

music



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VINTAGE
KINGS

.....
HOW THE NEHRAS
TURNED THEIR PRO-AUDIO
PASSION INTO A \$40
MILLION COMPANY

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LAST-MINUTE STOCKING GUIDE

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EYE OF THE CUSTOMER

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James Harding

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PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

THE HOLIDAYS ARE HERE

The holidays are upon us. Your orders are placed, your guitar packs are made and you've even hung a snowflake or two in your store-front window — with care, of course. You've possibly beefed up your sales staff and your holiday promotions are ready to go. So, what's left? How about stocking up on stocking stuffers? Turn to page 48 for the must-stock accessories our retail experts are sure to have on hand this season. But after stocking up on these last-minute must-have items, why not grab your customers' attention by displaying them uniquely?

Rhythm Traders' owner Brad Boyton shared his idea for creating an effects cymbal tree out of a cymbal stand, boom arms and clamps to place near his checkstand.

"Meinl has a great selection of effects cymbals," Boyton said. "Other major brands, such as Zildjian, Sabian and Wuhan, have trash crashes, spiral trashes, chinas, and inexpensive splashes that will make a nice display, while offering quick gift ideas for under \$100. Plus it's visually interesting and a talking point to engage customers."

Boyton also suggested a "12 Days of Christmas" giveaway on your Facebook page. He encouraged tying in your cymbal display by giving away an effects cymbal each day from Dec. 13–Christmas Eve if your Facebook fans answer trivia questions correctly or post photos of their new effects cymbal in their setup.

"You'll create goodwill, get a bunch of new 'likes' and a ton of social media engagement," he added. "That's pretty cheap advertising, especially when you take pictures of the winners, and it gets tagged and shared all around the Internet."

Another way to show off your stock is by creating a holiday gift guide. Roland Bellior, manager of The Fretted Frog in Pasadena, California, said that each year his store prints a Christmas Guide that helps people who aren't musicians shop for their family and friends.

"Obviously, we try to stock accordingly [for the guide]," he said. "The main idea is to stock higher-end accessories, which people wouldn't be ready to buy for themselves but would gladly be offered for Christmas."

Now that you have stocked up on all those Snark Tuners and Los Cabos sticks, make sure customers see them. During the holiday season, not all the customers that come through your doors are regulars. A lot of them are non-musicians shopping for loved-ones. By putting together a fun hand percussion display or sending out a gift guide you'll grab their attention and their dollars. And your register will be jingling all season long. **MI**



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LETTERS

Drummed Up Praise

My sincere gratitude goes out to *Music Inc.* for the cover story on my store, Vic's Drum Shop, in its October issue. Former Associate Editor Kathleen Costanza did an outstanding job conveying the essence

of what my business is all about. Kudos also to Art Director Žaneta Čuntová for the beautiful layout and for pushing traditional convention with my rock star cover. And special thanks to Editor Katie Kailus for the additional coverage and kind words

in her Perspective column.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity *Music Inc.* has given me to share my story and present my store in the best possible light. Vic's is truly a labor of love and a business for which I have tremendous pride. Confucius said, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." I consider myself incredibly lucky to go to my shop every day and never feel like I'm going to work!

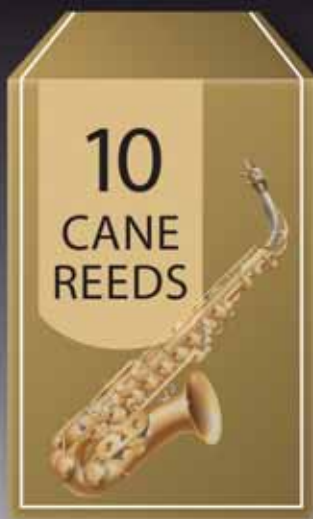
Victor Salazar
Owner
Vic's Drum Shop
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Stringed Success

Many thanks to the *Music Inc.* staff for the wonderful Retail profile on Carter Vintage Guitars in the October 2014 issue. While the story focuses on the two of us, we owe a great deal of our success to the goodwill of friends in all areas of the MI business — vendors, journalists, fellow retailers, musicians who've done videos for us, customers who've talked us up and our great staff. We always look forward to a new issue of *Music Inc.* Keep up the good work.

Christie & Walter Carter
Owners
Carter Vintage Guitar
Nashville, Tennessee

Correction:

In the October 2014 cover story "The Drum Destination," Operations Manager Kevin Jensen was misquoted in the final paragraph of the piece regarding Salazar's vision. The quote should have read: "It's his sense of vision — the way that he looks at the drumming community as such a vital and important piece of the music industry that is currently under-served. Drummers deserve this store." *Music Inc.* regrets the error.

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- > **E.L. Music**
Opens doors
PAGE 14
- > **Northwoods Music**
Adds second location
PAGE 16
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Welcomes new VP
PAGE 18



RETAIL

PM WOODWIND | BY MICHAEL JACKSON

THE ART OF THE CLINIC

When Paul Maslin opened his woodwind repair and retail shop PM Woodwind in Evanston, Illinois, 11 years ago, it was by no means his first foray into the saxophone world.

The still-gigging musician has been repairing saxophones for some of the most notable artists in the world for the past 23 years. His clientele has included Michael Brecker, David Sanborn, Ken Vandermark and Peter Brötzmann.

It is this relationship with artists that has helped him attract big-name acts, such as Chris Potter, Greg Osby and Jeff Coffin to perform clinics at his store.

“It is easiest to schedule a clinic when the artist is performing in Chicago,” Maslin said, adding, however, that scheduling Chris Potter was a bit tricky. “He was playing with Pat Metheny at Symphony Center and luckily had just one day off. He was very accommodating and came up on a week night. That was the first time I took reservations because of the large turnout.”

CREATING A PM CLINIC

PM Woodwind boasts an adjoining space that holds 50–60, which he acquired for the express purpose of hosting mas-



Chris Potter and Paul Maslin



Jeff Coffin performs at PM Woodwind.



The crowd at one of PM Woodwind's clinics.

target audience, each artist has divulged untold nuggets of wisdom. Dave Liebman demonstrated the art of playing scales and melodies on the mouthpiece of the saxophone alone; Bob Shepard jammed with talented young locals; Jeff Coffin brought his entire band plus a full entourage of instruments and discussed his

terclasses to educate the public. “I offer all of the clinics to my customers for free,” Maslin said. “I believe that being able to hear and interact with each of the artists I bring in is one of the most important things any working or young musician can experience.”

Appreciating the specialist

approach to playing in complex meters.

Maslin will frequently be too busy fixing horns next door to attend the clinics himself, but he makes sure to lay out snacks and beverages and provide promotional reed giveaways beforehand. He also lets the musicians sell their CDs during the events.

The clinics attract casual business to PM Woodwind, no doubt, but Maslin’s enthusiasm for helping to disseminate the brilliance of some of the finest players on the planet in his laid back, suburban storefront, some may say, is the work of an evangelist.

“I try to host three to four clinics a year,” he said. “But I would like to boost that up to six. Every other month would be fantastic. It takes a bit of set up, contacting the artist, then sending out several email blasts and reminders. I am currently working on getting Bob Mintzer to do a workshop.”

Despite the set up work, hosting the clinics has become a minor obsession for Maslin.

“I know how much contact with great musicians meant to me coming up and felt that it was becoming harder to enjoy that one-on-one experience,” Maslin said. “Since I am now in the position to make this available to everyone, it gives me great joy to do so.” **MI**

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MUSIC INC. OF GONZALES | ANNIVERSARY

MUSIC INC. OF GONZALES CELEBRATES 45 YEARS

Music Inc. of Gonzales celebrated its 45th anniversary with party in the Louisiana-based store's parking lot on Aug. 1. The celebration featured many man-

ufacturer rep demos, including Taylor, PRS, Peavey, Electro-Voice, Kala, Orange and CAD. The event also included product give-

aways, live music, free jambalaya and drinks. "It was the largest sales day at Music Inc. since I took over in 2012," said owner Brandt Bourque. "It was a awesome day."



Music Inc. of Gonzales' 45th anniversary celebration.

E.L. MUSIC | OPENING

E.L. Music Quickly Opens its Doors

Matt Robbins had a long-running dream of opening his own store after working in music retail for the last 20 years. This past September, Robbins and his father, Dwain Robbins, made the long-held dream a reality in less than eight short weeks when they decided to open the doors to E.L. Music in Worcester, Massachusetts.

"It was a lot of working 16 hour days, seven days a week and sometimes just sleeping on a blowup mattress, waking up and working again," Robbins said of the rush. Despite the fast pace, Robbins stuck to a specific vision of a store that was an inviting community-centered space. He said E.L. Music feels more like a coffee shop than a typical retail store with custom-made furniture, a fireplace, free Wi-Fi and couches.

"We sacrificed some retail space for comfort and vibe," Robbins said. "A lot of people would tell you not to do that because you're paying for square footage, but I looked at it differently. I didn't want just walls and walls of slatwall and hooks."

A music teacher himself, Robbins also said he developed the store around teaching first — retail second. And as a way to attract full-time teaching talent, he decided to run his lesson studios "more like a barbershop than a music store," without taking a commission from every student.

"All my rooms are full, six days a week, and we have 150 students," Robbins said. He added it's something other music stores think he's "crazy" for doing, but he hopes the long-term strategy will attract profes-

sional, high-quality teachers. "I got a lot of established teachers. I wanted people I could trust."



Matt Robbins; Photo credit: Joe Gonzalez-Dufresne

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BEST IN MUSIC | EVENT

BEST IN MUSIC ROCKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY



Best In Music's Marcus Hight (left) with giveaway winner Danny Abbot.

Best In Music celebrated its 25th anniversary on Sept. 13 with a huge sale, a free Lanikai sponsored uke circle and giveaways, including an open-mic uke competition.

Each year for the past 12 years, Best In Music has hosted an anniversary event with live music, vendor sponsored promotions, special event pricing and huge drawings where over \$23,000 worth of products is given away. More than \$3,000 worth of strings and accessories were tossed out to the crowd, as well. More than 600 people flooded the parking lot of the flagship loca-

tion in Orem, Utah, hoping for a chance to win one of 10 guitars — some even driving from four or five hours away.

“It’s wonderful to have an event where Best In Music can give back to our community and say ‘thank you’ to all of our loyal customers for keeping us in business for 25 years, but when that event generates sales revenue six times that of a typical Black Friday weekend, it’s that much better,” said Marcus Hight, general manager. “Giving things away makes us happy, but shattering sales records makes us ecstatic!”

NORTHWOODS MUSIC | OPENING

Northwoods Music Adds Second Store

Northwoods Music opened its second location in Virginia, Minnesota, on Sept. 2. The store also has a location in Superior, Wisconsin. According to local

news outlet *Mesabi Daily News*, owner Scott Johnson said the city was in need of a “buy, sell and trade” music store. The shop sells Washburn, Alvarez and Crafter

guitars along with Marshall amplifiers and provides guitar lessons.

