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The
2015
GEAR
GUIDE

RETRO RULES



PLUS: Retailers weigh in on
what's selling now **Page 47**





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FEBRUARY 2015 | VOL. 26, NO. 2

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

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

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

Published monthly, except April. Printed in U.S.A. by Maher Publications Inc. 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-2932. Periodical Postage Paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MUSIC INC., P.O. Box 11688, St. Paul, MN 55111-0688



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INSIDE



47

Sonor Vintage Series



47 | RETRO RULES

A sneak peak at 2015's newest & hottest products
PLUS: Retailers share what's selling in their stores now



42 | FROM THE TOP

Bernard Van Doren explains the process of making a Vandoren reed



Bernard and Robert Van Doren



ON THE COVER...

From left: Shure's 5575LE Unidyne (p. 71), Gretsch's Renown Walnut kit (p. 96) and Kala's Elite U.S. Ukulele Series (p. 49).

GEAR

48 | GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

70 | AUDIO & RECORDING

92 | DRUMS & PERCUSSION

100 | PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

104 | BAND & ORCHESTRA

108 | DJ & LIGHTING



114 | ASK THE RETAILER

× Dealer discuss how they effectively purchase inventory

RETAIL

PROFILE

14 | Joly steps down as president of Musician's Friend

16 | NEWS

- × Andy's Music holds holiday food drive
- × Royaltan Music Center celebrates its 50th anniversary, gets its own day

SUPPLY

PROFILE

24 | MONO focuses on design, customer service

26 | NEWS

- × Yamaha teams with retailer to donate keyboards to SoCal school
- × KHS now distributes Hercules Stands in North America

IDEAS

35 | INDEPENDENT RETAIL

- × Eschliman on maintaining relationships

36 | THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER

- × Billings discusses how to overcome "blind spots"

38 | LESSONS LEARNED

- × Rosenbloom on the impact of personal communication

40 | THE TECH BEAT

- × Harding's top five reasons to blog

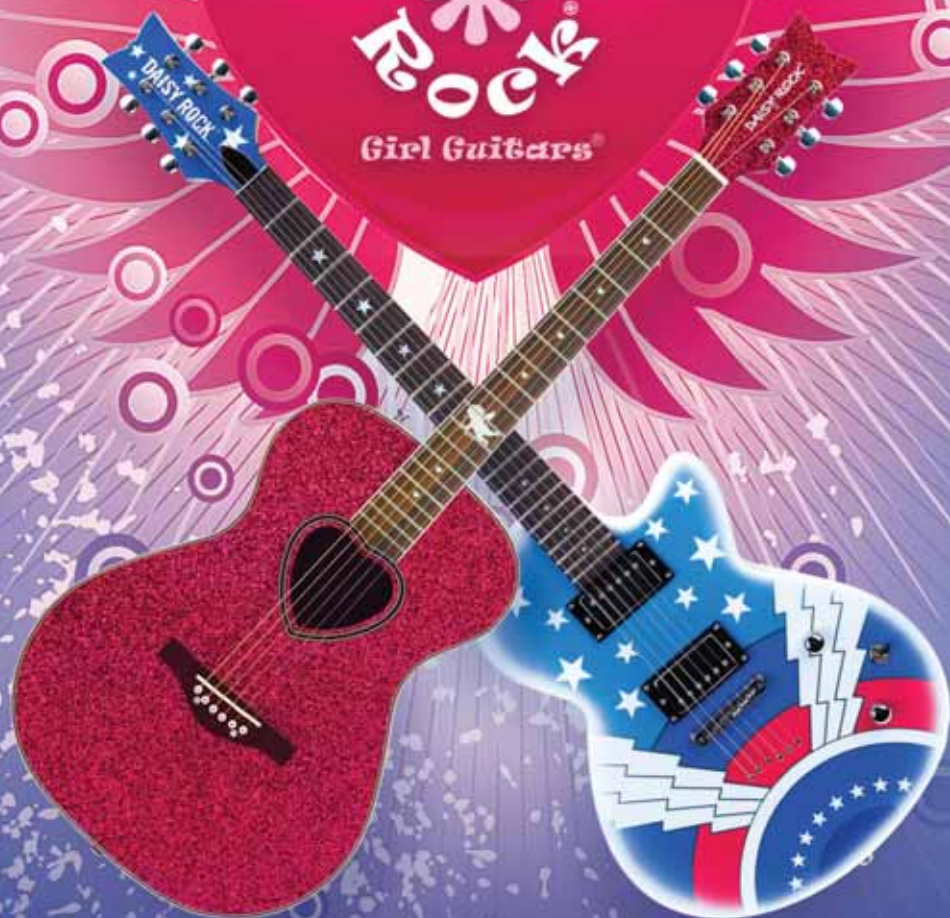


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PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

OVERCOME NAMM PRODUCT OVERLOAD

Every year, *Music Inc.*'s annual Gear Guide issue debuts at The NAMM Show. And each year, we are surrounded for four solid days by the newest and coolest MI products on the market. It can easily become sensory overload to the max. To help you narrow it down (a bit), starting on page 47, we have compiled a guide of some of the hottest new products on the market that are sure to grab the attention (and the dollars) of your customers and are not to be missed at this year's show.

While it might be overwhelming knowing what to stock up on and what to pass on, *Music Inc.* spoke with a few retailers and asked how they effectively purchase their inventory in this month's "Ask the Retailer" on page 114. Gabriel O'Brien, sales manager at Larry's Music Center in Wooster, Ohio, said, when at NAMM, he walks around the show floor searching for products that truly stand out.

"[We look for] cool and unusual small companies that are really hungry and really want our business and make awesome products," he said. "We try really hard to pick the things that we think are interesting — the stuff that we'd want to own, that we'd want to play and think is cool and unique."

Once you've decided what to stock, John Bertrand of Bertrand's Music in San Diego offers some insight on how many to stock by using a sold history calculator on all items.

"If the item sells once every 30 days we stock a minimum of two, but possibly more. If it sells once every 60 days we keep a minimum of one," he explained.

While writing this, I am reminded of a lesson Gerson Rosenbloom taught in his column in last year's January issue titled "Deciding What to Carry." He recalls, years ago, purchasing 48 units of a product called a Stylophone that he ended up having to give away as gag gifts due to its flop. Keeping this experience in mind, when he first discovered Casio's Casiotone keyboard, he wrote it off and eventually regretted this decision when those keyboards became one of the hottest sellers during that year's holiday season.

"The correct approach, in hindsight, would have been to buy both products, but modestly, and allow the market to make its determination," he said.

Keep this lesson in mind while you shop the aisles of The NAMM Show, and keep this issue of *Music Inc.* handy as you peruse. It's full of gems that are sure to shine in 2015. **MI**

Theo Wanne
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ELEVEN WORDS THAT SPARKED A REVOLUTION

“Wait a minute, wait a minute,
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Al Jolson’s first spoken words in *The Jazz Singer* mark the first appearance of synchronized dialogue in a feature-length motion picture. Art mirrored life. Moviegoers truly hadn’t heard anything like this before. And when they did, they wanted to hear more. *The Jazz Singer* had less than two minutes of spoken dialogue. But it sparked a revolution, nonetheless.



The Jazz Singer, 1927

SOUND CHANGES EVERYTHING

Pictures are pictures. Pictures with sound are transformational. That’s why *The Jazz Singer* hit Hollywood like a seismic wave. Its conversion to “talkies” was quick, complete, and total. Silent films are now history.

{ REST OF THE STORY COMING SOON }
ZOOM.

LETTERS

A Warm Embrace

What a nice job you and your team did in profiling our company last month in the January 2015 cover story “Embracing Change.” It’s a thrill to see the magazine I have been reading for the last few decades feature our company in an issue.

You hit it on the head with the “Embracing Change” cover title. That’s exactly what has propelled us, and the industry, to this point, and I know it will define us in the future. Thanks again for your great work in reporting the news of our industry.

Ben Kraft
Owner
Kraft Music
Franklin, Wisconsin

The Best Picture of All

I’d like to extend a big thank you to *Music Inc.* for writing a great Retail Profile in the January 2015 issue’s on my store Music Store Live that accurately depicts what the Music Store Live experience is all about. We’ve had a number of articles written up on us, but this one paints the picture best of all.

I’d also like to take a moment to thank the Vermont Small Business Development Center, Opportunities Credit Union, GE Capital, our amazingly supportive manufacturers, our valued customers, and, of course, our great employees. We could not have gotten where we have without all of the tremendous support we’ve received over the past few years!

Ben Werlin
Co-owner
Music Store Live
South Burlington, Vermont

Excellence Awards Shoutout

I must say that I am beyond pleasantly surprised to receive the Re-



tail Excellence recognition from *Music Inc.*, and many thanks for the coverage and exposure.

The very fact that you do these awards keeps shops like us on our toes and constantly trying to progress. Thanks again for a wonderful publication.

Shane Kinney
Owner
Drum Center of Portsmouth
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

A Toast to All

Thank you for devoting space in the January 2015 issue to the powerful opportunities dealers today have to reach consumers online. The Web also offers owners and employees tools to manage in-store operations more efficiently.

For instance, our At Last Point of Sale and It’s About Time

lessons management software operate in cloud environments to improve transactions, purchasing, receiving, rentals, repairs, item data, lessons scheduling, teacher payroll, billing and enterprise-level accounting and reporting functions. All parties can now communicate more efficiently; thanks to scores of suppliers and dealers that now use NAMM’s Standards to exchange order and product data information.

The keynote business strategy for our time? Embrace technology. When we increase operational efficiencies in-store and customer interaction online, every dealer, distributor, publisher and manufacturer gains more time and profits to accomplish our common goal — to

increase the number of music makers and grow our marketplace together.

A toast to all players in our thriving industry.

