bright/normal selector, optional input buffer and two gain channels. MAP: \$249.95. earthquakerdevices.com

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BEDELL | REVERE SERIES

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Bedell's new Revere series features solid adirondack spruce tops, three piece Brazilian rosewood back and sides, and a Honduran mahogany neck. The new models also boast an ebony fretboard, nickel with ebony button tuners and an "aged" toner gloss nitrocellulose lacquer finish. bedellguitars.com

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KORG | DS-DAC AUDIOGATE

Gateway to Sound

Korg's DS-DAC AudioGate USB Audio Playback system consists of the recently upgraded AudioGate 3 software, plus a choice of the DS-DAC-100 or DS-DAC-100m hardware interfaces. Both are USB digital-to-analog converters that will let any Windows or Mac user play back their audio with the highest possible fidelity. These interfaces are designed to provide enjoyment of high definition sound, whether on a home computer or on-the-go with a laptop. korg.com



APOGEE | DUET BREAKOUT BOX

Break Out of the Box

Apogee Electronics has released a limited-time bundle featuring its Duet audio interface and Breakout Box. The Apogee Duet for iPad & Mac is the first professional stereo audio interface, headphone amp and MIDI interface for iOS devices and Mac. The Duet Breakout Box is a durable, aluminum enclosure with two 1/4-inch inputs, two XLR inputs and two balanced XLR outputs. The Duet Breakout Box features studio-quality I/O connectors and includes a 2 meter cable letting users extend their connections and minimize cable clutter. MSRP: \$695. apogeedigital.com





XTA | APA SERIES

Intelligent Interaction

XTA's new APA series — short for Adaptive Processing Amplification — features new power and DSP platforms that have been designed to interact intelligently and adapt to prevailing conditions, protecting drivers and enhancing performance from all speaker systems. By including stu-

dio-quality analog-to-digital converters at the outputs as well as the inputs, real-time audio currents and voltages presented at the speaker terminals can be fed back into the DSP in addition to processing the incoming audio, letting the amplifier adapt and correct its performance continuously. xta.co.uk

MACKIE | THUMP LOUDSPEAKERS

That Low End Thump

Mackie's Thump powered loudspeakers deliver class-leading low end. With 1000-plus watts of power, users can get the high output needed in a package that's tough, but lightweight and portable. The Thump loudspeakers feature built-in 3-band EQ. mackie.com



Award Winning Hybrids



MMR Dealer's Choice
Kawai CA95 (2013)



MMR Dealer's Choice
Kawai CA95 (2012)



Diapason Magazine
Kawai CA95 (2012)



Music Inc. Magazine
Kawai CA95 (2012)



Japan Institute of
Design Promotion
Kawai CA95 (2012)



Music Inc. Magazine
Kawai CS10 (2014)

Having won six major international product awards, the Kawai CA95 and CS10, featuring the innovative Soundboard Speaker System and acclaimed GF wooden-key action, are the world's most decorated Hybrid Pianos.



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www.kawaius.com

CHORD | STACKABLE STANDS

Stacks on Deck

These recently updated microphone stands are stackable for up to five pieces, allowing for easy storage. Each stand is rooted by a cast iron base, which is detachable for ease of transportation. Their adjustable operating height and rubber sprayed handle also makes them user friendly. The base also features anti-slip rubber feet. avsl.com




STUDIOMASTER | STARLIGHT ML

Light it Up

The Studiomaster Starlight ML series integrates a lighting and a monitoring system. The angled cabinet has a recessed slot on one side that contains six high-power LEDs with dispersion lenses. An inbuilt controller has 13 programs including seven static colors, fade to color change and sound to color change. Brightness and speed are also adjustable. They are supplied as pairs so the LEDs and monitors are angled inward to the performers. They are available in 12- and 15-inch 250W active models. studiomaster.com



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www.imstechnologies.net





PROMARK | DRUMSTICKS

Triple Threat

Promark has designed three new drumstick models with some of the drumming industry's top players: Anton Fig, Bob Gatzen and Will Kennedy. Anton Fig's hickory signature drumstick has a short taper making it a forward heavy stick that generates a lot of sound. Meanwhile, the Bob Gatzen Balanced Groove

drumstick features a long taper and has a notch cut out of the handle which shifts the center of balance of the stick towards the butt end. Lastly, Will Kennedy's signature has a long taper which excentuates the rebound. It's made of hickory and features a wooden teardrop tip.