The store also sells a variety of old records and turntables.

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APPOINTMENTS

SWEETWATER HIRES THREE



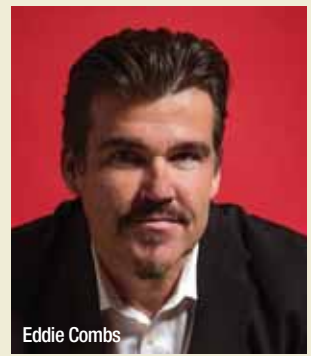
Don Carr

Sweetwater recently hired three nationally known music professionals: producer and keyboard player Phil Naish, drummer and vocalist Nick D'Virgilio and guitarist Don Carr.

Nick D'Virgilio and Carr, in addition to session work in Sweetwater Studios, will contribute to Sweetwater's marketing efforts, providing educational content for Sweetwater's customers through videos and writing. They will also conduct workshops, clinics, and master classes for Sweetwater's Academy of Music and Technology. Naish will work full-time in Sweetwater Studios as an executive producer and session player.

A producer, musician and songwriter, Naish is best known for producing and playing on Steven Curtis Chapman's first seven albums, resulting in his winning three Grammy Awards. D'Virgilio has recorded and performed with Genesis, Tears for Fears, Peter Gabriel, Sheryl Crow, and has countless studio session credits. Don Carr was the lead guitarist for 23 years with the legendary Oak Ridge Boys, performing more than 150 shows annually, including radio and television, and two command performances at the White House.

GC NAMES NEW SENIOR VP OF MARKETING



Eddie Combs

Guitar Center has appointed Eddie Combs senior vice president of marketing. Combs has extensive expertise in e-commerce, digital marketing, mobile experiences, customer loyalty and demographic targeting that will help him drive Guitar Center's branding efforts and marketing initiatives.

"I'm really excited about coming to Guitar Center," Combs said. "I previously worked at Sears, as the chief marketing officer for [its] Home Appliance Business Unit, and I can tell you, my favorite appliance in the house wasn't my refrigerator; it was my six-string. So, being part of a retailer [Guitar Center] that can deliver some of the best products and 'the greatest feeling on earth' is something I'm really looking forward to. For me, my whole marketing career started because of music. I was out, and I was playing for 10 years, and I started to learn all the aspects of marketing as a musician. Out of there sprung my corporate career in marketing. I get to come back full circle and bring it all back to Guitar Center."

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Andy Tinsley - FOH Engineer, Alkaline Trio

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**Richard 'Dickie' Chappell -
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Simon Fuller - FOH, Dry The River

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Brent Bodrug - Sly-Fy Chapel Studio



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

**Bob Strakele -FOH,
Billy Talent**

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

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

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Note From Joe A Different Perspective on The NAMM Show

'A little rebellion now and then is a good thing.'—Thomas Jefferson

I was recently in Washington, D.C., and visited an interesting company called 1776, an incubator of small startup companies, mostly in the technology, energy and health-care industries. As I stepped off the elevator, I noticed the Jefferson quote above written on the wall in big letters, and I believe it really set the tone for the young entrepreneurs working there, each passionately dedicated to an idea or product they hoped would take the world by storm.

After giving this some thought, it really made a lot of sense to me. The disruptive ideas and technologies of these companies benefitted from the stable platform provided by the incubator they shared. Noted economist George Gilder explains it this way: any risk-taking business pushing the boundaries of change (what he refers to as a high-entropy entrepreneurial style) requires a reliable business platform (a low-entropy carrier) to be successful. The idea of a stable platform on which innovation can thrive made me think of our industry and the role of The NAMM Show.

For over a century, The NAMM Show has provided a steady, predictable platform for our members to come together and create a little "rebellion" of their own. Just think of all the changes and cutting-edge musical technologies that have been launched there. Each year, under one roof, the world's buyers meet face-to-face with global manufacturers to see the newest products they've created. In this arena, every company, large and small, has an equal shot at success. Something special happens when all the musical tribes gather to share ideas and develop deeper relationships.

The global media is also there in numbers that no individual company could ever attract, which helps drive the demand for musical products, promote music making and grow the market for everyone.

Bob Taylor of Taylor Guitars put it this way: "I remember walking through The NAMM Show, back in the '70s when it was at The Disneyland Hotel, and dreaming that we could have a booth there someday. When we did, it was a 10' x 10', but it was really the first time we were able to talk one-on-one with people and sell them our guitars."

Little did Bob realize at the time the incredible future that awaited Taylor Guitars, yet he instinctively knew that he needed a stable, "low-entropic" platform like The NAMM Show to showcase his products and build his brand into the legendary company it is today.

The NAMM Show has helped thousands of music product legends like Bob Taylor make a name for themselves, and it can make a difference to your business too. For both buyers and sellers, it's the best place to see the latest innovations offered by companies rebelling against the status quo and pushing the boundaries of sound. Attendees can also take free educational sessions taught by our industry's most dynamic leaders and choose from hundreds of fun networking and musical events to attend each evening.

We look forward to once again welcoming the global music and sound industry's best and brightest to Anaheim in January—and we hope you'll be among them!



Joe Lamond

NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



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SUPPLY

KLUSON | BY KATHLEEN COSTANZA

BRINGING BACK KLUSON

Let's say you have a CBS-era Fender that you want better tuners on, but don't want to devalue your vintage guitar by modifying it or drilling holes in the headstock. Until recently, you were out of luck.

That is, until Kluson added its new line of CBS-era Fender tuners. Lightweight and with a 19:1 gear ratio, it's the first line of tuners designed for those specific models that players or repair shops can just drop into that headstock without modifying the instrument.

"Now, anyone with [CBS-era Fender] guitars from about 1966 to 1979 can change the tuner for a better gear ratio — and also have a locking option — without having to modify a vintage instrument," said Dave Lewis, manager of sales at WD Music, which owns the Kluson brand.

It's only one of the thousands of tuners and other hardware pieces Kluson has developed to solve that exact problem for vintage instrument owners. But the company doesn't just design identical replacement tuners — it's branched out by designing completely new lines of tuners as well.

CLASSIC HISTORY

The 90-year-old company was founded by John Kluson as a machine shop in Chicago. Kluson



Dave Lewis

picked up contracts with Gibson, Martin and Fender, turning Kluson into a household name in the world of vintage instruments.

Kluson went defunct in 1981, but WD Music founders Larry and Wendy Davis purchased the Kluson trademark in the early 1990s with the original goal supplying replacement parts for all the decades of guitar players with failed tuners. After doing some

investigation, Larry found there were a few deficiencies in the original tuners. So they improved the gear ratio, improved the plating and made the button shaft thicker. "The adjustments made them better than the originals but were still faithful in appearance and — most importantly — able to be mounted without having to modify the original instrument," said Lewis, who also

does design work on Kluson. And if the owner wants to sell the guitar one day? They just need to put the original tuners in a bag with some silica gel packets and pop them back in when it's time to sell.

NEXT STEP

Eventually, Davis and Lewis saw potential in designing modern tuners from scratch for builders and repair shop use.

"For me, it was really cool," Lewis said of the transition. "You're taking an iconic name brand in guitar parts and you're bringing them into today's market. It's like taking an iconic car company and bringing it back to life."

Today, Kluson sells to the Gibson Custom Shop, Fender Custom Shop, and an extensive base of dealers and repair shops around the world. Lewis said a robust vintage market has continued to grow Kluson's business further than originally expected.

"There are more people wanting to fix guitars nowadays than there are wanting to buy new, especially in the high dollar range," Lewis said. "I'm not speaking from a guitar builder's perspective. But from the parts business, business is blossoming. And the more good stuff I can offer, the more business we've been getting." **MI**

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Jensentone.com



photo by Michael Bulbenko

NAMM | EVENT

Apple's Wozniak to Speak at Winter NAMM

Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak will speak at the 2015 NAMM Show to be held January 22–25 in Anaheim, California. The engineering icon will open Saturday morning's breakfast session, talking music and technology with Joe Lamond, NAMM's president and CEO.

"Since the days of Thomas Edison, The NAMM Show has been the place where great thinkers have come together to create the future," Lamond said. "NAMM members coming to Anaheim this January will benefit from a robust show floor filled with the latest innovations, educational sessions that cannot be found anywhere else, and the chance to hear iconic speakers and thought leaders like Steve Wozniak."

Wozniak will discuss the hard-hitting

lessons learned during the founding of Apple. Wozniak and Lamond will also explore innovations in business, entrepreneurship and Wozniak's passion for music.

"Music is an enormous part of my life," Wozniak said. "It plays an integral role in creating the whole person, creative innovators that will shape the future," said Wozniak. "I look forward to witnessing technology and music come together at the NAMM Show. And of course playing a few instruments too!"

One of the early innovators of the micro-computer revolution, Wozniak co-founded Apple Computers (now Apple Inc.), designing both the Apple I and the Apple II. He was awarded the National Medal of Technology from President Ronald Reagan for his innovations, which effectively paved the way for the personal computer industry. namm.org

TRI-TECHNICAL SYSTEMS | ANNIVERSARY

TRI-TECH HITS 30

Tri-Technical Systems is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

Under the leadership of founder David Cox, Tri-Tech has grown from offering a single industry software application to providing software solutions for any retail establishment. Its software can now be found in thousands of businesses across the United States and Canada.

"Our focus has always been to stay abreast of technology in order to offer our customers the best solution for managing and growing their business, while providing top tier customer support," Cox said. "We could not have achieved this incredible milestone without the ongoing support of our loyal customers, partners and the dedicated team we have here at Tri-Tech."

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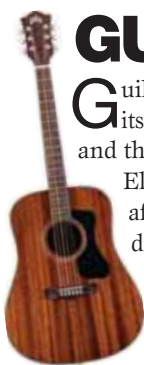


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GUILD CHOOSES GITAARBIZZ

Guild Guitars has named GitaarBizz as its new distributor in Germany, Austria and the Benelux. Industry veteran Ruud Elbers founded GitaarBizz in 2013, after an 18-year stint as the Benelux distributor of Gibson, Epiphone and Orange, among other brands.

“Ruud’s extensive connections with the existing dealer network, along with his experience in mar-

keting and logistics make him a well-rounded, ideal candidate to help us promote the Guild brand,” said Jonathan Thomas, Guild president.

GitaarBizz’s Guild distribution and product support has resumed with Guild’s Traditional series, GAD series and the Newark St. collection, offering a diverse selection of best-selling acoustic and electric styles.

{guildguitars.com}

TMP PRO, AUDIOFLY TEAM UP

TMP Pro Distribution is now the exclusive distributor of Australia-based Audiofly’s full line of Performance Series IEMs in the United States.