Bee Bantug
Managing Partner
Retail Up!
Grants Pass, Oregon

A Cold Slap

Your December 2014 issue with a grandiose article on GC and its former visionary, [former CEO] Mike Pratt; after the November announcement [to replace Pratt with new CEO, Darrel Webb], it is looking like you did not do yourself justice. With all the articles about GC in your publication, you should consider changing your name to “The Life and Times of GC, the Shaded Version.”

The fact that you constantly purport them to be some type of “Industry Angel,” when in fact all they manage to accomplish is to bastardize an industry — all the while being allowed to operate by different standards than others; opening across the street from long standing dealers and sucking off their business, when other dealers would not be allowed; constantly violating MAP; advertising gear that has not even been released as having used ones in stock. The list goes on and on. Your articles are a cold slap in the face to the so-called “independent dealers” in this country, that have carried this industry for years.

Name Withheld

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Cannonball

- > **Andy's Music**
Holds holiday food drive
PAGE 16
- > **Jenkins Music**
Closes last location
PAGE 17
- > **Royalton Music Center**
Celebrates NAMM Milestone Award
PAGE 19



RETAIL

MUSICIAN'S FRIEND | BY KATIE KAILUS

MF PRESIDENT RESIGNS

Gene Joly has stepped down as president of Musician's Friend, effective immediately.

Joly started working at Guitar Center, parent company for Musician's Friend, in 2002, where he held a number of leadership roles, including senior vice president of high-tech merchandising for Guitar Center, executive vice president of merchandising for Musician's Friend and executive vice president of Guitar Center stores, before being named president of Musician's Friend in September 2013.

Joly's career in the MI industry started long before GC when he joined E.U. Wurlitzer in 1975, a seven-store retail chain in Boston. Within 10 years, he became the president and CEO of Wurlitzer, a role that he then held for over 12 years. He went on to serve as director of store development at Thoroughbred Music from 1996–1998. Joly then took a position as vice president and general manager of Tascam, where he stayed for nearly five years before joining GC in 2002.

"Over the past 15 months, I've had the pleasure of leading the Musician's Friend team while staying close to all of you here at GC, where I've worked



Gene Joly steps down

for more than 12 years," Joly said in a letter that went out to the staff. "After a great deal of time and personal reflection with my family, I've made the decision to step down as president of Musician's Friend to make room for a new direction and new leadership in 2015.

There's no question about the challenges the Musician's Friend business has faced over the last few years as Amazon and other emerging Web retailers continue to disrupt the marketplace. As this new landscape continues to take shape, the Guitar Center, Musician's Friend and Music

& Arts teams are continuing to focus relentlessly on improving our effectiveness and efficiency to remain competitive and top-of-mind. Fortunately for us, this organization has the right people and the winning spirit to get the job done in 2015 and beyond.

"Like so many of you, music has been a passion and source of great joy in my life since I first picked up a guitar when I was 11 years old," Joly continued. "I can't tell you what it has meant to me to have worked in an organization that allowed me to help carry out our mission of helping people make music, every day. I've been so fortunate to work with many great people — they are the ones I will miss the most."

"Gene is a leader that is well known and highly respected across the industry, and while I haven't had the opportunity to get to know Gene as long as many of you have, his contributions cannot be overstated," said Darrell Webb, president and CEO of Musician's Friend, in a letter to the entire Guitar Center organization.

Effective immediately, the Musician's Friend division will report directly to Michael Amkreutz, executive vice president of merchandising, marketing and e-commerce. **MI**



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LONG & MCQUADE | PHILANTHROPY

SURREY'S LONG & MCQUADE AUCTION OFF PAINTED INSTRUMENTS FOR CHARITY

The Long & McQuade location in Surrey, British Columbia, has spread holiday cheer this year by auctioning off painted instruments to benefit music therapy efforts at BC Children's Hospital.

This annual program, now in its seventh year, supplies instruments, painted by local as well as nationally-renowned artists, to be sold in a silent auction, with all proceeds going to the hospital.

"I spent a number of days in the hospital as a kid, and it can be scary," said Bryan Faber, guitar department manager of Long & McQuade's Surrey location. "They bring these music therapists who come in, and they'll either bring instruments to [hospitalized children], and [the kids] can play with them; or, they will just play and sing to [the kids]."

This year, the store brought in five unused ukeleles and five brand-new Korg tinyPianos to be painted.

"There's a techno duo on the west coast here called Destinique, and they painted one and even featured it in a little documentary they made, and they recorded a track with it," Faber said. "We [also] got a nationally



Bryan Faber with this year's painted instruments, auctioned off in December.

acclaimed artist from Ontario named Ivan Wheale. Just beautiful pieces."

"Korg Canada hooked us up with five white [tinyPianos] at a very reduced cost, so our costs are already more than covered," Faber continued.

"I started the minimum bids at \$75." He added that the pianos usually sell at a

retail price of \$250. "Basically, it funds the payroll and the maintenance of instruments [in the music therapy program]. There's no government funding for music therapists, at least not here. So, it's all funded by donation, and every little bit helps."

The silent auction ran from Dec. 1-23.



From left: Kaki Hanenkraft, winner of the Alabama drum set; Jonathan Johnson, marketing director; Dave Reaney, Executive Director of Bay Area Food Bank; James Andrews, VP Andy's Music; Sheryl Etheridge, winner of the Auburn drum set

ANDY'S MUSIC | PHILANTHROPY

Andy's Music's Holiday Food Drive Exceeds Goal

Andy's Music of Mobile, Alabama, held the First Annual Drumming Out Hunger food drive and raised more than its goal of 10,000 pounds of food for the Bay Area Food Bank.

Drumming Out Hunger staged a friendly rivalry between fans of University of Alabama and Auburn University to see who could raise the most food. In addition, donors entered a sweepstakes to win a one-of-a-kind Alabama or Auburn themed Mapex drum set. Andy's Music special-ordered two custom drum sets from the manufacturer.

"Thanks to the generosity of our local

community, our Drumming Out Hunger food drive was a great success," said Jim Andrews, president and CEO of Andy's Music, in a press release. "We achieved our goal of 10,000 pounds of food — which is more than 7,500 meals — for the food bank. The unselfish giving was overwhelming and represented the true spirit of generosity during this Christmas season."

Drumsticks and guitar strings were donated by D'Addario to use as incentives for in-store donations. Starbucks donated a holiday gift basket as an incentive for non-musicians for in-store donations.

JENKINS MUSIC | CLOSING

JENKINS MUSIC CLOSING LAST LOCATION IN MIDWEST CITY

On Dec. 31, Jenkins Music closed the doors to its store in Midwest City, Oklahoma, the last store to use the Jenkins name.

The Midwest City music shop traces its roots to a chain of music stores founded in Kansas City in 1878. The company's Kansas City location was the site of its sheet music publishing house, which operated until the 1940s. At its peak, Jenkins Music Co. had 14 stores in Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri.

"It used to be that when you wanted a musical instrument, you had to go to a music store," owner Ken Leerstang told *The Oklahoman*. "Now you can go on the Internet and get whatever you want."

At age 75, Leerstang will close the last Jenkins store at 7100 SE 15 Street. He began his career with the Jenkins Music Co. 50 years ago as a school band sales representative.

At one time, Jenkins Music had as many as four stores in Oklahoma City.

"The Beatles came in and everything changed with more guitar shops," Leerstang said. "The company was slow to adapt to new retail concepts — demographics changed."

Jenkins Music's presence in Oklahoma City began out of the back of a covered wagon. The company had been selling musical instruments since before Oklahoma's statehood, Leerstang said.

"It was the family business, and I grew up in it," 85-year-old J.W. Jenkins IV told *The Oklahoman*. "My father took it over from my grandfather, and I took it over from my father. We were one of the largest music companies in the United States at one time."

During World War II, musical instrument makers halted production to support the war efforts and Jenkins sold tombstones among other items to stay in business.

"We were just looking for things to sell, and that's one of the things we grabbed hold of," J.W. Jenkins said. "It helped us get through the war."

Jenkins Music Co. built a seven-story building in downtown Kansas City that

included several floors devoted to musical instruments and a printing department for sheet music that remains a local landmark.

The building served as a department

store and corporate headquarters and also had an auditorium that seated 250 people.

"It was the Taj Mahal of music," Leerstang said.

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MOORE MUSIC | WEB

MOORE MUSIC ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF THREE NEW WEBSITES

As Moore Music's retail showroom has experienced continuous growth over the last two years, Moore Music's online business has also grown substantially. Over the last few months, separate guitar and drum shops have been set up on eBay and Reverb, and are generating additional business.

In efforts to improve the customer experience online, Moore Music has launched three new websites. The new "main hub" site is mooremusicusa.com. On this site, the online shopper is given a choice of entering the "Guitar Shop" (mooremusic-guitars.com) or the "Drum Shop" (mooremusicdrums.com).

"Splitting the site into two sides allows us to really tailor the online shopping experience to our customer," said Rob Arnold, public relations manager for Moore Music. "The feedback we've received so far has been very favorable."



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ROYALTON MUSIC CENTER | ANNIVERSARY

ROYALTON MUSIC CENTER CELEBRATES 'ROYALTON MUSIC CENTER DAY'

Royalton Music Center celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special event on Nov. 16 in Cleveland at the Music Box Supper Club. At the celebration, the City of North Royalton presented Royalton Music Center with a proclamation proclaiming Nov. 16, 2014 as "Royalton Music Center Day."

"It was such surprise, and certainly a humbling one too! We're thankful to have been a part of this community for 50 years, and look forward to serving musicians for 50 more," said Lauren Haas Amanfoh owner.

Royalton Music Center is Ohio's only NAMM Top 100 Dealer for four years running, and is one of only 20 businesses in the country to receive the award for a fourth consecutive year. At Summer NAMM, Royalton Music Center was honored with the Milestone Award for 50 years of service in the music products industry. Originally founded in 1964 by Richard and Ida Eleck, Royalton Music Center is now in its third generation of family ownership under granddaughter, Lauren Haas Amanfoh.