promark.com

PINTECH | PDK2000

Naturally Electric

Pintech's new PDK2000 series drum kit offers upgrades from the PDK1000, kit such as dual zone capabilities, larger drum pads and chokeable cymbals. The ConcertCast drums feature a mesh drum head that was engineered to feel as natural as possible, while being some of the quietest playing surfaces. Each cymbal comes with a cymbal spring that gives players the natural feedback they would expect from an acoustic cymbal. The PDK2000 drum rack is also loaded with adjustments as each pad and cymbal can be located anywhere on the drum rack. pintechworld.com





YAMAHA | DTX LIVE-SOUND SOLUTIONS

Drummer Designed

Yamaha's DTX-Live Sound Solutions take the guesswork out of what drummers need by providing simple setups with professional sound. DTX-Live Sound Solutions feature drummer-designed setups for rehearsal moni-

toring and stage drum monitoring in both stereo and mono configurations featuring Yamaha DXR speakers and DXS subwoofers, along with the STAGEPAS 400i and STAGEPAS 600i portable P.A. systems. yamaha.com



SHANE KINNEY

DRUM CENTER OF PORTSMOUTH
PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

OUR BEST HOLIDAY PROMO

We have been running a multi-level Black Friday promo that requires engagement from our customers. We have three different levels of discounts based on how willing the customer is to help promote us. The coup de grace being the customer wearing all black, holding turkey drumsticks and singing a Johnny Cash song in the store or on our Facebook page. We've done this three years in a row and it's been great.

The standard mark down discount is a trend we're trying to avoid, so if our profitability goes away, we ask our customers to help us promote the store. When the customers engage with us, it increases our visibility to other potential customers. We try to do something creative. If the customer sees that we put some thought into it, it draws them in and makes them want to be involved. Of course, there will be customers that will just go to the price leaders for a discount, and we can't avoid that. But for our little segment of the market, it's effective and worthwhile.



PEARL | CRYSTAL BEAT

Crystal Clear

Pearl is bringing back the original seamless acrylic drum shell with the new Crystal Beat Acrylic drum sets and component drums. The Crystal Beat's upgraded 7 mm seamless Acrylic shell comes

standard in four stock configurations. Individual components are also available from 8 to 22 inches in UltraClear, Ruby Red and Tangerine Glass transparent finishes. pearldrums.com



GEAR >

BAND & ORCHESTRA

WILLIAM S. HAYNES CO. | JAMES GALWAY EDITION Q SERIES

High-end Flute

The William S. Haynes Co. has introduced the new James Galway Edition Q series line of flutes. The design and construction features a solid silver headjoint and tubing, left-hand pinless mechanism

for superior response, modern Haynes A=442 scale, .016 inch tubing, C# trill key, open hole to low B and choice of inline or offset G. There is also an option to upgrade to a 14 karat gold riser. wmsHaynes.com

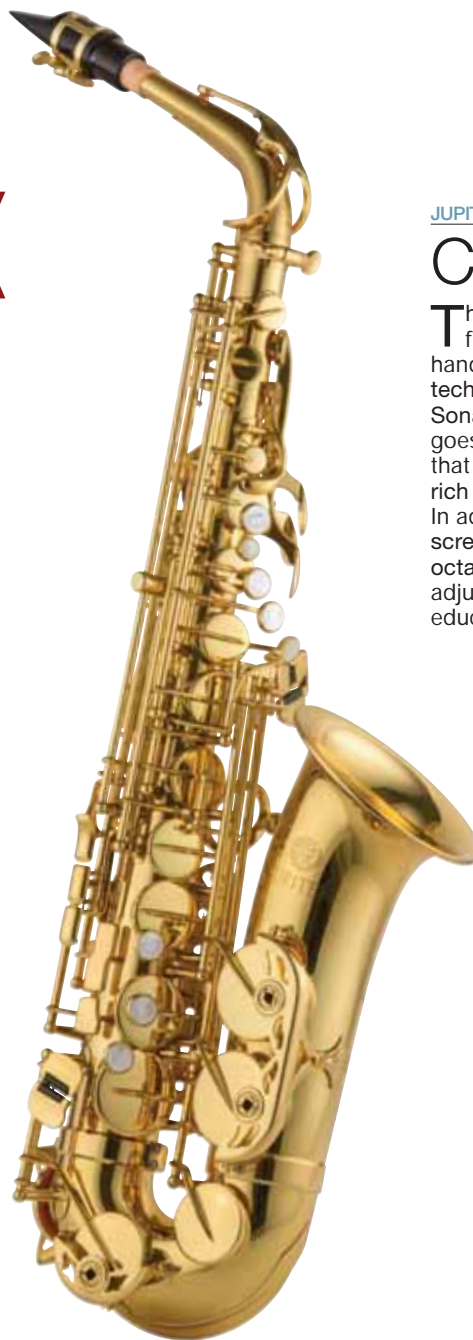


PETE ELLMAN
ELLMAN'S MUSIC
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS

OUR BEST HOLIDAY PROMO

We have two Yamaha events per year: "Graduate to Yamaha" at the end of the school year and "Step-up to Yamaha" for Christmas and the holiday season. The Yamaha events are designed to increase step up sales. Our sales have been pretty successful; we have seen an increase in Yamaha sales each of the last three years. Yamaha has offered rebates of \$50 on intermediate instruments and \$100 on pro and custom along with financing through GE Capital for qualified customers.

This year, our promotions will be basically the same but we'll be more aggressive with emails, Facebook, Twitter, and person-to-person phone calls to our VIP customers. We've found that you need to plan well in advance and start promoting early enough that customers can budget time to attend — but not so early that they forget. The phone calls have been the most effective for us because customers can get specific answers to their questions.



JUPITER | 1100 SAXOPHONES

Classic Sax

The 1100 series saxophones from Jupiter combine classic, hand-crafted design and modern technology. They feature the new Sona-Pure neck, which undergoes a special annealing process that gives the instrument a full, rich sound with a solid attack. In addition, a G key adjusting screw and adjustable rocker key octave mechanism facilitate quick adjustments by the performer or educator. jupitermusic.com



D'ADDARIO | RESERVE REEDS

Reeds Reinvented

Debuting D'Addario's new measurement and cutting technology are the new Reserve Bb Clarinet reeds, Reserve Classic Bb Clarinet reeds and Reserve Alto Saxophone reeds. Ideal for the advancing student and professional, the reeds are crafted from naturally-grown cane from D'Addario's own foreign fields. The Reserve line only uses the densest, lower-internode cane for greater durability and consistency. woodwinds.daddario.com



THOMASTIK-INFELD | SPIRIT STRINGS

High Spirits

Thomastik-Infeld's new Spirit strings for violin and cello embody superior quality at a budget-conscious price point. Made in Vienna and designed to produce a distinguished sound for every kind of music, Spirit strings boast a warm and vibrant sound, easy and stable tuning, easy response to the bow and are balanced and long lasting. connollymusic.com



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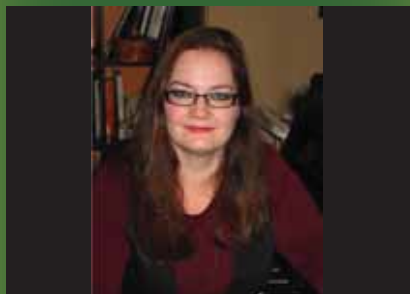
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GEAR >

PRINT, MULTIMEDIA & GIFTS



CHRISTIE SMITH

LONG & MCQUADE
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

OUR BEST HOLIDAY PROMO

One of the best holiday promotions we've ever done is our Christmas piano music reading session for teachers. I'm a piano teacher myself and I know how much we love spending money on Christmas music. The problem is you can spend hours looking through all the books and still not find the gems. So at the end of October we held a Christmas reading session for piano teachers.

The first step is we asked our staff to try out all the Christmas music and pick out the best 90 titles. We put together a balanced program of elementary, intermediate, advanced and duet materials and instead of hiring a clinician to lead this session, we wrote to our teachers and asked for volunteers to demonstrate the music. We sent several books to each of the 25 people that agreed to participate and they played one or two selections out of each book for all of us to hear. The event took three hours and after we had a Christmas party.

We had 70 participants and sold over \$7,000 worth of music that day! It was a true community building experience for everyone and it became one of the best print music sales events we have ever had. Not only that, it seeded the market with a whole new fleet of lovely Christmas music that we would expect to grow in sales for years to come.