“TMP Pro is always looking to strengthen and nurture its line card, especially with new companies that bring a passion for making the pro audio experience a memorable and reliable one,” said Eugene Mulcahy, director of pro audio products at TMP. “Dave Thompson and his staff at Audiofly have delivered a new take on the personal monitoring experience with their professional IEM monitoring products.”

{ttmpro.com}

ANTHEM, NORTH BRIDGE JOIN FORCES

Anthem Musical Instruments is now the exclusive U.S. distributor for North Bridge flutes.



All North Bridge flutes feature a sterling silver headjoint that is handmade in

the United States by flute artisan Chris McKenna. The North Bridge flute pairs a McKenna headjoint with a flute body that is assembled in Taiwan.

“North Bridge provides Anthem with quality step-up instruments that perfectly compliment Anthem’s existing product line,” said David Kilkenny, president of Anthem.

{northbridgewinds.com}

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NAMM, MUSIKMESSE | EVENT

NAMM Musikmesse Russia, Prolight + Sound See Increased Attendance

Sokolniki Park in Moscow played host to NAMM Musikmesse Russia, and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia from September 11–14. The shows' third edition saw increased attendance by 42 percent over the 2013 show. More than 190 companies showcased their products. Attendees had the opportunity to attend more than 160 education, entertainment and business events. "We returned after a year's absence

with the single desire to make the world a better place through music in these times of tension," said Jiro Ohno, general director of Yamaha Music Russia, in a statement from NAMM. "We were delighted by the excellent turnout of attendees, which doubtlessly is tied to the very good marketing and advertising campaign of the organizers." namm-musik-messe.ru; prolight-namm.ru



FISHMAN | EVENT

Fishman Speaks to Apple Staffers

Larry Fishman, founder and president of Fishman, was recently invited to speak to Apple designers, engineers and product managers. Fishman delivered a presentation titled "Inspiring Tools for Musicians: A Confluence of Engineering and Art" to a standing-room only audience.

Fishman took the audience through his concept of creativity and how the engineering arts relate to and co-exist with the fine arts in terms of individuals and companies.

He went on to explain how the Fishman culture of inspiration, rejecting institutional bias and "untying knots" has helped build his company over the last 33 years.

"Apple's mark on product technology and design are indisputable," Fishman said. "That they would invite me to speak to them as a peer is quite an honor.

"Being given the opportunity to share my views on product development to a receptive audience at Apple was an amazingly inspiring and humbling experience." fishman.com



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ST. LOUIS MUSIC | RETIREMENT

VP of Knilling Eaton Retires

St. Louis Music has announced Jim Eaton, the vice president of Knilling and orchestral sales for more than six years, has retired. He will remain with St. Louis Music in an advisory role after his retirement.



During his career, Eaton held the roles of director of marketing for Scherl & Roth, product manager for William Lewis & Son, executive vice president of JR Music Supply, executive vice president of EMMC and, most recently, vice president of Knilling and orchestral sales at St. Louis Music.

“While we are sad to see Jim leave the company, we certainly wish him well in a much deserved retirement,” said Mark Ragin, president and CEO of St. Louis Music. “Jim has been the driving force behind the incredible success of the Knilling brand for more than six years. We are very happy that Jim has agreed to stay on in an advisory role as we seek to build a new management team.” stlouismusic.com

APPOINTMENTS

D’ADDARIO NAMES NEW CCO, CF&AO

D’Addario has announced two new appointments. Richard LaBonté has been appointed Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) and Shabbir Ahmed been named Chief Financial & Administrative Officer (CF&AO). Both are newly-created positions.

As CCO, LaBonté will be responsible for the commercial strategy and development of the organization relating to marketing, sales, product development, artist relations and customer service, to drive business growth and market share.

As CF&AO, Ahmed will work to develop and execute the company’s overall strategy by driving all business planning activities, monitoring profit opportunities, and protecting the organization’s financial health

through robust systems and solid internal controls.

“Richard’s multi-disciplinary experience and education will let him move seamlessly between the creative, financial, entrepreneurial, business development, and marketing worlds,” said Jim D’Addario, CEO.

“His prior business associates have described him as having a great ability to think conceptually, strategically, and operationally, with an impressive skill set in systems development and finance,” said John D’Addario III, D’Addario president. daddario.com



Richard LaBonté

Shure has hired Mark Rahilly as its new senior sales manager.

Darren Wallace has been named brand manager for Ovation Guitars.

Yamaha Corp. of America has appointed Simon Oss the company’s new premium piano marketing manager.



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“I found them to be very smooth and a joy to tune with. I find that I don’t have to go with the ‘that’s as close as I can get it for now’ attitude that I had with tuning this particular guitar up after drop D, or an alternate. It tunes precisely with plenty of ‘travel’ as it comes up to the desired note. Smooth, easy, and precise, are words that come to mind.” - Tim Mathews

“They have made a vast improvement to the guitars stability.” - Lachlan Hallam

“I enjoy playing this guitar much more now that it stays in tune for days without needing adjustments. Gives me more time playing and less time tuning. Thanks for making a great product!” - Jeremy Werner

Roger Fisher
(Founding guitarist of Heart)
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IDEAS

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLUM

THE EYE OF THE CUSTOMER

It's a simple truth — we humans are creatures of habit. If you watched a video of your daily activities from one day to the next, you'd probably be surprised that there are certain things that you do with uncanny repetitiveness. You probably pull the comb through your hair nearly the same number of times every day. The same shoe goes on first. You have a morning ritual that is likely a routine. And then you get to your store where you walk right past the same weeds growing through the sidewalk, in the doors and past the disorganized displays, dusty drum sets and stained floor. Do you do this because you don't care? Of course not. You do it because you're a creature of habit going through the same daily routine. In short, you pass these things by because you simply don't see them. But the thing is, your customers see them, and they make a bad impression.

I learned this many years ago when a friend of mine, John McMurray of McMurray Music in St. Louis, invited me to attend an annual sales event at his store. Since we both held similar sales, we visited one another and helped out. If you have a similar opportunity, do it. It's



'Some things just weren't that obvious because they became the norm for me and my staff.'

fun to work for someone else where you get to sell in another environment without the ultimate responsibility of running the business.

But the most amazing part is that we both saw things in the other person's store that we never saw on our own. He pointed out

glaring issues in my store that were hurting the customer experience. And fixing those problems paid dividends.

The next step for me was to take this isolated set of observations and leverage what I learned into an ongoing program to ensure that I was always putting my company's best foot forward. However, that's not as easy as it sounds. No matter how committed I was to making my store look its best, some things just weren't that obvious because they became the norm for me and my staff.

SECRET STAFF SHOPPERS

To give us the ability to look at the store with "customer eyes," I put a fun little exercise into place. Since my store was departmentalized, I had staffers "shop" other staffers' departments. So the keyboard folks critiqued the guitars, and the guitar folks looked at drums, etc. Since they rarely had reason to spend time in those departments, noticing things that weren't quite right was actually quite easy. To balance it, I asked them to report on truly outstanding things in the department, and then the problems that needed to be addressed.

I didn't want to make this too negative. So, to limit any bad feel-

ings, I did a couple of things. First and foremost, I created a safe environment that helped my staff to understand that these weren't personal attacks by co-workers. Instead, this was an opportunity to see the things that our customers would see and not like. In essence, this exercise was a business-building opportunity. Secondly, I limited the "shopping" time to just a few minutes. I wasn't looking for anyone to redesign someone's department — I just wanted the stuff that really jumped out. And finally, to make this as real as possible, these exercises were always surprise events. This way, what we got to see as we looked around was the real deal — just how the store would look to any customer showing up unannounced.

Even if your store is less departmentalized, and everyone does everything, it's still important to go through this exercise. In that case, consider bringing in friends and relatives to do this reporting for you. Either way, you'll be amazed at what you've been missing. **MI**

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

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Holiday Selling to Students

When it comes to holiday shopping, there's a lot of discussion about attracting sales from outside with events like Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. But what about gearing your holiday promotions toward your community of music lesson students and families that are already in your store on a regular basis? Luckily it is not too late to develop a student selling strategy for this holiday season. This strategy should be based on stocking products that are needed by your students.



Develop a student selling strategy to keep your students' dollars in your store this holiday season

CREATING THE STUDENT SELLING STRATEGY

To create a student selling strategy, first make a gift list of musical accessories that will enhance your students' playing and learning experience. Most parents are ecstatic to have gift ideas. What if I asked you how many of your students don't have a music stand, a guitar stand, a gig bag or a stick bag? You probably don't know, and I would wager most of your students don't have one. These are great items to put on a gift suggestion list for your students and their families. Make a flier from this list and hand it out to your students. Create a video on gift ideas and post it to your YouTube, website and Facebook pages.

The holidays are also a great time to thank your students for taking lessons at your store. Offer a student discount on their purchases. Let all of your students and their families know you offer this discount. Give it to everyone who's holiday shopping, including their family members.

Hold a student-only holiday sale, and do it before Black Friday so your students get the deals before anyone else. Offer layaways, deals on special orders and a "hide it here" for larger items like drum sets.

Provide your students with a gift card to your store for referring new music lesson students. This will help drive new customers to your store during the holiday selling season.

GET TEACHERS INVOLVED

How many of your students need capos? Or an amplifier? Some of your piano students might not have a keyboard to practice on at home. What about a better guitar? Parents many times are

waiting for the teacher to tell students to get a better instrument, and most teachers don't mention it — they're just happy to have a student.

Making a list of your students by teacher and sitting down with each teacher to review each student is a great way to take notes on each student's supply needs.

Spiff your teachers for helping a sale. Many times your teacher hears that your student customers are in the market for a new instrument before you do. And many times the teacher says, "That's cool," but how many times do they say, "Let's look at what the store has here." Teachers don't necessarily feel like they are part of the sales process at your store. They teach — you sell. Explain to your teachers that they don't need to "sell" the product, they just need to help in the process by showing the parents that cool guitar, better amplifier or awesome trumpet, and get the parents hooked up with your sales crew.

Have fun developing your student sales strategy. Make sure to promote these events and special programs with every student and family. Your student sales strategy will no doubt add a little cheer to your holiday selling season. **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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TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

Figuring Out Facebook

Did you know that most people never see the stuff you post on Facebook? It's true. In fact, less than 10 percent of your fans are actually seeing the content that you work so hard to create.

I first discovered this when I posted a photo album from a Halloween concert at my store, Gist Piano Center. With more than 150 student photos, I was certain the "Halloweekend" album would engage a large number of fans. Sadly, less than 40 people interacted with it. The following year, I turned our Facebook photo album into a costume contest. Parents voted by "liking" a student's photo and the student with the most "likes" in each city won a cauldron of candy and a \$50 "Gist Certificate." The results were enormous. More than 4,500 people participated in the contest, and I learned a valuable lesson about Facebook. If you want your posts to have an impact, you will have to first engage your Facebook fans. Create clever content that will entertain and educate them, and they will interact with you.