"Reaching a milestone like this takes hard work, a clear business plan and the ability to change with the times," said Joe Lamond, NAMM president and CEO. "And in the music products industry, success and longevity also require the willingness to share the love of making music with your community. On behalf of the 9,000 global member companies of NAMM, we are proud to recognize Royalton Music Center and wish them continued success in the future."



Lauren Haas Amanfoh accepts proclamation recognizing Nov. 16, 2014 as Royalton Music Center Day from Thomas Jordan, Director of Economic Development (City of North Royalton).



Guests at Music Box Supper Club.



From left: Holly and Alison Michalke, Lauren Haas Amanfoh, and Linda Fisher Nicholas.

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Progressive Music Joins Music Education Policy Roundtable

Progressive Music, in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, is continuing its efforts to expand the role of music and the arts in education by joining the Music Education Policy Roundtable (MEPR). MEPR works to ensure the presence and perseverance of school music programs, by advocating for music education policy among political and governmental agencies.

“Ensuring that every child in Western Pennsylvania and across the country has access to a quality music and arts education is key to what we do at Progressive Music,” said Mark Despotakis, director of market development at Progressive Music. “We work at the local, state and federal level championing the music education cause. Joining the Roundtable is a natural next step in our advocacy efforts.”

A group created and administered by National Association for Music Education (NAfME) in February, 2011, MEPR is the unification of many music education advocacy organizations under a single banner. In addition to membership in The MEPR, Progressive Music actively works to lobby for music education with: NAMM, The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association, and The Pennsylvania Arts Education Network.

BISBEE BOOK STORE DABBLES IN MI MARKET

A new store has opened in Bisbee, Arizona, offering a wide range of books, musical instruments and equipment, vinyl albums and record players, and gifts.

The Bisbee Book & Music Store is owned and operated by Carol Lokey. The store has been open since Nov. 14.

“We’ve had a wonderful reception here,” Lokey told the *Sierra Vista Herald*. “The [building owners] have been great to work with. There’s a camaraderie here. We watch over each other’s stores.”

Its musical instrument selection includes electric guitar starter packages and electronic keyboards, as well as accessories, such as strings, reeds, capos, tuners, drumsticks, amps, cables and mics.



THE
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GREENE MUSIC | RETIREMENT

Mike Greene, Owner of San Diego's Greene Music, Retires

Mike Greene, the longtime owner of San Diego's Greene Music, retired in January, having sold the store to Music Exchange, a multi-location retailer based in northern California.

Music, Greene says, is in his blood. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Carroll Greene, a successful music salesman, in both his choice of career and how he approached selling musical instruments.

"If you don't understand that the heart of any business is people, then you're missing the point," Greene said in a press release.

"It comes down to either changing with the times, or being left behind," Greene explained. "We always felt at Greene Music that it was our responsibility to be one step ahead, not just for ourselves, but for our customers. They looked to us to tell them what the latest was, and most importantly, what that could mean for them and their music."

Greene and his longtime general manager, Richard Sibley, will continue to operate the Greene Music Education Center.

"The best part is that Richard and I will still work together to run the music school," Greene said. "I'll still get to see

and hear that wonderful magic of young people learning to play music, and in the bigger picture, learning to love music. No

matter what the age is of our students, that's what our Music Education Center is all about."



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Note From Joe Thank You!

On behalf of the NAMM Board of Directors, Executive Committee and staff, I'd like to thank you for coming to The NAMM Show. It is our sincere

hope that your participation has left you inspired and better equipped to succeed in the year ahead. Your membership in NAMM and your involvement in NAMM events link you to a global family of industry professionals, and unifies the power and influence of our community to share our belief that music is a driving force for good in the world.

The NAMM Show is the engine that drives your association's yearlong work on behalf of your company and the industry. Revenues from the show enable us to execute our strategic plan. Our exhibiting members, and the buyers who come to meet with them, deserve heartfelt thanks from the industry, the music education community and, perhaps most important, the millions of people—especially kids in school—who will benefit from these efforts to bring music into their lives. Our

Vision, Mission and five strategic Objectives drive all these efforts with clarity and focus:

Trade Shows—As our world becomes more connected through technology, NAMM's trade shows are changing. The products and exhibits are still the stars of the show, but today, our members tell us that robust educational offerings and peer-to-peer networking opportunities make the trip to Anaheim a must. In addition to the traditional reasons our industry makes its annual pilgrimage, I believe an essential outcome from The NAMM Show is inspiration and passion, possibly the two most important ingredients for success.

Membership—Banding together is a critical element of success for any industry. Going back to the ancient Greek storyteller Aesop, the phrase "United we stand, divided we fall" has never been more true. This means working together to speak with one voice to lobby government leaders and regulators, to negotiate better rates on business services and to address important industry issues. And with annual dues



vision

We envision a world in which the joy of making music is a precious element of daily living for everyone; a world in which every child has a deep desire to learn music and a recognized right to be taught; and in which every adult is a passionate champion and defender of that right.

around 50 cents per day, using just one of our discounted business services makes this the best investment you'll make all year.

Professional Development—There is no better industry education available anywhere . . . and it comes free with your membership! Members have told us that the things they learned at NAMM U have not only helped them through the recession, but also made their businesses better than they had ever been. And by attending the morning sessions at the show, you get wisdom from guys like Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and a free breakfast—I'm not sure where else you can find that.

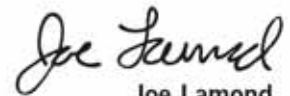
Market Development—Creating more music makers of all ages; that is the "end zone" for this objective. If every member could experience the impact of NAMM's work in this area, they would be amazed. Grants, scholarships, innovative new music programs, kids getting new instruments and school music programs being restored and strengthened—they're what we live for, aren't they? NAMM is also the leader in funding music research and promoting the results and proven

benefits of music education to the world's media to influence government leaders, policy makers and parents. Music education is the key to student success; everybody knows that now!

Global Impact—NAMM has members in nearly 100 countries now and, if I had to guess, I'd bet half of our members do business outside their home country. And with our circle of benefits business model expanding, revenue generated from Music China and NAMM Russia is being reinvested to create more music makers globally without impacting the work we do on behalf of our U.S. members.

Thank you again for being a part of this wonderful work. Through your participation, music and music education will continue to reach more people around the world. And perhaps one day we can say we've achieved our vision of a world in which the joy of making music is a precious element of daily living for everyone!

Sincerely,



Joe Lamond

NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO

mission

NAMM's mission is to strengthen the music products industry and promote the pleasures and benefits of making music.

objectives

Trade Show

- Produce successful trade shows that serve our members and the industry, thus ensuring the growth of NAMM's Circle of Benefits model

Membership

- Recruit and retain members by making NAMM services an invaluable tool for success
- Convene stakeholders around industry issues to provide tools and strategies to help members address challenges and pursue opportunities

Professional Development

- Provide relevant and high-value educational programs for NAMM members

Market Development

- Promote music education as a right for all children
- Create, fund and market programs, initiatives and public relations campaigns designed to encourage people of all ages to make music
- Promote and represent the shared interests of NAMM members to elected officials and policymakers in the United States

Global Impact

- Expand NAMM's Circle of Benefits model by pursuing new opportunities globally
- Increase global attendance at NAMM trade shows
- Convene a global coalition of stakeholders around industry issues

- > **Yamaha**
Teams up with SoCal retailer to donate keyboards to school
PAGE 26
- > **Davitt & Hanser**
Takes over Cort Guitars' U.S. distribution
PAGE 29
- > **Korg**
Distributes Dean Markley
PAGE 30

SUPPLY

MONO CASES | BY KATIE KAILUS

DESIGN EXPERTS

When Daniel Kushner, CEO of MONO, graduated from college, he took an industrial design job in San Francisco, but felt like something was missing. That missing piece, music, caused him to fuse his two passions, design and music, together and, in 2007, launched MONO — an accessory supplier known for creating innovative and durable cases and straps.

“MONO’s main objective is to help creative individuals across the world protect their instruments as well as help them in the creative process by getting them from point A to point B,” said Randy Couvillon, global account manager at MONO. “We want to inspire and empower the global music community.”

RETAIL BACKGROUND

One way the company empowers musician’s worldwide is by tapping into its own staff’s experience. All MONO’s staffers are not only musicians, but gigging ones who are used to the rigors of touring and transporting gear.

Adding to the company’s connectability is the fact that Couvillon himself is a former MI store manager.



MONO prides itself on its design experience — and its friendly culture

“My [background] helps me better connect with dealers,” he said. “I started my career on the sales floor, then moved on up to managing the store. Now that I have that background, I know what the sales guys want and know what the end users

want. I know how to speak their language. That is a part of our friendly culture here at MONO. Not only are we all musicians, but we are all well-versed in the industry as well.”

Couvillon said he was the first MONO dealer and test marketed

four cases in his store for, at the time, the newly founded company.

“I told Daniel if they didn’t sell in 30 days, I’d send them back,” he said. “And they all sold in two weeks.”

“That sort of set the precedent of how we do business with dealers,” Couvillon continued. “It is very open policy. There’s no minimum buy-in so dealers can test market the product. We have proven over the years that end-users don’t want to buy the same economy-based bag that might not have the same features and benefits and might fall apart. They want one that is going to take care of their instruments and last a long time.”

And dealers and end-users have no problem showing their appreciation for the company. Couvillon said the company’s NAMM booth often turns into a shrine for MONO fans.

“I came to love the company before I was even involved in it, and we get people stopping by our booth just to show their love for the brand,” he said. “I’ve seen guys come up and hug our cases and say, ‘You guys make the best stuff,’ or ‘I just came by to tell you how much I love MONO!’”

Couvillon said MONO’s helpful personnel has created a culture that goes beyond a dealer or artist

network and feels more like a family.

“We get a lot of fellowship and common experiences where people say, ‘MONO saved me money.’ ‘MONO helped me on this tour.’ ‘MONO got me from point A to point B.’”