HAL LEONARD | 'BIG BOOK OF BACKING TRACKS'

Practice Foundation

With Hal Leonard's new "The Big Book of Backing Tracks," guitarists can back away from their boring routines and practice in style. The collection assembled by Chad Johnson contains 200 chord progressions which players can practice their latest and greatest licks over. It also includes a USB flash drive of audio demos for every single track. The audio tracks range from approximately one minute for the short progressions, to four minutes or more for the full-length "song" progressions. halleonard.com



HUDSON MUSIC | 'THE GLADSTONE TECHNIQUE'

Gladstone Tribute

Hudson Music has released "The Gladstone Technique" from Morris "Arnie" Lang. As one of the few surviving students of Billy Gladstone, the DVD is an important historical document of not only Billy Gladstone and his important contribution to modern drum technique, but of the career and legacy of Mr. Lang himself. Topics include principles of the Gladstone technique, parts of the stroke, and body mechanics. An approach to the rudiments is covered in detail, as well as various other topics including accents, matched and traditional grip, and a segment on applying the Gladstone technique to the drumset. hudsonmusic.com



KENDOR | 'COUNTING THE DAYS TILL CHRISTMAS'

Holiday Countdown

Kendor's 'Counting The Days Till Christmas' is a swingin' medley of songs that includes "O Christmas Tree," "O Little Town Of Bethlehem" and "O Come All Ye Faithful." It has solid voicings, Basie-style figures and written or ad-lib solos for all which makes it an ideal option for medium-level groups. kendormusic.com





GEAR >

PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

KURZWEIL | ANDANTE

A New Breed

Kurzweil Music Systems has introduced its new breed of digital home keyboards, Andante. The new models include the CUP110, CUP120 and CUP2A, which all feature 88-note, fully-weighted hammer action and 128 Note Polyphony — enough power to accommodate layering and splitting capabilities of complex sounds. The CUP110 and 120 both feature a modern cabinet design and the CUP2A has sleek, compact upright design with a slow-close fall-board and prop-up music lid. kurzweil.com



IK MULTIMEDIA | IRIG MIDI 2

Universal Connectivity

IK Multimedia's iRig MIDI 2 is the first portable Lightning/USB MIDI interface for iPhone, iPad and iPod touch as well as Mac and PC. For musical instruments or other device connection, iRig MIDI 2 comes equipped with three standard-sized female MIDI DIN sockets: IN, OUT and THRU. These allow for full MIDI functionality and connectivity with any MIDI-enabled device and are ideal for keyboards and hardware synthesizers as well as software sound modules, drum machines, drum pads, DJ controllers and pedalboards. ikmultimedia.com



GEAR

DJ & LIGHTING

NUMARK | NV

Intelligent Control

Numark has released the NV, an intelligent controller for Serato DJ. It features two, 4.3 inch, full-color screens integrated into its compact chassis. Using NV, performers experience feedback of Serato DJ within Numark hardware. It's complete with spinning virtual decks, effects, cue points, waveforms and more. Supporting four decks of control, its screens also provide song library navigation and detailed waveforms respective to each deck. numark.com



ODYSSEY | BLACK KROM

Sleek Twist

Odyssey's Black Krom series cases are made to the same standards as the original Krom series but the steel corners are uniquely octagonal and, like all the other hardware including the aluminum trim, are color coated a sleek black. The DJ mixer and CD/me-

dia player carrying cases have a fully foamed-lined interior with a velvet-lined bottom interior designed which includes an open pit under the gear section that allows for ventilation and storage space for cables and other essentials. odysseygear.com

AIR MUSIC TECHNOLOGY | ADVANCE MUSIC PRODUCTION SUITE

Mega Suite

AIR Music Technology has introduced the Advance Music Production Suite, a comprehensive collection of virtual instruments, effects, sample packs and production resources preloaded on a 500 GB hard drive. Featuring over 25 virtual instruments, over 15 effect plug-in processors and over 15 sample packs, Advance Music Production Suite lets musicians compose, produce, mix and master music with their DAW of choice. It includes titles from AIR Music Technology, Akai Professional and Sonic Academy. airmusictech.com





CHAUVET DJ | GEYSER RGB JR.

Forecast? Foggy

The Geyser RGB Jr. from Chauvet DJ blends fog with colored LED lights. Smaller and lighter than its predecessor, the new junior product will be easier for DJs and mobile entertainers to take along with them. The colored fog reaches 15 feet high and the tank flip design lets it be mounted several different ways. It can be controlled wirelessly or manually. chauvetdj.com



AMERICAN DJ | FLASHBACK 4

Old School Meets New School

American DJ's Flashback 4 screams retro with its boarder can effect and panel lighting look. Each of the versatile 4-bank LED fixtures has one green, one blue, one amber, and one red cluster of 36 by 10 mm LEDs, resulting in vibrant colors and

powerful light output. Eleven built-in programs and two operational modes make it flexible depending on users' needs and XLR sockets let the two fixtures be connected, working in sync to produce atmosphere-capturing lighting effects. adj.com