ENGAGE YOUR FANS

Arguably one of the most successful Facebookers is George Takei. Though he became a household name in the 1970s piloting the *Starship Enterprise*, Takei has built a second career in his later years as a comedic genius and social activist on Facebook. If you are wondering how he has achieved a fan base of more than 7.5 million people, it's because Takei wraps the majority of his posts in his own clever sense of humor. In short, because he makes people laugh, they flock to his page and consume whatever content he puts out — even when the content is focused on more serious social issues.

As the holidays approach, think of ways you can engage your Facebook fans using your own brand of entertainment. Why not post a series of "Christmas karaoke" videos with your teachers or best customers? Create a free Jib Jab video using photos of your staff and post it on your page. Why not hide a candy cane in your store and give your Facebook customers a \$5 gift card if they find it and post a photo of it? Find ways to make your Facebook fan page fun, and you'll develop a large and loyal following.

EDUCATE YOUR CUSTOMERS

Today's retailers have to create a market for their products by demonstrating how they will enhance customers' lives. That's why companies like Best Buy have chosen to fill their Facebook fan pages with how-to tips and videos. These posts establish Best Buy's authority; they build product demand by helping customers who have purchased from them. This approach fosters critical dialog between Best Buy and its customers.

Why not make Facebook a value-added service for your customers? Post a video about changing drumheads or guitar strings. Upload a how-to photo series demonstrating the best way to clean your new piano. Better yet — offer your customers a free how-to video of their choice when they use the Facebook check-in feature in your store.

Whatever your Facebook strategy, the key to success is regular conversation. Remember that Facebook is not like a newspaper ad. Your fans want to interact with you and that interactivity is what will spread your message — and your brand — around the Internet. Create loyal Facebook fans and they will promote your business for you. **MI**

James Harding is the president of Gist Piano Center, a freelance Web designer, pianist and avid blogger. Email him at jharding@gistpiano.com.

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The

VINTAGE KINGS

By Katie Kailus
Photography by Len Katz



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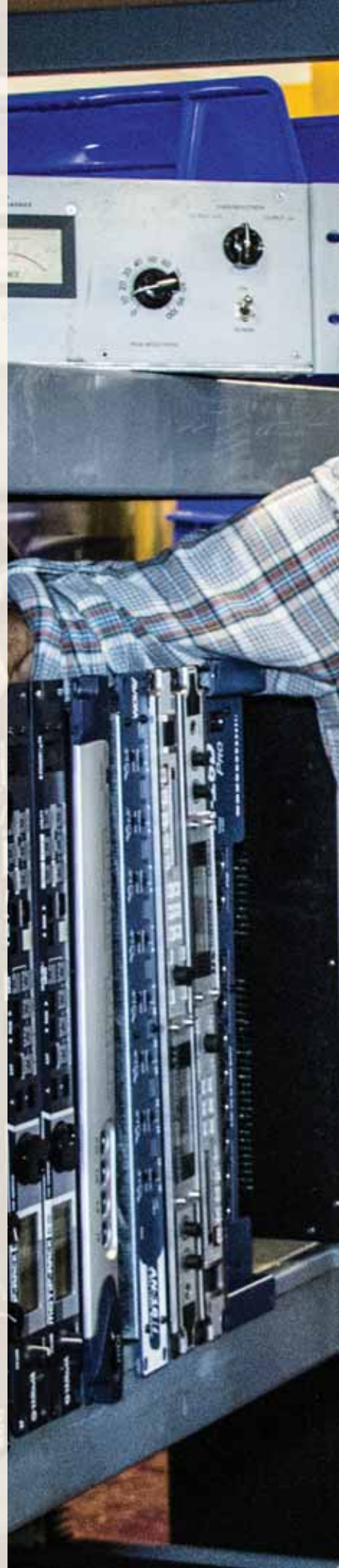


Back in the early 1990s, before Mike Nehra founded Vintage King Audio with his brother Andrew, he ordered a few products from a used pro-audio broker, and they arrived broken.

“I called the broker back and asked, ‘What’s going on? I paid for this. Can we exchange it or fix it?’” he recalled. “And the guy told me, ‘Nope, worked fine when it left here.’ I was heartbroken, because that’s all the money I had.”

That single experience has set the tone as the Nehras have turned Vintage King Audio into a \$40 million company with 80 employees, an administrative and distribution facility just outside of Detroit, and appointment-only showrooms in Los Angeles and Nashville, Tennessee. Nearly 20 years after founding the company, they still maintain a customer-first mindset.

“We vowed we’d never treat a customer like that,” Mike said. “It was how we were brought up. Our parents taught us treat others how you want to be treated. And we’ve always carried that through to our business.”





Andrew and Mike Nehra

➔ Growth Through Staffing

Vintage King does more than just treat its customers with respect. The company takes a strict approach when it comes to hiring its sales staff.

“We don’t just say we are hiring recording engineers or people that are into music, we hire people who that is literally who they are,” Mike said. “They really are the fabric of recording. They are musicians.”

“The majority of the team has experienced a professional career as a musician, producer or engineer beyond the commitment of a hobby.”

Mike said that when hiring, he and his brother look for candidates who have a desire, drive and ability to work with other like-minded individuals with common goals.

“Generally a type of person who wants to be around others who love recording, learning and being challenged with a down to earth, genuine persona,” Mike said.

Vintage King’s dedicated sales crew of about 15 consists of skilled pro-audio specialists that can assist customers — whether they are seasoned mastering engineers or up-and-comers — on any aspect of their purchase.

“We offer more service and a little more depth and have conversations with people,” Andrew said. “And if a customer really needs help we can gravitate or educate them. I think that’s a dynamic people appreciate. I think about places that I call because I don’t know that much about a product and to be able to talk to somebody and get information and feel comfortable and not feel like you are just being sold something is a great thing.”

Before selling, Vintage King staffers undergo extensive training at its Ferndale location.

“The training consists of on-site orientation,” Mike said. “Trainees meet the staff and experience the day-to-day roles within our facilities. The Tech Shop explains the foundation of Vintage King’s roots and allows them to experience how we service, refurbish, rebuild and customize our used and vintage items. From here they start to train on our software platform, role playing and learning how to work within the platform. Throughout a two-week period, they will experience working in related, but unrelated, roles within the company. For example, they will sit with marketing or shipping to get an idea of how the department functions, getting to know the people within.”

After the initial orientation on-site, new staffers will be mentored weekly with consistent sales and training meetings — but it doesn’t stop there.

“Over the course of 18 months, they are assigned a dedicated sales mentor who shadows and works with them daily, developing knowledge, while passing on the ‘VK Way,’” Mike said. “Throughout this duration there is direct vendor training, assigned reading as a group to discuss and expand, along with other techniques to help each person find their uniqueness within Vintage King. We find it takes this time to truly hit a person’s stride, allowing them to become fully

acclimated with all the systems, people, knowledge and flow. Eventually it all becomes second nature.”

Staff training also focuses on fostering relationships with customers.

“We teach them how to create that relationship,” Mike said. “For example, we get them to understand what the customer’s whole purpose is and what they need and not just try to sell them what [the salesman] wants to sell them. Our team draws out of them what best fits the customer’s needs and finds what’s best for them.”

With such a seasoned staff, it’s not just the customers that come to Vintage King for input. The sales team gets calls anywhere from engineers needing advice on assembling a large package to college students looking for information for research papers. But more importantly, manufacturers, such as Barefoot Sound, Shadowhills Industries, Retro Instruments and Helios, look to the company’s sales team when creating new products.

“It started with key brands like API and Helios — vintage brands that are still some of the most influential,” Andrew said. “They took note of what we were doing and how much



vintage stuff we were selling. Over time we earned their respect and were able to get them to start manufacturing the things that we thought were beneficial.

“Our sales crew has a lot of ideas and manufacturers will come to us when they are in the beta stages of their development or even early development, and ask for help with the architecture of it. It is important because they connect on all levels. The sales guys who are presenting it really understand it, love it and believe in the product because it is a tool that they want to use. They then pass that excitement on to the customer.”

Mike added that the relationship between Vintage King, the manufacturer and the customer is symbiotic.

“We try to hear the customer and voice, on their behalf, what they want to see in the market,” he said. “We do this instead of the manufacturer saying, ‘I think we should make this and the public will like it.’ A lot of times it is backwards — it is the manufacturer making the customer do it their way. So we act as a voice for the customer.”

➔ Rock Star Retailers

The transition from rock star to retailer isn't always an easy one — or a common one for that matter. But Mike and Andrew have managed to do just that. In the early

and mid-1990s, the two brothers were touring around the country with Robert Bradley's Blackwater Surprise. Today, they are running a \$40 million pro-audio company.

So how did they make the transition?

It all started when Mike took a trip to Europe to purchase \$8,000 of vintage recording gear — cheaper than buying in the States due to exchange rates.

“I got back and showed Andy and was like, ‘Look at all this cool stuff; we are going to keep all this,’” Mike said. “And Andy was like, ‘No, we should sell it and make some money.’ So, basically we compromised, and we kept half and sold half.”

And thus, Vintage King Audio was born.

The brothers continued to tour the country with their band for a few more years, often doing business deals over pay phones and selling to the customers they found themselves surrounded by — their fellow tour mates.

“We did the H.O.R.D.E Festival that Dave Matthews was on and the Allman Brothers and Ben Harper,” Mike said. “It was around that time that the other acts we were traveling with started discovering we were Vintage King Audio. So they would hear our records and would admire the sound we were making and put two-and-two together. And it sort of snowballed from there.”

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➔ "Customers Are People, Too"

Starting with transactions among tour mates, the Nehras have kept one thing in mind when it comes to its customers' experience: looking at them simply as people.

"Our growth is really reliant upon them and what they want," Mike said. "We listen to our customers heavily. We love that relationship."

Andrew added that it all comes back to treating them with respect.

"You do the right thing for people," he said. "It's a relationship. It's not like we were thinking about having some plaque on the wall that said, 'Customers First.' It's

just that customers are people, and that's what you do with people — you respect them. They are giving you their trust so of course you want to treat them well and reciprocate the way you are supposed to. You don't need to spend money to learn that concept. If we acted that way socially, I think the world would work better."

Vintage King gives back to its customers by teaming up with mix master and pro-audio viral video host Dave Pensado to hold events at its appointment-only showrooms in Nashville and Los Angeles. (See sidebar on the next page for more information on the showrooms.) Events like "Mix With the Masters," which welcomes pro-audio heavy-hitters like Rupert Neve, and "Gear Expo," which brings manufacturers and pro-audio enthusiasts together in Nashville, offers customers in the community the opportunity to connect not only with pro-audio pros, but also with Vintage King.