Once, the company even received a review from a customer who got hit by a car, landing on his back — on top of his guitar in a MONO case. Not only was he uninjured, but so was his guitar.

DESIGN KNOW-HOW

MONO takes great pride in the design of its products — so much so it has garnered national attention. In 2013, MONO received the Silver Idea Award from the Industrial Design Society of America for its Vertigo Top-Loading Guitar Case, joining the ranks of Tesla and Sonos which also received awards that year.

“Every one of our products has one slick detail that makes it more than just a nice strap or a nice case,” Couvillon said. “You will always find one element that really works. And that’s the thoughtfulness that goes into the design.”

The award-winning Vertigo, for example, is a top-loading case that features a boot — a giant molded-rubber piece on the bottom of the case protecting the guitar’s body. It’s innovations like these that keep MONO’s product return rate under 1 percent. Since the entire staff is made up of gigging musicians, they often find themselves designing products they, and other musicians they know need.

“Sometimes you see a lot of crazy graphics or designs like skulls and crossbones on guitar straps to set them apart from other ones, and that just didn’t seem to be what we saw musicians wanting,” Couvillon said. “The whole crew here is made up of musicians who are all in bands. We’ve all done the deal from the ground up. Most of the design is born from our experiences and talking to other musicians and seeing what they need. It’s something that works really well for us.”

And that goes for product testing as well. MONO doesn’t throw its cases off the roof of its building to test durability. The company’s staff test out the gear in real-life situations.

“We test it the same way a musician would test it,” Couvillon said. “We drop it down stairs or cram it into a tour bus or load it in and out of cars. One of the sales pitches

I do sometimes is I hold it up over my head and drop it. It’s not rigorous testing, it is real-life testing. It’s what us musicians’ really face when we’re out playing.”

THE FUTURE OF MONO

MONO went from its debut three SKUs (which included bass, guitar and cymbal cases) to almost 64 today. Its lines now offer case solutions for electric and acoustic guitars, basses, drums, keyboards and DJ equipment. Couvillon said he sees the com-

pany continuing to grow in all directions.

“We’ve been on such a great trajectory since day one,” he said. “I feel we have a really solid group of international distributors, really solid in-house accounts and solid coverage from our current open channels.

“I see us continuing to grow and innovate and go beyond what we are already known for, which is our cases. We’ll continue our innovation and continue to offer help for the creative individual.” **MI**

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YAMAHA | PHILANTHROPY

YAMAHA, KEYBOARD CONCEPTS TEAM UP TO DONATE KEYBOARDS

Students at Haydock Academy of Arts and Sciences in Oxnard, California, recently received a major boost to their music program when Yamaha Corp. of America and Fountain Valley, California-based Keyboard Concepts donated eight keyboards for the students to borrow and practice on at home.

The donation of the eight new Yamaha YPT-240 electronic keyboards will go to students in grades six, seven and eight who are taking piano classes at school. The eight new instruments, which each come with headphones, a foot switch, power adapter and a carrying case, will be added to eight repurposed keyboards provided by the district to form a “Keyboard Library” at the Haydock Academy of Arts and Sciences, home to a new Yamaha Piano Lab. Part of the program also includes Yamaha support for curriculum review, development and onsite training, as well as a ‘Say Yes to Music’ assembly next spring designed to increase awareness of the new academies, specifically Haydock, to help the district compete with charter and private schools.

“The ability to check out a keyboard to



take home will complement the in-class piano instruction by providing students the opportunity to practice at home,” said Cesar Morales, superintendent of the Oxnard School District, which Haydock is a part of. “Thanks to Yamaha and Keyboard Concepts, we are able to remove the barrier of a student not having a piano [or] keyboard at home.”

“A lending library for keyboards is a very cool idea that really excited us, and we were happy to work with Yamaha to make this a reality for students at Haydock,” said Dennis Hagerty, president of Keyboard Concepts. The ‘Keyboard Library’ makes practicing at home possible for every student, no matter their circumstances.”

{yamaha.com}

JODYJAZZ | COMPANYY

JodyJazz Expands Global Reach

JodyJazz has expanded its global reach, announcing a significant expansion of its international business in 2014. The company reported a 20-percent increase in sales overall, and for the first time over 50-percent of its business is being done in overseas markets.

The company’s significant international success also led to its nomination and ultimately being named a finalist in the 2014 Governor’s International Trade Awards, which honors top exporters in the state of Georgia.

JodyJazz has also added a slew of new international endorsers, including Magnus Lindgren, Gaoyang Li, Kunikazu Tanaka, Rodrigo Bento, Rubens Mariano, Hamilton Faria, Victor Aguiar and Sintia Piccin.

“We are very proud to have so many of



the top, most influential saxophonists in so many countries playing JodyJazz,” said Jody Espina, company founder and president. “These are all truly great players in their

own right and represent a broad spectrum of musical styles from funk, latin and pop to smooth jazz, modern jazz and straight ahead.” {jodyjazz.com}

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DW, KMC | SALE

DW Buys LP, Toca, Gibraltar & More

In a blockbuster deal, Drum Workshop — the Oxnard, California-based manufacturer of drum sets, pedals and accessories — has purchased Latin Percussion, Toca, Kat electronic percussion and Gibraltar drum hardware from KMC Music.

Drum Workshop will also take over the manufacturing licensing agreement with Gretsch Drums as well as the U.S. distribution of Sabian cymbals. The deal also includes DW purchasing the Ovation guitar brand.

“This is an amazing opportunity to extend our passion and commitment for the art of drumming,” said Chris Lombardi, CEO of Drum Workshop. “We are excited to welcome these legendary American brands to the DW family.”

“We are extremely proud of our team’s effort to nurture and grow each of the individual brands and are enthusiastic

for their future,” said Scott Gilbertson, interim CEO and board member for Fender Musical Instruments, the parent company of KMC. “We recognize the strategic opportunity for DW and are confident that they will be champions of the brands moving forward.”

“It’s going to be our sales staff at The NAMM Show selling the brands,” said Scott Donnell, DW vice president of marketing. “We’re already picking up the marketing. It’s all moving.”

At The NAMM Show, the LP, Toca, Gretsch and Gibraltar brands will be in booth 304D, next door to the DW booth. The brands will be represented by the DW management and sales staff.

According to Donnell, the deal has long been in the works.

“Chris [Lombardi] has a really close relationship with Larry Thomas [former

Fender president and CEO,” he said. “When Larry was still at the helm at Fender, we learned that they were going to start selling off some of these ancillary brands to get back to their core business. One of the first sales was with Cordoba and they bought Guild. Chris noticed that was already happening, and he showed interest in LP.”

Regarding Ovation, Donnell said plans will take a little more time to unfold.

“We’re not going to make a lot of noise about it at the show,” he said “And that’s because percussion isn’t our wheelhouse, and I think people will already be a little shocked by us acquiring so many brands.”

Financial and other terms of the sale were not disclosed, but the purchase could easily triple the size of DW, almost overnight.

Drum Workshop will continue to manufacture products from California. LP and Toca’s offices will remain in New Jersey and Gretsch’s U.S. manufacturing will remain in South Carolina, according to DW sources. Brands like Gibraltar and Kat, which were handled from KMC’s Connecticut offices will move to the West Coast along with a number of executives from those brands.

Initial retailer response to the deal was positive.

“I look forward to this acquisition,” said Victor Salazar, owner of Vic’s Drum Shop in Chicago. “Drum Workshop has always been a forward-thinking company and they’re extremely passionate about drums and percussion. I think they’re going to have a positive influence on these other brands.

“I didn’t see this coming where they’d be breaking it up. I thought you bought all of KMC or you bought nothing.”

With the acquisition, DW has hired former Guitar Center executive John Bagan as Chief Operating Officer. More management team additions are expected.

kmcmusiccorp.com; dwdrums.com



WESTHEIMER | DISTRIBUTION

Westheimer, Cort Guitars Part Ways, Davitt & Hanser Named New U.S. Distributor

Westheimer Corp. announced a new strategic direction that better fits its business model in an ever-changing musical instrument market.

Laura Gabel, CEO of Westheimer Corp., said in a statement, "As it relates to Cort guitars, we spent this past year re-examining the musical instrument industry and how to position our brands. As many

know, Jack Westheimer was a pioneer in the musical instrument industry. Over time, however, the industry evolved in such a way we decided it is best at this time to focus on our proprietary brands. As a result, we made a difficult decision and ended our long term distribution relationship with Cort Musical Instrument Company (CMIC), as their U.S. distributor of the Cort brand."

Gabel continued by saying, Westheimer enjoyed a successful 40-year relationship with CMIC, which began with Jack Westheimer and Young Park as partners in an OEM Korean guitar factory.

"Our relationship with CMIC will continue with other product lines and we look forward to a mutually prosperous future with CMIC and the Park family," Gabel said. "Going forward, we will continue to


develop and maximize the sales and value of our own brands which include Mighty Mite, Harmony Guitars, Groove Tools by Conklin, Teisco, Emperor band instruments, Cortez and BSX percussion."

"We are truly saddened by the decision that Westheimer Corp. will no longer be selling Cort Guitars in the U.S.," said Jun Park, president of Cor-Tek, the company that owns and manufactures Cort Guitars. "We respect their decision but will be forever grateful for their long-term support and friendship. When they informed Cor-Tek of their decision to no longer distribute the Cort brand, they worked with other companies in the MI industry and helped us identify our new Cort distributor in the U.S., Davitt & Hanser." westheimer.com



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DISTRIBUTION NEWS:



KHS PARTNERS WITH HERCULES

KHS America has assumed control of North American distribution of Hercules Stands as of Jan. 1.