PIONEER | PLX-1000 TURNTABLE

Vinyl Fans

Pioneer's new PLX-1000 professional turntable was designed for DJs who enjoy the look, feel and performance of vinyl for music playback. The model offers a user-friendly control layout, high-torque direct drive mechanism and exceptional audio playback quality. To create a stable player and prevent vibration, Pioneer used a heavy-mass zinc die-cast chassis for the top section of the player that's reinforced with a bottom section made of 8 mm thick resin. The player also provides a range of tempo adjustments and users can interchange cables to customize sound quality. pioneerdjusa.com



MARKETPLACE

- × Rates: Classified display: \$25 per column inch. Reading notices: \$1.70 per word; \$15 minimum charge. All ads are prepaid.
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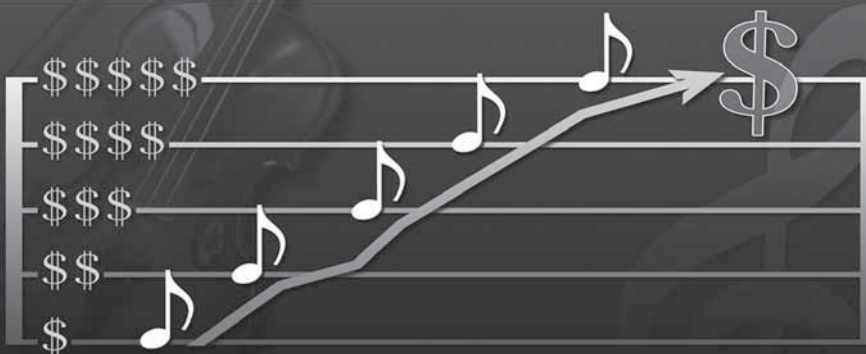
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Joel Foreacre

Guitars United
Jacksonville, Florida

YouTube. The dollars go towards promoting a video that's an ad for my shop. What you're going to see on my channel if you're not a subscriber is an ad that has my face right there describing my shop. I throw \$5 at my channel everyday. I've been doing it for four months and it's been phenomenal. Everyday somebody comes into my shop and says, "I saw you on YouTube." I have about 160 videos, but to be successful on YouTube it takes 500 to 750 videos. So I'm still a baby but it's already influenced my business big time.

>>>

Walter Carter

Carter Vintage Guitars
Nashville, Tennessee

When we opened we had virtually no advertising budget, so we looked for alternate ways to get the word out. Facebook and YouTube are free but we had to have a hook to attract viewers. We figured a video of a sunburst Les Paul Standard or Gibson RB-12 banjo would draw plenty of views on the merits of the instruments, but we'd get 10 times as many views if J.D. Simo or Charlie Cushman were playing them.

When we did look at buying advertising, we shied away from conventional print ads, website banners and even paid placement in search engine results because we felt people are conditioned to mute the commercials, to unconsciously separate ads from content. Scott Tichenor, the proprietor of the MandolinCafe.com, set us up with a choice location for our logo plus a featured instrument in the classifieds. We gained a presence at several levels, and we've become ingrained into experience. That makes the customer feel more comfortable with us.



>>>

Amy Ball Braswell

Capo's Music Store
Abingdon, Virginia

Where's the best return on your advertising budget?

We found out early on that marketing to the masses was not a great return on investment; we are just too specific in what we carry and who we are as a store. Since we are a niche store, we market specifically to that niche and we've found using online player communities like the Hangout Networks (Banjo Hangout, Mandolin Hangout, Fiddle Hangout, etc.) and Mandolin Cafe are a great place to reach players and potential customers within our focus.

We sell a lot of small shop instruments and one-of-a-kind instruments by builders like Ome Banjos as well as niche accessories and support products so we go where our audience is

and that is online. We sell online and over the phone all across the country and so for us, the best way to reach our target audience is on a national level. We are active within these communities as well as advertisers so we have a presence beyond just a pop up ad. We've seen a great return on investment and they've driven traffic to our website and we've seen a significant growth in our high-end sales and specialty accessory sales since we started being involved in these online player communities.

The second best driver of business for us both locally and nationally has been Google Adwords. Finding the right phrases

for Adwords is important. As a niche, it was also important to find the anti-words we wanted to put in to keep from getting clicks and calls for instruments we don't sell. Figuring those out and programming them in saved our sales staff's time and money. It also helped our bounce rate on our website which helps with our organic ratings in Google.

Most of our local dollars go to the sponsorship of live music, hosting events and contests and more public relations than direct advertising. We travel to a lot of bluegrass and old time music festivals and vend as well as sponsor them so it puts us directly in front of our audience. **MI**

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