"The events are really engaging," Mike said. "We invite the community — and we aren't just inviting them like, 'Hey, come and buy this.' Instead we are saying, 'Hey, come and learn about something.' Our talent is starving to tell their stories and customers are starving to learn from other people. People in pro-audio are geeky about this stuff." **MI**

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A LOOK AT VKLA



VKLA's showroom

➔ Vintage King's Los Angeles

showroom is 3,500 square feet of pure pro-audio bliss.

Mike and Andrew Nehra have created the appointment-only showrooms in Los Angeles and Nashville to give their customers a chance to try out the gear in a intimate, relaxed setting.

"It's not really a store, it is more a comfortable hang out," Mike said. "You can buy the gear — we try to hold as much inventory as we can in both of the showrooms, but there are limitations due to space, so all the warehousing is done in Detroit."

"Really they are a souped-up recording facility," Andrew added. "The idea is to be in that type of environment. We are not set up to be a store where there are 100 people in there at a time. It is supposed to be a little more intimate — not intimidating. But you have to have intimacy sometimes in order to be able to experience the gear. If you go to a larger store and they carry some of the goods, it is harder to get that personal experience. They are appointment-only showrooms so customers can have the best experience."

As for the Los Angeles location, West Coast Sales Manager Jeffrey Ehrenberg said he sees people all over the world making an appointment when they are in town, noting that the sales growth in Los Angeles has doubled since opening the showroom.

"For people to be able to give this stuff a listen and gets some hands on, ears on experience with it before they make the big investment has been really viable," Ehrenberg said. "We have been getting people from all over the world stop in when they are in town. I've also had people drive in from Idaho, Texas and Florida, because there are really no other places like this in the country."

Turn the page to get a walk-through experience of VKLA.

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WALK THROUGH

Vintage King Los Angeles has packed its 3,500-square-foot location with all of the hottest pro-audio and boutique guitar gear. Here's a glance at the appointment-only showroom:



Recording Room: "We have all the major brands in here, including Avid, Apogee, Focusrite, and so forth," Ehrenberg said. "The API is our best-selling small-format console, so not only can we demo the console, but it helps with room function, with the routing and the control room monitoring and such. This room was built from the ground up for this purpose. The doors are custom-made and weigh about 350 lbs each to help soundproof and dampen the low-end."

Guitar Selection:

"It is a hand-selected selection — sort of the same as the pro-audio," Mike said. "The guitar brands are really specific, hand-made goods that are kind of individual to themselves, and the designers are unique. We focused initially on pedals and amps, and we are putting more focus on guitars. We are also concentrating on keyboards and modular synths at the boutique level."





Mic Booth: "This is our most popular area to do a demo," Ehrenberg said. "It's our greatest hits of microphones. I would say \$1,500 is probably our average seller but even in the lower price points, we've chosen to have professional options like the Shure SM7. Even people on a more modest budget have counted on us to have curated the best stuff for their price range."

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FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

JIM D'ADDARIO | D'ADDARIO & COMPANY

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

I'm an extremely early riser and normally get up anywhere between 4:30–5:30. I have a cup of coffee, check my inbox, and usually work for one to four hours from home. Then I take a break around 7 a.m. to work out, shower and head into the office — if I'm even going in that day. Lately, I've been working from home more, since I've started to get back into more design and strategic work.

WHAT KIND OF DESIGN WORK?

I do initial drawings of a product idea and decide what resources are needed to finish it. A lot of times I'll scope out a product completely on my own — things like price points, what I'm looking for a product to do — based on intuition or on online research. I sit in on every third or fourth product development meeting for each brand and check in, weekly or daily, with the people running them, so whenever new products are in development, I'm intimately involved. I babysit product development until its finished. [Laughs.]

WHAT'S AN EXAMPLE?

I'm working on a new reed case to replace the old Rico Reed Guards, which we sell quite a few of. They were designed in the 1950s or '60s. Honestly, they look old-fashioned and we can do better. I came up with a simple concept for construction and worked out the mechanical basis for it, then passed it off for the final design. Another new product I'm working on is for our orchestral string line — it's a cool idea for a new way to hold, cover and store a cake of rosin so that it's fun and easy for students to either attach to the handles of their violin cases or backpacks, or put it inside their instrument cases.

HOW DO YOU CONTINUE TO INNOVATE SOMETHING THAT SEEMS AS BASIC AS INSTRUMENT STRINGS?

It's all about continuous improvements. That's something that I learned from my father and grandfather. They were never satisfied with the status quo and were always looking for better materials or a better process. They didn't have the resources, financial and creative that we have today, so they innovated with what they had available. Now, things are bit different. We have materials, process, mechanical and industrial engineers, and when we decide we want to

improve something, we start a research project. We throw away the previous recipe and say, "If you were starting with a clean slate, what would you do?"

HOW HAS THAT APPROACH WORKED FOR YOU?

It's led us to breakthroughs like our recent NYXL high carbon steel which won "Best in Show" [this past] Summer NAMM and had an extremely successful launch. High carbon steel is what you use to make basic strings on an electric or acoustic guitar, and it's the core of what goes inside wound strings for guitars, mandolins and banjos. It's a critical component and there have only been a handful of people who knew how to make a usable music wire, so there's always a shortage of quality high carbon steel. Plus, high carbon steel is a difficult product to make, and the quantities used in the music industry aren't huge enough for big companies to be interested in the business.

SO, YOU SAW THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY?

We decided to make the best wire for music strings we possibly could. We looked at different alloys and small variants in the carbon content, which changed the structure and physical properties of the material. We bought all-new wire drawing machines from Germany — \$2 million for four machines. We built a whole new plant here, in one of our buildings in Farmingdale, right across the street from the string factory. We relearned the entire process and re-invented it, right from the point of the rod that we start with to the drawing, straightening, and tin-coating that prevents the wire from corroding. It may sound unromantic, but the net result of doing all of these minor improvements along the way is a string that's stronger than anything we have ever made or seen.

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU REALLY ENJOY THIS SORT OF INNOVATION.

Developments like that are tremendously exciting because I'm a string nerd and a guitarist. The fact is, it's a better string than we've ever made before, and we did it by innovating.

IS THAT APPROACH SIMILAR TO HOW YOU DO ALL OF YOUR PRODUCT INNOVATION?

We try to conceive of things that are a step up from



THE DETAILS

JIM D'ADDARIO, CEO

HQ: Farmingdale, New York

Founded: Eight generations of string making preceded the first strings to ever bear the D'Addario brand name. These were brought to market in 1974.

Employees: Approximately 1,100

Best selling product: D'Addario EXL110 Nickel Wound Regular Light 10-46 electric guitar strings

Fun Fact: Once the company took over ProMark Drumsticks in 2011, Jim D'Addario implemented a policy by which, for every hardwood tree cut down to make sticks, five more would be planted. "In five years, we'll replace every tree ProMark has taken down since they started making sticks in 1957," he said.

what's been done before. I want to make a product that's unique in its space, not just for the sake of being different, but to have functional features that make it something that you would want to have. That's the way that I go about designing most products.

WHO IN THE FAMILY IS NEXT IN LINE TO LEAD D'ADDARIO?

Last year, we made strategic decisions on the board and family level to help me with my succession plan, since I'm going to be 65 in December. While I still feel like I have a tremendous amount of energy, and that I'm more creative today than I've ever been, the business is a lot bigger, and I'm looking to have more time at home with my family. Also, I want more time to just focus on design work, which is where I add the most value to the company. So, last year, we promoted John D'Addario III, my nephew, to become president of the organization at the end of the year and we redrew our organization chart at the request of my independent board members — I have a board with three independent members who are not family members or stockholders.

HOW MANY OF YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE MUSICIANS?

A very large percentage. In certain parts of the company, it's just about mandatory that you need to be a player, or at least understand what players are talking about and experiencing by being an amateur musician yourself. Some of our employees may have gone to school for music, but chose to pursue business instead. Every one of our product managers uses the product that he or she is managing — otherwise, they wouldn't be able to walk the walk and talk the talk — but in other departments, such as engineering, IT or finance, musical experience is not so critical. We still attract lots of musicians, even in those departments, though.

DO YOU PLAY YOURSELF?

I'm not a great musician, but I play almost every day, a little guitar and piano, and I enjoy it. I've always tested our products — that intimate involvement with using guitar products and accessories myself has made me better at realizing how to improve things.

YOUR COMPANY SEEMS CONSCIENTIOUS WHEN IT COMES TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

I wouldn't classify myself as an extreme environmental activist, but I've always thought that sustainability is im-

portant. We can't continue doing what we're doing, burning so much fossil fuel, polluting the environment, wasting, over-packaging things and using materials that can't be recycled. Philosophically, you have choices as you're running a company — you can often get the same profits, and make something that's more effective and less environmentally damaging, if you spend even a little time and some resources on it. That's what we've done from the early '80s on.

WHAT'S AN EXAMPLE?

Every tiny piece of wire that's scrapped is separated and recycled. We collect the dust from the orchestral strings as they're being polished, and the titanium, tungsten, sterling silver, and aluminum are all separated and made into ingots. Also, we changed how we package guitar strings. In the mid-'80s, most were packaged in clear PVC pouches with a label and six envelopes, one for each string in the set. That's eight pieces of packaging, one of which isn't a very good material for the environment. One day, my 13-year-old daughter said, "Every time you change those strings, you have all of that garbage? You need to do something about that." She was right!

WHAT DID YOU DO?

We color-coded the ball ends of strings and then coiled the strings inside one recyclable plastic bag that was treated with a corrosion inhibitor. Then we put that in a beautifully-printed, recycled cardboard outer envelope. That became our standard packaging in the early '90s. We slowly

migrated our entire line over to that packaging and the effect it's had on our environmental impact is significant. And it cost us nothing. In fact, it lowered the cost of the strings for the consumer.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE YOUR NAME ON THE COMPANY?

It's one of the reasons why we spend a great deal of time teaching the next generation, or the next two generations, now that the grandkids are getting older. When musicians go on stage, they're depending on our product to perform. That's a big responsibility. The fact that our name is on the product makes that responsibility even more serious.

IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

Probably something involving machine and product design work. I like to invent things and have lots of ideas for products that are not in the music industry — I just don't have time to act on them right now.

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LAST-MINUTE STOCKING GUIDE

by Katie Kailus

It's not too late — you still have time to stock up on some last-minute add-ons that are sure to keep your register jingling all holiday season. We asked a few retailing experts what they stock up on before the holiday season, and here's what they said.

KEVIN DAMM, PRESIDENT
Damm Music Center, Wichita, Kansas

Clip-on Tuners

"We stock Yamaha's GCT1, Planet Waves' PW-CT-12 and PW-CT-13, and On-Stage's GTA6000. We buy them in bulk [if it saves us money], and we sell lots of them. Stock up, because you don't want to run out!"