“KHS America is very pleased to be the lead U.S. distributor of Hercules Stands,” said Tabor Stamper, president of KHS America. “Our experienced inside and outside sales teams, along with our long-term dealer relationships, will allow us to enhance the quality of service for our retail partners. For our friends in Canada, we are also pleased to announce that Coast Music will be the supplier of Hercules for Canadian retailers, also beginning Jan. 1.” khsmusic.com; herculesstands.com

KORG TEAMS WITH DEAN MARKLEY, LITTLEBITS

Korg USA is now the exclusive U.S. distributor of Dean Markley’s line of guitar strings, pickups, picks and polishing accessories.

“We are proud to have the opportunity to represent Dean Markley,” said Joe Castronovo, Korg USA president. “It has a great heritage and we are looking forward to helping them re-energize the brand.”

“Korg USA will improve our product availability and delivery time at the industry’s most competitive prices,” said Lori McCallian, CEO of Dean Markley USA.

In other Korg distribution news, the company has partnered with littleBits to expand the distribution of littleBits’ Synth Kit, which shares the form factor of littleBits’ ever-growing library of electronic modules, which snap together in near-limitless configurations to help users invent their own imaginative, functional devices. korg.com; deanmarkley.com; littlebits.cc



#4900



Eastman Guitars has collaborated with legendary guitarist Ray Benson on a signature and custom model guitar, the Thinline T486-RB, faithfully built to his exact specifications. A nine-time Grammy Award winner, founder and frontman of the revered country western swing band Asleep At The Wheel, Benson has released more than 25 studio and live albums over the last four decades. As a producer, Benson has worked with an impressive who’s-who A-list including Willie Nelson, Aaron Neville, Brad Paisley, Trace Adkins, Merle Haggard, Carolyn Wonderland, and Vince Gill. His latest project, a solo album titled A Little Piece, was released earlier this year.

www.EastmanGuitars.com



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DIGICO | INSTALLATION

CHICAGO'S SYMPHONY CENTER UTILIZES DIGICO

Symphony Center is home to the The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which traditionally performs acoustically. However, when visiting jazz and pop artists stop by for shows using amplified music, the venue now invokes DiGiCo's SD9, a super-flexible, completely integrated digital mixing system powered by Stealth Digital Processing and floating-point Super FPGA technology.

The system was installed by The Sound Co-Op, and when owner Kenny Check isn't helping the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, he's on the road mixing monitors for metal band Godsmack through a DiGiCo SD10 console.

"Both consoles sound excellent for these applications," Check said. "The SD9 in Symphony Center is perfect for the CSO and visiting artists because of its versatility — the number of inputs and outputs and the enormous number of useful features. It's a real step up from what was in Symphony Center before and offers the same pristine audio quality as the SD10. Occasionally, Symphony Center presents shows by outside artists, but the range of genres is pretty wide, so the SD9's flexibility is what they needed. Plus it simply sounds great." digico.biz



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SUPPLY

NAMM SHOW 2015 NEWS

THE TEC FOUNDATION

SLASH TO RECEIVE LES PAUL AWARD DURING TEC AWARDS

Iconic guitarist Slash will receive the Les Paul Award during the 30th annual NAMM Technical Excellence & Creativity Awards, to be held Saturday, Jan. 24 in Anaheim, California — during The NAMM Show. Comedian Sinbad will host the event which honors individuals and companies across 30 categories for outstanding achievement in professional audio technology and production.

The Les Paul Award, named for the revolutionary inventor and esteemed musician, honors individuals or institutions that have set the highest standards of excellence in the creative application of audio and music



technology. Instituted in 1991, the honor has been granted to luminaries including Pete Townshend, Paul McCartney, Brian Wilson, Stevie Wonder, Neil Young, Todd Rundgren and Peter Gabriel.

As a critically-acclaimed British-American musician and songwriter, Slash has amassed album sales topping 100 million copies, received a Grammy Award and has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The TEC Awards will also honor engineer-mixologist Ed Cherney and bassist Nathan East as they will be inducted into the NAMM TEC Awards Hall of Fame. tecfoundation.com

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL MUSIC NETWORK

SHE ROCKS AWARDS TO HONOR THE BANGLES, COLBIE CAILLAT

The Women's International Music Network will hold its 3rd annual She Rocks Awards on the evening of Friday, Jan. 23 at the Hilton Anaheim.

This year's honorees include: recording artist Colbie Caillat, legendary rockers The Bangles, jazz artist Mindy Abair, Beacock Music owner Gayle Beacock, Berklee's Debbie Cavalier, Vice President of Brand Marketing for C.F. Martin & Co Amani Duncan, *Music Inc.* editor Katie Kailus, Capitol Studios' Paula Salvatore and Zildjian CEO Cragie Zildjian. The event will be co-hosted by guitarist Orianthi.

"The She Rocks Awards does so much for women in music, and I'm excited to be a part of it," Orianthi said. "This event recognizes women who truly rock, and it will be my honor to be there to congratulate them." thewimn.com



APPOINTMENTS

Gutnik Named Seymour Duncan Chief Revenue Officer



Seymour Duncan has appointed Max Gutnik as its Chief Revenue Officer. Gutnik brings a long list of skills and experience in developing relationships with dealers and building innovative products that are responsive to musicians needs.

He has worked as a key player for Apogee, DigiDesign, Avid and Line 6 and will be overseeing sales, marketing and new products at his new role at

Seymour Duncan.

“Max has the knowledge, skills, energy and enthusiasm to deliver results,” said Cathy Carter Duncan, Seymour Duncan CEO. “He has played critical roles in product development, sales and marketing during large growth periods of several music companies. Best of all, he loves to play guitar.”

{seymourduncan.com}

Boulder Creek Guitars has named Michael Hurwitz its vice president of worldwide sales. In this role, Hurwitz

will oversee the sales of domestic USA dealers and international distributors.

Pauline France has joined **Mad Sun**

Marketing as its public relations and content manager. France previously handled public relations at Fender.

IN MEMORIAM



ROBERT J. SPERZEL

Robert J. Sperzel, founder of Sperzel tuning keys, passed away on Dec. 14. He was 91. Sperzel started manufacturing tuning keys in 1977. In 1983, he introduced the Trim-Lok, which holds the string tight without tying or multiple wraps around the string post that can slip and cause staying in tune problems.

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IDEAS

Inside**IDEAS** > The Customer Whisperer Page 36 > Lessons Learned Page 38 > The Tech Beat Page 40

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHILMAN

YOU DON'T BRING ME FLOWERS

I have a confession to make — after almost three decades of marriage, I've recently learned something startling: wives like flowers.

My wife has simple taste. She's never been much for expensive jewelry or cars. I never felt compelled to go overboard with flowers, even on special occasions, but I'd splurge once in a while. On Valentines Day, I'd go with the herd and treat her to a nice bouquet. A couple years ago, I noticed she was adorning our kitchen counter with her own modest grocery florist arrangements.

Feeling a little guilty, I soon discovered that something I was blissfully ignorant of could completely brighten her day for a nominal investment with huge emotional dividends. How could I have been so clueless for so many years?

Relationships with our customers are so much like a marriage — easy to take for granted and we can be trapped in blissful ignorance of the simple actions we can take to show our appreciation for them. Sometimes it's modest, mindful steps that keep these bonds healthy.

Reboot. Often times, we're sadly naïve thinking we've done something special for our spouse



Relationships with customers can be easy to take for granted

or our customer afterwards. We remember giving that church committee a really good deal or loaning the hi-hat stand to an absent-minded weekend warrior drummer at the last minute or the time we stayed open a few extra minutes for Kelsey's mom to get the reeds she needed for her contest. We think we "own" them. However, we forget the what-have-you-done-for-me-lately human-default mode. Favors wear off, and they must be re-

peated and/or replaced. Don't think that one great thing you did for that customer grants you permanent loyalty. Those flowers wilt, and need to be replaced with fresh ones. Frequently.

Fill their needs. Our business is not just about moving inventory. We're here to meet needs. A good marriage looks out for what the partner needs, not what we can get. Yes, we need to turn a profit in our business, but we have to proactively wire our staff, our goods and our services to solve problems, adjust, and be attentive to shifting market tastes and desires.

Flatter. We should compliment our customers. A sincere note of congratulations on a well executed concert, an "atta boy!" after a good lesson or a public acknowledgement of an award reminds your customer you are tuned in to them. Airlines thank you at the end of each flight for choosing them over their competition. Do you thank your customer for stopping in (over the convenience of staying home and clicking a mouse) for a purchase?

Be transparent. There are things your store does well and things it can never do. We can't be all things to all people, espe-

cially in today's global economy of specialty retail. Know what you do well and brag about it, but don't try to be something you aren't. Be open enough to admit it. Great relationships demand everlasting candor.

Demonstrate an interest. Our customers typically are overt about their musical activities; they're dying to tell you about them. Take some time to listen. You never know when they might mention a need that involves you making a sale. You've probably feigned an interest in something your spouse wanted to talk about, right? Let your customer bare his/her soul in small doses.

"Like" things they like. We get entombed in our own tastes, and it can be hard to branch out. Music changes and so does the equipment that makes it. Get contemporary, be eclectic and even if it's not your thing, you could at least appreciate the fortitude it takes to perfect.

Do these seem trite? Some might say fresh flowers are too, but it's the unexpected and simple things that make the most impact on customer rapport. **MI**

Ted Eschilman has been in the music retailing business for over 30 years. He is the co-owner of Dietze Music in Southeast Nebraska. Mel Bay published his book, *Getting Into Jazz Mandolin*.

THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

Battling the Blind Spot

Recently, while visiting my hometown of Milwaukee, I had dinner with my old friend Keith Mardak, CEO of Hal Leonard Publishing. Keith told me a story about my dad I had never heard before.

In the mid 1960s, Keith was working at our store as an organ teacher — a job he had taken because it paid \$3 per lesson, twice what he made as an accordion teacher. He aspired to become an organ salesman, because that was where the real money was. But when he asked if he could change jobs, dad said, “No, you are not a salesman, but I have something for you on the publishing side.” If you look at the bottom of the first page of any of Hal Leonard’s thousands of publications, you will see a copyright notice there because Keith ‘sold’ someone on giving him the publishing rights to a song. Keith has probably closed more deals than anyone in our industry, but dad had a blind spot about Keith.