PETE BIEDRON, OWNER
BandSource, Downers Grove, Illinois

Rico Reserve Mouthpieces

"We always stock up on mouthpieces. A lot of band programs remind students to upgrade their mouthpieces and, especially around Christmas-time, kids are advancing and getting to be better players. D'Addario Woodwinds' Rico Reserve is one product that we are definitely planning on having extra of on hand.

"Another thing that we do is we feature local trumpet, trombone and sax players' albums in our store. Around the holidays they are a really

easy up-seller, especially when a mom or dad is in the store buying something for their child. We can say to them, 'Hey, here's a local artist that you can support that could inspire your child to play even more.'

"We do a consignment program with the artists so we don't buy their albums. When one sells we give the majority of the profits to the artist and keep a small amount — just to cover credit card processing and such. Then we let the musician know that they can receive their payment in the form of a check or in-store credit. They usually chose store credit."



BRAD BOYTON, OWNER
Rhythm Traders, Portland, Oregon

Effects Cymbals

"Build an effects cymbal tree and keep it by the cash register. You can take any cymbal stand and load it with boom arms, clamps and cymbal stackers. Don't forget to price them all and have package deals. Meinl has a great selection of effects cymbals. Other major brands, such as Zildjian, Sabian and Wuhan have trash crashes, spiral trashes, chinas and inexpensive splashes that will make a nice display, while offering quick gift ideas for under \$100. Plus it's visually interesting and a talking point to engage customers.

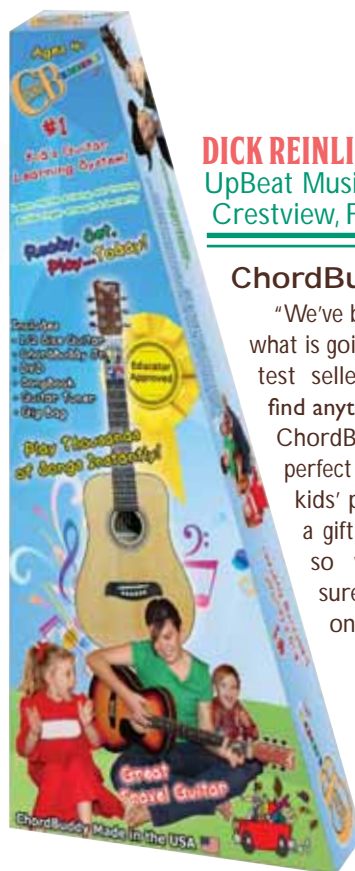
"Have a bucket of \$9.99 Gibraltar and PDP cymbal stackers and clamps as add-ons placed under the effects tree. Talk to suppliers about getting you an 8-inch splash that you can sell for \$25 to create some buzz. Advertising 'cymbals from \$25' won't hurt sales, either. While you're at it, go ahead and offer your employees a \$5 spiff if they sell an accessory with the cymbal. With any luck, your cymbal tree will look like Charlie Brown's right after the holidays."



ROLAND BELLOIR, MANAGER
The Fretted Frog, Pasadena, California

High-End Guitar Straps

"We stock higher-end straps by smaller companies, a bit in a 'haute couture' vibe, such as Jaykoo, Copperpeace, Original Fuzz and Capturing Couture. We stock specialty picks, such as handmade Wegen all year long, but we make sure to stock up extra for the holidays. We also stock up on wood, bone or coconut picks by J.Pearse. I would qualify holiday accessories as novelty instruments that people are looking for in that particular season. We make sure to stock a little heavier on these, including Charangos [10-string Andean nylon string instrument], Dulcimer-inspired guitars like Merlin by Seagull and a few novelty ukes in the \$50 range."



DICK REINLIE, PRESIDENT
UpBeat Music
Crestview, Florida

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FENDER | LIMITED EDITION AMERICAN STANDARD SERIES

True Classics

Fender has released several new Limited Edition American Standard series guitars. The American Standard Stratocaster and American Standard Telecaster limited edition models feature Fender's channel-bound, compound-radius fingerboard and the time-honored look of a Dakota Red or Sonic Blue gloss finish. Additionally, Fender has introduced two limited edition looks for the American Standard Stratocaster — Vintage White with a tortoiseshell pickguard and rosewood fingerboard, and Mystic Aztec Gold with a parchment pickguard and maple fingerboard. fender.com



EVH | WOLFGANG STANDARD SERIES

Special Standards

EVH has launched the Wolfgang Standard series and has revamped its Wolfgang Special series. The new Wolfgang WG Standard is decked out with a quilt maple top and features a “comfort cut” forearm contour for maximum playing ease. Other features include a one-piece, bolt-on maple neck with satin finish and graphite reinforcement and a smooth compound radius maple fingerboard with rolled edges. The EVH Wolfgang Special is available with a basswood body and arched flame maple top. It is crafted in EVH's Ensenada, Mexico, facility with a reimagined design that delivers more guitar at a greater value. evhgear.com



ORANGE AMPLIFICATION | COMPLETE GUITAR PACK

Pack it Up

Orange Amplification's new guitar pack contains everything needed to start playing — just in time for Christmas. Created to get the next generation of guitarists playing, or encourage lapsed performers to get back in the saddle, the pack contains an Orange Guitar, Orange Crush PiX 12L amplifier combo, Orange branded gig bag, headstock tuner, guitar lead plus plectrums and strap. Also included in the pack is the new Orange Music Education Rock Guitar beginner guitar tuition course with access to more than 10 video tutorial lessons and backing tracks. The single cutaway Orange guitar is crafted from solid Nato wood with a maple neck and rosewood fretboard. orangeamps.com

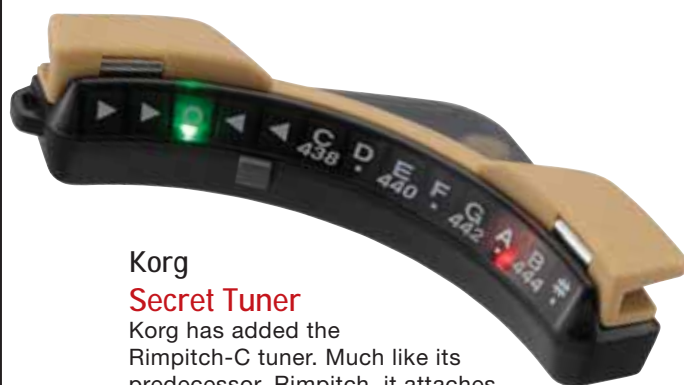


MOD KITS | AGGRESSOR

Ear Splitter

The Aggressor is a high-gain distortion pedal kit that delivers contemporary distortion with plenty of chunk and ear-splitting pitch harmonics. The distortion effect goes from subtle break up to over-the-top molten distortion at maximum gain. It features true bypass, an LED indicator and a versatile tone control with a scoop/bump switch that shifts the mid-frequency response, letting users craft a tone that fits their style of playing. modkitsdiy.com

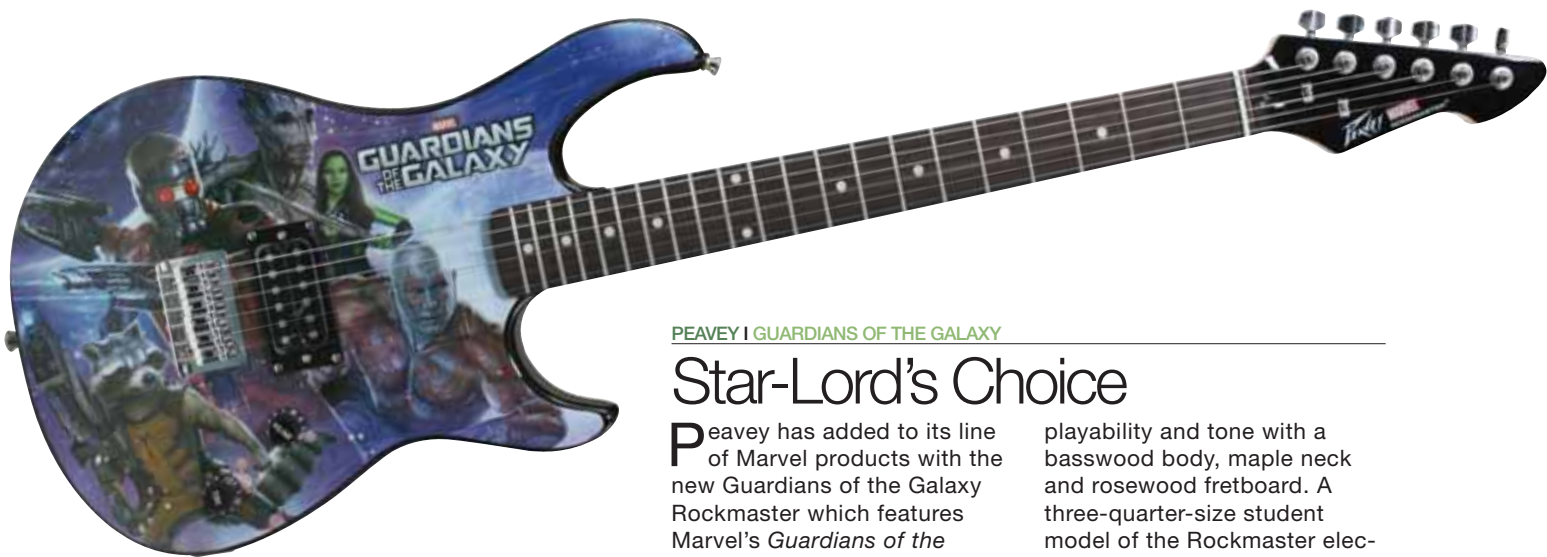
ADD-ON SPOTLIGHT



Korg

Secret Tuner

Korg has added the Rimpitch-C tuner. Much like its predecessor, Rimpitch, it attaches directly to the sound hole and now features a new chromatic scale. Used for a broad range of tuning, the Rimpitch-C detects the vibrations of the guitar with speed and accuracy. The tuner attaches easily to the lower side of most acoustic guitars, enabling the player to check the tuning meter at the closest possible distance within their natural angle of vision. korg.com



PEAVEY | GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

Star-Lord's Choice

Peavey has added to its line of Marvel products with the new Guardians of the Galaxy Rockmaster which features Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy* characters in a high-gloss finish. The Rockmaster guitar provides a balance of

playability and tone with a basswood body, maple neck and rosewood fretboard. A three-quarter-size student model of the Rockmaster electric guitar is also available, and both guitars come with a cable and picks. peavey.com



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VOX | UNION JACK WAH PEDAL

The British are Coming

Vox's new, limited edition V847 Union Jack Wah pedal has a casing that bears the Union Jack. Based on the V847 model, the foundation of the VOX Wah lineup, the limited edition pedal inspires musicians to infuse a dose of classic power into any performance. voxamps.com

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BOSS | RC-1 LOOP STATION

On Loop

Boss has unveiled its new RC-1 Loop Station. Record, overdub, play/stop, undo/redo and clear operations are all accomplished with one integrated pedal, while the loop level is controlled with the panel's single knob. The unique circular loop indicator features 24 multi-colored LEDs, providing instant feedback on the operation mode and cycle status of the current loop. bossus.com



JENSEN | BASS SPEAKERS

All About That Bass

Jensen Musical Instrument Speakers has added bass speakers to its line. After years of working with musicians and engineers to develop a new line of speakers specifically designed for bass players, Jensen has designed two different and distinct series of bass speakers. The Jensen Punch Sound series provides great dynamics and super fast response, offering a solid sound. The Jensen Smooth Sound series is equipped with neodymium magnets and aluminum baskets for a more modern tone and look. jensentone.com

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AMPTWEAKER | TIGHTDRIVE PRO

Celebrating Five

Amptweaker is celebrating its 5th anniversary with the release of the TightDrive Pro. Having received more feedback for this model than any other, the resulting Swiss army overdrive features dual boosts, 3 effects loops, built-in noise gate and many different boost and drive options requested by customers. The High Gain switch gives two distinct tones — a transparent cleaner boost or a higher gain mid-boost-style drive. amptweaker.com



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THE LOAR | MANDOLIN PICKUPS

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For mandolin players that want to jam in an electrified setting or with a larger ensemble, The Loar mandolins are now available for special order with Fishman bridge pickups, installed and set up at The Loar's workshop in Hayward, California. From the LM-700 to the new Grassroots series, The Loar will install pickups before shipping to dealers, and is ideal for modern folk players. theloar.com

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CAD AUDIO | 1600 SERIES

Versatile Addition

CAD Audio has added the StagePass 1600 series UHF wireless system to its StagePass line. The new 1600 series system provides 100-channel frequency agile UHF operation for maximum operating range, along with CAD Scan-Link technology to precisely scan, select and link to the optimum channel in any RF environment. The 1600 systems are available as the WX1600 Handheld System and WX1610 Bodypack System, featuring the Equitek E19 broadcast and production miniature condenser ear-worn mic, cardioid lavalier mic and guitar cable. cadaudio.com



ROLAND | MOBILE UA

Pint-Sized Interface

Roland's Mobile UA is an ultra-compact USB audio interface that incorporates newly developed S1LK sound technology. Featuring up to four channels of DSD and PCM audio playback in a small, bus-powered device, the Mobile UA deliv-

ers audio quality and low-latency operation for on-the-go music production or live performance. Not much bigger than a deck of cards, the Mobile UA is the world's smallest USB audio interface that supports both DSD and ASIO. rolandus.com



BLUE MICROPHONES | MO-FI

In Your Head

Blue Microphones' new Mo-Fi headphones feature built-in audiophile amplifiers matched to high-powered, precision drivers for consistent accuracy on devices ranging from studio gear to laptops, tablets and phones. With the combination of premium drivers and a matched amplifier, Mo-Fi brings the performance of custom-tuned, high-end studio monitors so players can judge what's really going on in their mix. Mo-Fi lets players choose between three amp settings — On, On+ and Off. bluemicrophones.com

ADD-ON SPOTLIGHT



Gig Gear

Watch Your Fingers

Gig Gloves are accessories for musicians, roadies, A/V pros and other gigging professionals. They are designed for the gigging individual to provide comfortable but tough hand protection for loading in, setting up, tearing down and loading out. Gig Gloves are made with a thick, durable polyester black mesh and a flexible TPR protective mold on the back, a padded PVC grip on the palm and fingers, and a neoprene wrist cuff with a hook-and-loop strap for a secure fit, comfort and stability. gig-gear.com



PROTECTION RACKET | STANDARD UTILITY CASE

The Case for Sampling Pads

Protection Racket's Standard Utility case can be used to carry laptops, paperwork, set lists and charts along with Roland's range of SPD-S and SPD-SX sampling pads. The comfortable, padded carrying handle, adjustable shoulder strap and three internal compartments make it ideal for musicians carrying important electronic equipment. protectionracket.com

CYMPAD | CHROMATIC WASHERS

Chromatic Array

Cympad has rolled out new crimson, yellow and white models of its Chromatics cellular foam cymbal washers. The new Chromatics colors join Cympad's existing orange, blue, red, purple and green models. They come in convenient five-packs. MSRP: \$12.95. cympad.com





PREMIER | MODERN CLASSIC DRUM SET

Premier Classic

Premier has launched the Modern Classic drum set, a selection of three-piece retro kits with clean tones and a modern-build quality. The all-new Modern Classic drum set draws on the concept of the original snare drums, redesigned for today's player — the result of a creative collaboration between master

drum craftsman Keith Keough and the range's pioneer, drummer Steve White. Hand-crafted at Premier's Custom Works in England, each model shares several key features including birch/mahogany shells, low-mass solid brass tube lugs and single-flange solid steel hoops. premier-percussion.com

ADD-ON SPOTLIGHT

Korg Table Drum

Korg's new Cliphit lets players attach three vibration-sensitive clips to desk tops, tables or any other surface to instantly transform them into a fun, portable electronic drum set. It's an ideal practice drum for beginners. The Cliphit provides various drum combinations, such as kicks, snare, toms and cymbals arranged into kits. It also comes equipped with EFX programmed sounds, including dog sounds, tambourines and wood blocks. korg.com



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ROLAND | TD-1K

New Family Member

Roland's TD-1K V-Drums are a new compact drum kit from the V-Drums family. The TD-1K features 15 ready-to-go drum kits for playing nearly any style of music. Every drum sound offers a wide dynamic range and natural tone, and the pads provide an organic response that fully supports authentic acoustic playing techniques. The crash and ride include bow/edge sounds, support for cymbal chokes, and have a natural swinging motion when played. The hi-hat provides organic sound variation from tightly closed to fully open, and users can play heel splashes and other traditional techniques as well. roland.com



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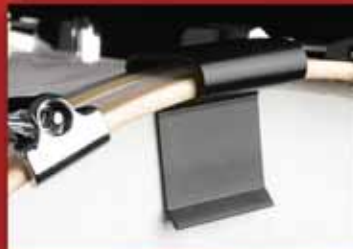
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The next generation of Yamaha timpani features upgrades to the frame, bowl and wheel designs, and the tuning gauge. Yamaha completely redesigned the frame to enable maximum sustain from the suspended bowl and ensure a long, reliable life. Simultaneously, the design of the bowl was altered to improve consistency and generate a deep, rich tone. Beyond the sound, Yamaha created a new wheel design and improved pedal mechanics to allow vast position options and smooth reliable pedal operation. In addition, the tuning gauge can now be moved to accommodate German and American setup options.

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D'Addario's new Select Jazz Mouthpiece for alto saxophone is milled, not molded. Using D'Addario's precise computer-controlled mouthpiece-making technology, it combines vintage design with modern production techniques to provide a balance of tone and feel. This new mouthpiece captures the playing characteristics of vintage mouthpieces: providing classic sound and response, with even intonation across the entire range. Select Jazz mouthpieces offer a full, focused and fat sound. They are available in the three most popular facing models: 5, 6 and 7. daddario.com



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ADD-ON SPOTLIGHT

MusicNomad

Instrument Caretaker

MusicNomad Equipment Care is expanding its product line and adding B&O care products. Product additions include valve oil, t-slide trombone lubricant, bore oil, silver polish, lacquer polish. All products have gone through a rigorous product testing by some of the key players in the industry. The formulations are proprietary, eco-friendlier and smell great. musicnomadcare.com



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KORG | PA3X LE

Live Arranger

Korg's Pa3X Le Professional Arranger is a 76-note semi-weighted keyboard that's naturally responsive with velocity sensitivity. Designed primarily for the live performer, Korg Professional Arrangers have a dual playback sequencer for non-stop performances, extra articulation for recreating convincing instrumental performances, and a number of ready-to-use styles with no pre-programming required. The Pa3X Le offers over 410 styles, each dedicated to providing a different musical genre. Each style offers four fill-ins and breaks — one for each variation. korg.com



CASIO | CTK-2090 & LK-175V

Simple Sampling

Casio has debuted two new digital sampling keyboards — the CTK-2090 and LK-175V. Both keyboards have two sampling modes: short and full. Short Sampling Mode lets users create up to five sounds of .4 seconds in length, whereas full sampling mode lets users create one two-second sound. With a built-in sampling microphone, users can also sample their voice and other ambient sounds to create a variety of sampled tones and effects for later use. casio.com

ADD-ON SPOTLIGHT

MusicNomad

Keep the Keys Clean

MusicNomad has added piano and keyboard cleaning products to its Equipment Care line, including polishing cloths for piano/keyboard, Piano ONE Polish, and Key ONE Key and Keyboard Cleaner. All products have gone through a rigorous product testing by notable players in the industry. The formulations are proprietary, eco-friendlier and smell great. musicnomadcare.com



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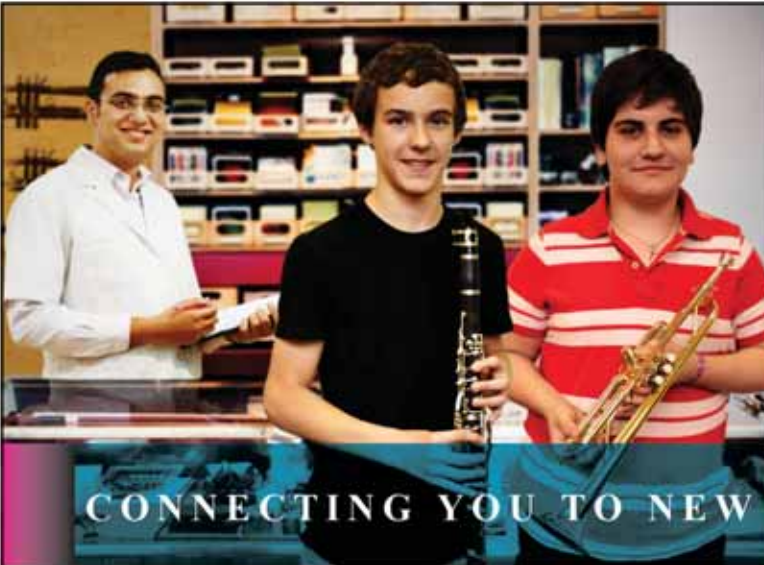
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ALTO PROFESSIONAL | LIVE SERIES ANALOG MIXERS

Modern Mixers

Alto Professional's new Live series analog mixers are united by their modern look, low-profile design, low-noise, high-headroom DNA preamps, extensive EQ and built-in compression. The mixers are available in four configurations: Live 802: 8-channel, 2-bus; Live 1202: 12-channel, 2-bus; Live 1604: 16-channel, 4-bus; and Live 2404: 24-channel, 4-bus. Designed for modern music-making, the mixers feature USB audio in and out. altoprofessional.com



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NUMARK | iDJ PRO

Updated for Apple

Numark has released the latest version of its landmark iDJ Pro, which has been updated to accommodate Apple's 30-pin to lightning adapter. The newest iDJ Pro is a hardware controller that fully houses, charges and protects Apple's iPad. The new iDJ Pro works seamlessly with Algoriddim's djay, djay 2 and vjay apps. It features capacitive touch-activated dual-zone platters, XL die-cast aluminum volume knobs with LED metering and a brushed aluminum casing with hot cue, loop and effects controls. numark.com

ADD-ON SPOTLIGHT

Pioneer

All in Your Head

Pioneer's HDJ-C70 professional on-ear headphones are intended for DJs who want a headset that's lightweight, flexible and produces audio with more impactful bass and clear mid and high frequencies.