‘Let’s not be so quick to classify, categorize and stereotype. Let’s slow down for a moment and think: Is the solution right before our eyes?’

We all have blind spots. Most will not have the happy ending dad and Keith had. Amazon has 100 pages of books with some variation of the title “Blind Spot.” It’s a recognized problem for businesses large and small. If we can overcome our blind spots, we can run our businesses and serve our customers better.

The books I reviewed all had the same general themes. Our blind spots are the result of lazy thinking. We fail to see what is right before our eyes. We generalize. We categorize. We stereotype, and we can’t see the forest for the trees. We don’t do our homework, challenge our preconceived notions or seek to determine what we don’t know. And it is not just in our businesses that we have blind spots. It’s all aspects of our lives.

Dad’s blind spot was that he thought he knew what salespeople looked and acted like. They were big guys with loud voices and equally big egos. Except, what dad thought he knew was wrong.

Nobody knows what good salespeople look like because they all look different. Nobody knows what good customers look like either. The following are three short stories that illustrate the point.

THE SALESMAN & THE FARMER

Around the same time, dad hired a fellow who didn’t look at all like a salesman. His name was Clem Genrich. Clem had worked for my grandfather as a bookkeeper and was an old family friend. When grandpa’s business wound down, dad felt obligated to hire Clem. He was a small man (about 5’6”). He was also soft-spoken and a generation older than all the other salesmen. But, Clem had an ability to connect with our customers and gain their trust.

He became the best salesman at the store for 10 years and ultimately was one of the partners who bought the store from dad. The blind spot here was that dad didn’t recognize what had been right in front of him all the time.

Clem didn’t have a blind spot most of us have. He didn’t stereotype people. He once had an interaction with a customer that became a legend in our company, and still affects how we relate to our customers.

One day an old farmer pulled up to the store in a beat up pickup truck. He was wearing bib overalls and boots. The salesman, whose turn it was, handed off what he perceived as a “waste of his time” to Clem.

An hour later the farmer gave Clem \$3,600 in cash for the most expensive console organ in the store. (You would have to double the price and add a zero to

have an equivalent amount today.) Clem didn't disqualify this customer because of his attire. He had probably known lots of farmers. Instead of disqualifying, he qualified, and then followed with a presentation and closed the sale.

THE BALL PLAYER

late last summer an hombre, wearing jeans and a t-shirt, came into our Steinway Piano Gallery late in the afternoon. He was with a friend who spoke no english at all. He could have been a landscaper. He could have been a teacher. There was no way to tell. After a short chat, I learned that he had two daughters, one of whom was trying to learn piano on a keyboard. We talked about enrolling his daughter with one of our teachers and about getting her a real piano. He said he really wanted a baby grand. We found one he liked, and he left to get his wife to show it to her. As he was leaving, I asked what he had done to his foot and why he was limping. He said he hurt it playing ball. I asked if he was in a league and he told me he played for the Baltimore Orioles and was on the DL undergoing rehab.

After he left the Gallery, and thanks to Google, I quickly learned that his annual income was \$30 million. I don't know if I would have responded to him differently if the story of Clem's sale to the farmer hadn't been told so many times in my family's store that it became a part of my DNA. If I had disqualified him, based on a stereotype, we probably would not

have enrolled his daughter in lessons, or gotten his cell phone number, or been invited to his home to see the room where the piano would go. And he certainly wouldn't have bought an expensive piano from me.

Of course, I have other blind spots. We all do. The blind spot books I found on Amazon read like pop-psychology self help because that is exactly what they are. We all need help to overcome our blind spots and "self" is the only place to start. Let's not be so quick to classify, categorize and stereotype. Let's slow down for a moment and think: Is the solution right before our eyes? Are we grasping the big picture? Is what we think we know accurate, and what don't we know?

In fairness to dad, he didn't have a blind spot when it came to merchandising. Even though he parked behind the store, he always entered through the front door so he could, "see the store through his customers eyes."

It is a big task to be introspective and thoughtful enough to overcome our blind spots. But when we do it for a while, it becomes second nature. Maybe we should start small. How about we start with stereotyping? If we can get a handle on that, the rest should be relatively easy. **MI**

Greg Billings is the former owner of the Steinway Piano Gallery in Naples, Florida. He welcomes questions and comments at gregpianos@gmail.com.



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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

The Danger of Technology

I'm a tech junkie. I love my smartphone and tablet. I've always been an early adopter. You can be sure that I've got the latest operating system on my laptop and all the newest apps. I even like egghead things like really painstakingly detailed file hierarchies and totally tripped out spreadsheets.

Thanks to all this technology, I have the wherewithal to remain connected in any number of ways, from anywhere on the planet, with a remarkable palette of possible tasks that I can perform at the flip of a button.



But here's the thing: There's a dark side to all this technology and many of us get seduced by it. If I'm totally honest with myself, looking back on my company, I'm sure that there were times when I spent hours working on technology instead of working on my business. In my mind, I'm sure that I thought the two were equivalent. But it's not always so.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Back in the days before all the common carriers provided software to create shipping labels, I thought it would be a great time-saver to create templates to fill out their blank forms. It felt like a great accomplishment once I had it done, but it's unlikely that all the time invested in the project ever really increased productivity. It became an excuse for not doing the real work that needed to be done. What technology projects have you or your staff undertaken that have turned into "time sucks?" There's little that you can imagine today that isn't available somewhere for some modest sum of money. Spending a couple bucks on turnkey versions of the things you need will free you up to do much more valuable things in your business

— like paying attention to the day-to-day activities and challenges.

Another really popular way of wasting time is social media. Now don't get all worked up! The various social media, as well as email and text blasts, should all be part of your approach to outreach. It's important to reach your customers through the electronic media. But if you become entirely dependent on them, you're missing a lot. Think about it — how much feedback do you actually get from these efforts? Now think about picking up the telephone and contacting former customers. One or two minutes on the phone can be a treasure trove of good information. What about

actually meeting face-to-face with customers in your store? This is invaluable. But if you're hurrying through a conversation in the store to get back to the virtual interactions on your laptop, you are short-circuiting your greatest source of relationship-building potential.

The reality of electronic communication is that it tends to be very cut and dry. That's actually part of the reason that we gravitate to it. It's really simple — you ask a direct question and you get a direct answer. Or your customer presents a problem, and you send back an email response that offers a solution. In your mind, it's "mission accomplished." But what you miss is the nuance of a personal conversation. You miss the intonation when a customer writes "thanks for handling it," but actually means, "I'm glad you're doing something, but I'll never shop there again." In a real-time conversation you'd pick up the distinction, in email you may lose a customer forever.

You need to be sure that you have a sound technology game plan for your business. But then, with that in place, be certain to never let it become a layer that separates you from your customers or your co-workers. **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.

A focus on technology is good, but don't lose sight of the impact of human interaction

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THE TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

Top 5 Reasons to Blog

Running a small business has rarely given me much free time. So, when my search engine optimization company approached me about starting a blog, I wasn't very excited about the idea of adding yet another responsibility to my plate. However, after some careful research, I discovered that — not only should I be blogging regularly — but you should be, too. Here's why:



Attract a larger audience to your store's site by creating a blog

1. BLOGGING ATTRACTS AN AUDIENCE

Unlike your business' website, which is primarily factual or promotional, your blog can consist of personal opinions, product reviews, discussions about your favorite albums or performances, and “insider tips” for your clients. Create good content and you will quickly build a loyal audience of potential customers, referral sources, employees and friends.

2. BLOGGING ESTABLISHES YOUR AUTHORITY

Consistently post honest and meaty content and your prospective customers will come to trust you in the same way they trust people who aren't “trying to sell them something.” It's not uncommon for a customer to walk into my store and ask for me simply because they read something I wrote online.

3. BLOGGING BUILDS RAPPORT & ENCOURAGES ENGAGEMENT

Watch carefully when customers walk into your store for the first time. Those who are “uninitiated” (or unfamiliar with your products or environment) often come in with a face full of caution, confusion and even fear. A good blog can significantly reduce the friction of a first-time visit and give you the opportunity to address questions or concerns before it threatens a potential sale. You might even consider inviting your blog readers to a special “meet and greet” with their favorite content providers. It doesn't cost you anything, and it gives your staff another chance to personally engage.

4. BLOGGING IMPROVES YOUR GOOGLE SEARCH RANKING

Though Google Search ranking is a product of several elements, two key pieces to appearing “at the top” are good content and Web authority. One great way to build both is through your blog. For

example, if you want to encourage more people to take lessons at your store, why not write a blog about the cognitive, emotional and physiological benefits of taking music lessons? NAMM has great resources and statistics for you to use and you can post links to your blog on your social media sites. You can even ask your teachers to post the blog on their social media pages — creating more links to your blog and showing Google that you're an authority on music lessons.

5. BLOGGING SELLS

Of course, the litmus for any business-related activity in our hectic world has to be, “Can this make me money?” You might be thinking that the above ideas are great and they certainly make a case for blogging as a marketing tool, but did you know that, with the right plug-in, your blog can actually become an effective and very inexpensive e-commerce portal? When I first setup the e-commerce portal on my website, I was thrilled to pay less than \$150 a year to have an online store. Now, after a couple of years of healthy Web sales, I can say that my website — or more specifically my blog — has become a profit center for my business. Unlike staff, my blog can sell 24/7! **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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FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY FRANK ALKYER

BERNARD VAN DOREN | VANDOREN

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

I phone the company, the factory.

WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT MAKING THAT PHONE CALL, FIRST THING IN THE MORNING?

Because, we need to make that contact and they need to know if, for instance, our trip to the United States is successful. We are the messenger for them. We communicate a lot.

YOU RECENTLY LAUNCHED TWO NEW PRODUCTS. CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THEM?

The first is the BD5. BD is for Black Diamond. I thought about this mouthpiece in 1972. And we made some of them by hand. But we did not have the technology to produce this mouthpiece because it requires something very special. We could only make some prototypes. But now we have the technology and can make that mouthpiece. It's an old story, but this mouthpiece is certainly the right one for people who did not play a Vandoren mouthpiece.

THIS IS A CLARINET MOUTHPIECE. WHAT TECHNOLOGY DID YOU NEED TO MAKE THIS MOUTHPIECE THAT WAS NOT AVAILABLE IN 1972?

CNC driven machines were needed to have a normal price. Otherwise, the price would be prohibitive. As a result, we had to wait. We wanted to make an ultra premium reed. So, for that, we have created the V21. It is a combination of the Vandoren V12 and the Vandoren 56. It's two reeds in one. That's something ultimate.

We are also very happy with our new Juno student reeds. At the time of Vito Pascucci [founder of G. Leblanc] and D'Addario [both companies who previously distributed Vandoren reeds], they asked us to make a student reed all the time, but we were not interested. Finally, we decided we would. And for that, we made Juno, which, for every musician, is, 'My first Vandoren.' It is a reed for every beginning student.

THAT'S SOMETHING THAT'S VERY INTERESTING ABOUT VANDOREN AS A COMPANY. YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD THE HIGH END OF THE MARKET. THE NEW V21 IS AN EXPRESSION OF THAT, TAKING TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF ARTISTRY. BUT NOW, YOU'RE TAKING IT TO THE BEGINNER.

Juno is a high premium reed for beginners. Even a professional can play a Juno reed. It's good to make embouchure.

We think, at Vandoren, that the sound has to be premium. You either have a good sound or you have nothing.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP PRODUCTS LIKE THESE? FOR EXAMPLE, IT'S 1972 AND YOU DREAM UP WHAT BECOMES THE BD5. WHERE DID THAT IDEA COME FROM?

The idea came after we created the B45. And some people wanted more, a darker sound. The German sound. The French clarinet school was different. It was more vibrant. The mode at the time was they wanted a darker sound.

But I remember that some musicians said, "You know, we need more." As we saw that, musicians all over the world were trying to find that sound with other mouthpieces. So, we said we have to do something. We changed completely the geometry of the mouthpiece.

It's very simple. When the market says they need something, we try to respond to the market.

BUT YOU HAVE A VERY LONG VISION WHEN YOU ARE RESPONDING TO THE MARKET. AS YOU SAID, IN 1972 YOU COULD NOT MAKE THE BD5 AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE. AND JUNO, YOU COULD NOT MAKE THAT PRODUCT FOR THE STUDENT MARKET BACK WHEN YOU WERE BEING DISTRIBUTED BY VITO OR D'ADDARIO. AND IT TOOK UNTIL TODAY BEFORE YOU COULD PRODUCE A STUDENT REED.

Yes, every good thing arrives in good time. You do not pick the apple when when it is not ripe.

WHAT MADE JUNO RIPE WHEN IT WAS LAUNCHED IN 2013?

I thought that we were ready. We had the technology. We had the machines. We had the cane supply.

When we make a Vandoren reed, the time to make the traditional reed was 12 seconds, but with the new technology, we can make a reed in 8 seconds.

YOUR BUSINESS IS SO FASCINATING. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT MANUFACTURING, AND ALL THE MACHINES IN YOUR SHOP, YOU CAN'T JUST GO OUT AND BUY THEM.

We made our own.

WHAT KIND OF ENGINEERING TEAM DO YOU HAVE TO DO THIS?



THE DETAILS

BERNARD VAN DOREN, OWNER AND CEO

HQ: Paris

Founded: 1905 by Eugene Van Doren

Employees: More than 100

Best selling product: The most popular reed is the Traditional (Blue Box) #3. The most popular mouthpiece is the B45 clarinet.

Fun Fact: Company founder, Eugene Van Doren was a clarinetist for the Paris Opera during the Belle Epoque at the end of the 19th century. All clarinetists made their own reeds at the time, but Van Doren's played so well that he started making them for other musicians — and a company was born.

It's a Vandoren team. Vandoren engineers. Good machinists and people who believe in their product. They believe in Vandoren. It's a big family.

CAN YOU WALK ME THROUGH THE PROCESS OF WHAT IT TAKES TO GET CANE FROM THE FIELD THROUGH THE FINAL PROCESS OF MAKING A REED?

It's like a tulip. It's produce. The cane has to grow for two years. In its first year, it grows to its final diameter. And in the second year, the cane becomes mature. It becomes more consistent. The fibers become more consistent, and you have the density. And after two years, we cut the cane. We let them dry for a minimum of one year to a year and a half. So, it's nearly four years before the cane reaches the factory.

WHY IS FRANCE THE BEST PLACE TO GROW CANE?

People there have a long-term knowledge about cane because they use to grow cane for many things like flower baskets. And they know the process. They have been educated in how to grow cane and to give cane a good quality.

What is important in our company is that we heat the factory with the cane. Not all the cane is up to standard, so we don't use fuel, we don't use gas, we use the cane that is not up to our standards to heat the factory. And with other cane that doesn't meet our standards, we make a mulch and give it back to the soil that the sun has given us [smiles].

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU SEE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY TODAY?

[Note: At this point Emmanuel Tonnelier, Vandoren's General Manager enters the conversation.]

Tonnelier: Counterfeits. Fake reeds. To combat this, every reed has a serial number and every box we send has a serial number. We have a website called Fight Against Fake. That way, you can go to the website and check if that serial number is a valid production number. And if anybody else uses that number once, it will alert us that a couple of reeds are being sold in the world with the same number. Those are fake products. We have identified some fake products.

[Back to Bernard Van Doren.] We had some counterfeiting in China.

THAT'S A BIG CHALLENGE.

Yes. The reeds are terrible, but the signature was the same, exactly the same. Even the packaging was sometimes even a little better [laughs].

SO WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU FIND OUT SOMEONE'S COUNTERFEITING?

We have a good distributor now in China. We changed the distributorship. It's KHS. They are established. They do a very good job.

YOU'RE THE THIRD GENERATION IN THE BUSINESS. YOUR SON, ROBERT, IS NOW THE FOURTH. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?

We are proud of that. I was speaking this morning to the factory, and they are very happy and very excited to have Robert. It proves that the company is going to continue.

HOW LONG HAS ROBERT BEEN IN THE BUSINESS?

Robert joined the business in September. He's very well accepted by everybody. We are going to see what area he finds to be the most interesting. For me, when I joined the business. I was very interested in the beginning with the mouthpieces more than the reeds. The reeds are not easy to understand because it's something natural. The ebonite [used in mouthpieces], the hard rubber, it's something different. It's mathematic. The cane, it's moving all the time. You have to understand the product.

"IT'S VERY SIMPLE. WHEN THE MARKET SAYS THEY NEED SOMETHING, WE RESPOND TO THE MARKET."

WHAT YOU DO IS A CRAFT. THERE'S MANUFACTURING, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE THAT YOU BRING TO IT THAT BRINGS LIFE TO THESE PRODUCTS. WHAT IS THAT?

When I joined the company in 1967, we had a terrible problem. People at that time bought a box of 10 Vandoren reeds and said there was only one good one in the box.

So, my first objective was to try to understand the problem and try to avoid it. We completely changed the way we made reeds because I don't like any complaints. We've tried to make new machines and use new technology to have more stabilized production. We want to make the best product in the market. I like the best.

YOU STARTED WITH THE COMPANY IN 1967. YOU'RE VIBRANT, CREATIVE AND STILL CREATING NEW PRODUCTS. DO YOU THINK ABOUT RETIRING?

No. [Smiles.] Not yet!

IF YOU WEREN'T IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

I would have made precision rifles. It's about the same as reeds. It reminds me a lot of how you have to understand how to make reeds and mouthpieces. You can't lie. When you have a precision rifle and you want to shoot a target at 200, 300 or 500 meters, the material has to be exact. I like the detail, and my son is the same. I don't know if he's going to prefer the mouthpieces in the beginning or reeds. Right now, he's into tooling.

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The 2015

GEAR GUIDE

48 | GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

Line 6 ups the ante with its new AMPLIFI TT

70 | AUDIO & RECORDING

MXL rolls out mini microphone mixer

92 | DRUMS & PERCUSSION

Gibraltar covers it all with its new Cajon Accessory Pack

100 | PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

Casio adds four models to its Celviano and Privia digital lines

104 | BAND & ORCHESTRA

Jupiter expands its 1100 series with new clarinet

108 | DJ & LIGHTING

Chauvet lights it up with its new GigBAR

Reverend Charger 290 LE, Page 66

Yamaha PSR-E353 & PSR-E253, Page 100



RIDING THE



CHORD

CU21 3-TONE SUNBURST

As a new addition to Chord's popular Soprano ukulele range, the CU21 Ukulele now comes with a 3-tone Sunburst finish. This instrument features a linden top, back, sides and neck with a 12-fret fingerboard. It also comes fitted with nylon strings — tuned via four geared machine heads — and a rosewood fingerboard and bridge. chord.avsl.com

LANIKAI

HAWAIIAN WOOD TUNAUKES

Lanikai has announced new Solid Mango, Natural Koa and Monkeypod Hawaiian wood models that feature TunaUke Technology. TunaUke is Lanikai's patented system that consists of a compensated nut and movable saddle system that have been proven to improve a ukulele's intonation by up to 90 percent. The new TunaUke equipped models are available with solid rosewood fingerboards and abalone decorations across the body. lanikaiukuleles.com





UKE WAVE



KYSER

LIFEGUARD HUMIDIFIER

The Kyser Lifeguard Humidifier for concert ukuleles prevents drying and cracking by maintaining a level of proper moisture within the wood on a ukulele. Simply immerse the unit in water, dry it off and then position it within the sound hole beneath the strings. The hard plastic ring is made of a specially designed polymer that will not react to any polish or wood grain finishes on the ukulele's body.