The HDJ-C70 features more compact ear cups, rotatable arms, interchangeable parts and a minimalistic look. Its large 40 mm drivers are specially tuned to produce the lower bass frequency region in music. The headphones are also designed to help minimize loud background noise. pioneer.com



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HAL LEONARD | 'POP PIANO HITS'

Pop Piano

Hal Leonard has released the 7th volume of *Pop Piano Hits*, a series designed for students of all ages. Each book contains five simple and easy-to-read arrangements of today's most popular downloads. Lyrics, fingering, and chord symbols are included to help make the most of each arrangement. The new volume includes "Am I Wrong?" by Nico & Vinz, "Boom Clap" by Charli XCX and "Stay With Me" by Sam Smith. halleonard.com

ADD-ON SPOTLIGHT

Aim Gifts

Holiday Bonus

Aim Gifts is offering special music gift accessories specifically designed for the holidays. The company offers thousands of music gifts including its Musicians Parking Sign, Multi-note Zipper Pouch, G-Clef Straw and Cup Set, Crystal Keyboard Bracelet and Latte Note Cup. aimgifts.com



ALFRED | 'THE CHRISTMAS SONGBOOK'

Classic Christmas

Alfred's new book, *The Christmas Songbook*, is a deluxe hardcover compilation of more than 100 traditional and popular songs. Created for anyone in the family who wants to sing and play, the book is printed in lead sheet format and contains an eclectic variety of songs, from sacred music and classic carols, to popular tunes and instrumentals. It comes with an eight-page color insert, a foreword on the history of

several songs, and an accompanying CD featuring performances of the included 12 guitar instrumentals, as well as access to printable lyric sheets for every song in the book to be used for sing-alongs, choirs, and carolers. Songs include "I'll Be Home For Christmas," "It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year," "Jingle Bells," "Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer," and "Santa Baby." alfred.com

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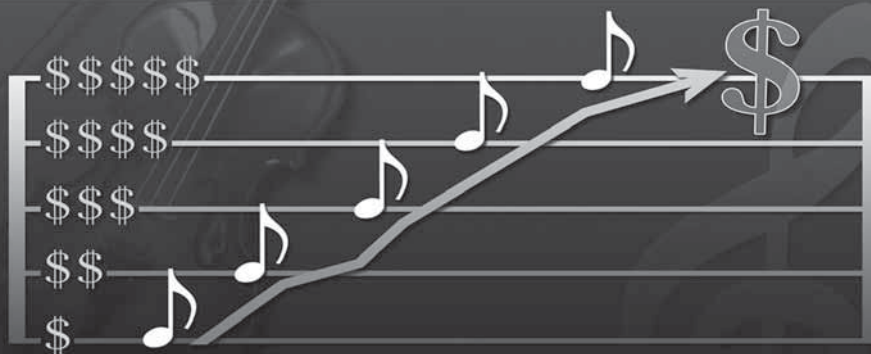
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Matt Hatfield

Parkway Music
Albany, New York

We have an alarm system throughout the building that includes doors and windows with motion sensors. We haven't had a break-in, but we've had somebody not lock a door, and mistakenly the alarm will go off and the cops will show up. We've had a couple incidents of shoplifting over the years, and it woke us up to the fact that when there are people here, we need to be around, engaged and present. That was a big wake-up call. That's part of our security talk: When there are people here, you've got to be out there. And that's good for business anyway.

Another big one we've found is we don't let people wander around the store with their own gig bag and case. That's a typical move — you've got your gig bag and then unbeknownst to the music store owner you've put the '59 Les Paul in the bag and your Squire Strat up on the hook and walk out. We try to be cool about it. We don't want this to be some sort of police state mode, but we just ask, "Hey, do you mind if I put your case behind the counter?"



Mick Faulhaber

Ward Brodt Music
Madison, Wisconsin

There are two kinds of theft — external and internal. The latter is harder to deal with. That's a matter of watching and taking frequent inventories. We have a big store, and people can do the buddy system [to steal]. We've been through all of that, and it's pretty hard to detect until someone eventually makes a mistake. For that, you want a good network [with pawn shops] and a good whistle blowing system where your employees can call someone who isn't affiliated with your store. It might be a lawyer or something — but you just let your employees know they can make an anonymous call to someone who will feed it back. As far as external theft, we have a couple products that you need a special device to release them. But the only way you're going to stop the real pros is by having a very engaged sales staff. And anybody that comes in knows they're being watched. That's the number one deterrent — and we train that.



Paul Callicot

Route 60 Music
Barboursville, West Virginia

How do you keep your store secure?

In order to secure Route 60 Music, we use an electronic security system, which includes nine cameras, a DVR, and window, door and glass breakage sensors, as well as motion detectors throughout the building. It is electronically monitored, and we, as well as law enforcement, are notified of any abnormalities. Fire monitoring is part of the system and includes immediate notification to the fire department.

We have experienced several after-hours break-ins that have led to this level of security. We have also had break-ins since this system was put in place, and it has led to the arrest of some thieves a few times. Be forewarned, though, that watching security footage of

three \$3,000 Taylor guitars getting tossed out a broken window onto pavement can be a little nauseating.

In other areas of the store we have buzzers that let us know if a door has been opened in an unsecured area during business hours. Shoplifting is always a concern, and we have been the target of a few major instruments vanishing. In one instance, a group of decoys distracted sales people while their buddy turned a high-dollar Gretsch hollow body guitar upside down and stuffed it down the back of his pants leg, put his coat back on over it and walked with a limp out the door — he came in with a cane.

Thieves can be very creative, and we try hard to

keep our sales people vigilant. During the holiday selling season, it tends to get worse.

We frequently will have clinics, concerts and events which involve larger numbers of people at one time. At those times, we keep people at the doors and limit the number of available exits to the minimum the fire marshal will allow.

As far as fire safety goes, in addition to the fire alarms, we check at the end of each business day for such things as gear being left on, no steel wool and batteries together on the repair benches, no soldering irons plugged in, and we fix any obvious loose outlets or light fixtures when discovered. Just common sense stuff. **MI**

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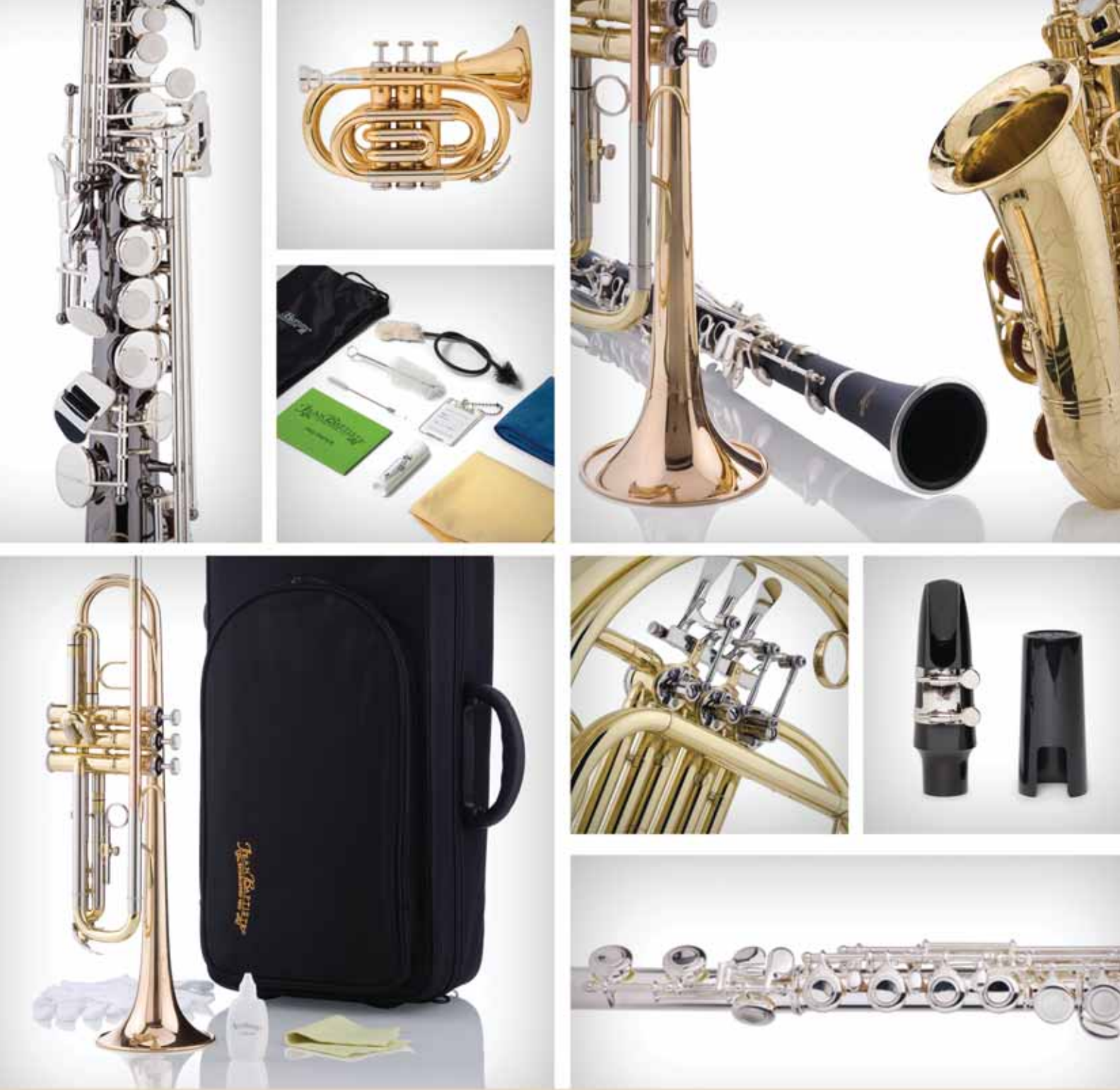
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