{kysermusical.com}

KOHALA

UKULELE PLAYER PACKS

Kohala Ukuleles has announced the newest expansion of its line of feature-rich beginner and mid-range ukuleles. The new Kohala "Player Pack" includes an upgraded mahogany ukulele with improved binding on the body and fingerboard, new Aquila strings, a padded carry bag, and clip-on chromatic tuner.

{kohalaukuleles.com}

KALA

ELITE U.S. UKULELE SERIES

Kala's Elite U.S. ukuleles are hand built at the Kala custom shop in California, featuring all solid Hawaiian Koa, Honduras Mahogany neck, ebony and rosewood fingerboards and bridges, bone nut and saddle, custom inlays and appointments. {kalabrand.com}

What's Selling?



GEORGE GRUHN
Gruhn Guitars
Nashville, Tennessee

Last Year: “Martin dreadnought models like D-18s and D-28s lead the charge in acoustic sales for new, used and vintage. New Martin 15 Series instruments of all sizes also sell very well for us. For acoustic-electrics, the Taylor 214CE and 814CE models are our best sellers. If you compare the two brands, [we sell] about 70 percent Martin and 30 percent Taylor.” — Sarah Jones, Gruhn Guitars

This Year: “My favorite new acoustic guitars are custom shop Martins, especially the OM-21 guitars we have ordered. These instruments feature Adirondack spruce tops, hide glue construction, Hawaiian koa bindings, steel T-bar in the neck similar to that used in the 1930s, and a choice of Madagascar rosewood, cocobolo, or Guatemalan rosewood back and sides.” — George Gruhn



FISHMAN **FLUENCE HUMBUCKER**

Fishman is now shipping its Fluence Classic and Modern Humbucker pickups, which are fully analog active humbucker pickups that are combined with Fluence Core printed “coils” and feature true Multi-Voice electronics. Each Fluence pickup has two selectable complementary voices onboard, which offer classic timbres and tone. fishman.com



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"My Fluence pickups sound amazing. I haven't changed pickups in 30 years on my favorite HSS Strats, but then I heard Fluence. Powerful, dynamic and with dual voices for vintage and modern sounds, Fluence does it all for me and my tone."
- Gary Hoey, Recording artist, producer

"WOW! I am blown away by these pickups. 100% quiet and 100% pure Stratocaster tone. The clarity is to die for and there is none of that steroids I normally try to dial out. Very dynamic, like steroids for a Stratocaster. These have become my 'go to' pickups for a Stratocaster."
- Elwood Francis, Guitar tech for Billy Gibbons

"Fishman Fluence® is a whole new world for electric guitar pickups. The crispness and clarity is incredible, unlike anything I've experienced before. It feels like the guitar plays itself!"
- Ryan Mendez, Yellowcard

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GEAR GUIDE

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

C.F. MARTIN CEO-8

The eighth incarnation of C.F. Martin IV's CEO's Choice series features favored specifications selected by Chris Martin. Martin's largest acoustic body size, each CEO-8 Special Edition comes with stage ready D-TAR wave-length multi-source electronics and bears an interior label individually numbered in sequence and personally signed by C. F. Martin IV. [\[martinguitar.com\]](http://martinguitar.com)

YAMAHA A6R, AC6R

Yamaha has unveiled two higher-end editions to its A-series with the introduction of the A6R dreadnought body shape and the AC6R concert shape. Constructed of all-solid Sitka Spruce tops and all-solid Rosewood backs and sides, both models are meticulously handcrafted at Yamaha's historic Music Craft workshop in Hamamatsu, Japan. Only 20 units of each model will be available in the United States. [\[usa.yamaha.com\]](http://usa.yamaha.com)

HOHNER A+300 DREADNOUGHTS

Hohner has expanded its new A+ acoustic guitar line to include full-size dreadnoughts. The A+ 300 series consist of the model 305 (featuring a laminate top, dot inlays, chrome hardware with matte black tuning pegs) and 355 (featuring resonate solid tops, diamond inlays, gold hardware with matte black tuning pegs and inlaid rosette). Both are available as acoustic full-body instruments or with a cut-away and a pickup/pre-amp featuring an on-board tuner. [\[us.playhohner.com\]](http://us.playhohner.com)



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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



CELESTION CREAM

The Celestion Cream is an alnico magnet guitar speaker with 90-watt power handling capability that has been purpose-built to create vintage tones. The Cream exudes warm lows and a bell-like chime. It has smooth and organic mids and a high-definition quality to the vocal range. With an 8-hole steel frame, this guitar speaker delivers an output sensitivity of 100dB and is available in 8 or 16 ohms.

{celestion.com}

MICHAEL KELLY TRIAD SERIES

The Triad series is the Michael Kelly top of the line collection. Consistent between all four models are the exotic wood three piece backs, a solid spruce top, flamed okoume sides, zero-endpin bridge, the Triad three circle inlay elements, built-in Fishman active electronics discretely installed within the soundhole, and two additional ports on the side of each model for extra sound dispersion and audibility to the player.

{michaelkellyguitars.com}





Dunlop

50
YEARS

JIM DUNLOP, 1969

BOOTH #4568

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

MOJOTONE

LERXST OMEGA AMPLIFIER

After working with engineers at Mojotone, Alex Lifeson has put his name on an exact replica of the custom amplifier used in his guitar rig, dubbed the Lerxst Omega amplifier. Based on a vintage Marshall amp Lifeson used in the studio while recording his band's latest album, this 25/50-watt amp has select modifications made to the circuitry and an overwhelming attention to aesthetic detail with "greater immediacy, sustain and grip" than its Marshall predecessor, according to Lifeson. [\[mojotone.com\]](http://mojotone.com)

LINE 6

AMPLIFI TT

The new Line 6 AMPLIFI TT guitar tone processor makes it possible for guitarists to turn any speaker system into a guitar amp and Bluetooth streaming system that mixes in guitar amp tones. The AMPLIFI TT delivers over 200 award-winning amps and effects with incredible sound quality. It features thousands of professionally designed presets, including Line 6 tones heard on hundreds of records and provides a streamlined way to record over USB to Mac, PC, or iOS, letting guitarists instantly match tones stored in a massive cloud database to tracks in their music library. [\[line6.com\]](http://line6.com)



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MONOCREATORS.COM

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



JENSEN BASS SPEAKERS

Jensen recently added bass speakers to its lineup. The Punch Sound series are equipped with ceramic magnets and steel baskets for a more classic tone and look, with a wide dynamic range and fast response. The Smooth Sound series speakers are equipped with neodymium magnets and aluminum baskets for a more modern tone and look, giving players a clean tone with high headroom. In addition, these speakers are 50 percent lighter than their ceramic cousins.

{jensentone.com}

LEVY'S M17CC

New from Levy's is the California Collection M17CC. The unique dying process of the "pull up" leather lets the color move beneath the surface changing the texture. The straps are available in grey, tan and teal.

{levysleathers.com}



FENDER KINGMAN ASCE

Updated with even cooler looks and resonant tone, the Kingman ASCE delivers an elegant take on Fender's sun-and-sand So-Cal dreadnought acoustic. Premium features include a solid spruce top with forward-shifted scalloped "X" bracing, solid mahogany back and sides, a full-body Sunburst finish and a black Stratocaster headstock. Other Kingman features include a maple neck with "C" profile, "Viking"-style bridge and onboard Fishman electronics.

{fender.com}



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www.theloar.com

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

GRETSCH

PROFESSIONAL COLLECTION BRIAN SETZER GUITARS

Gretsch has released the new and updated Professional Collection Hollow Body Brian Setzer guitars, each built to Brian's exacting specs and modeled on the guitars in his vintage collection. Standard features include 1959 treble bracing, dual TV Jones Brian Setzer "Signature" pickups, Schaller locking tuners and strap locks, pinned Adjusto-Matic bridge, nickel hardware, and Bigsby B6CB vibrato tailpiece. The guitars are available with a three-ply maple body in Gloss Black Urethane and Vintage Orange Lacquer, or with a five-ply flame maple body in Orange Urethane or Orange Lacquer.

{gretschguitars.com}



THE LOAR

LH-302 & LH-304

The fully hollow LH-302 and LH-304 thinbody archtops from The Loar deliver vintage style and vintage tone in a classic single cutaway body design. The 302 and 304 are lively single-cutaway archtops with 1 1/2-inch body depths and classic 16-inch lower bouts. The Florentine cutaway was a classic 1960 design element added to thinbody archtops, giving greater access to the upper frets. The dual pickup design covers a full range of tones in either bridge or neck positions.

{theloar.com}



S2 Series



© 2015 PRS Guitars / photos by Marc Coughlin

S2 Standards: simple, classic style

Since the launch of the PRS S2 Series in July of 2013 it has grown into a broad line of modern and vintage-inspired American made guitars that offer the feel, playability, tone, and reliability that you expect from PRS Guitars. The S2 Standards are our latest offerings and feature a solid mahogany body, set-in mahogany neck and pickguard mounted pickups and electronics.

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www.prsguitars.com

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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES

MODKITS DIY THE AGGRESSOR

The Aggressor is a high-gain distortion pedal that features true bypass, 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. MODKits are designed to give novice and experienced musicians the opportunity to build or modify their own effects pedals.

{modkitsdiy.com}



PEAVEY CLASSIC MH 20-WATT

Peavey recently unveiled its new Classic MH micro head. The all-tube 20-watt Classic MH is powered by two EL34 power tubes and three 12AX7/ECC83 preamp tubes. It has two channels that follow the same gain structure and voicing of the Peavey Classic Series amps. The channels share a three-band EQ, lush reverb and an effects loop, while the channels, effects loop and reverb are all footswitchable.

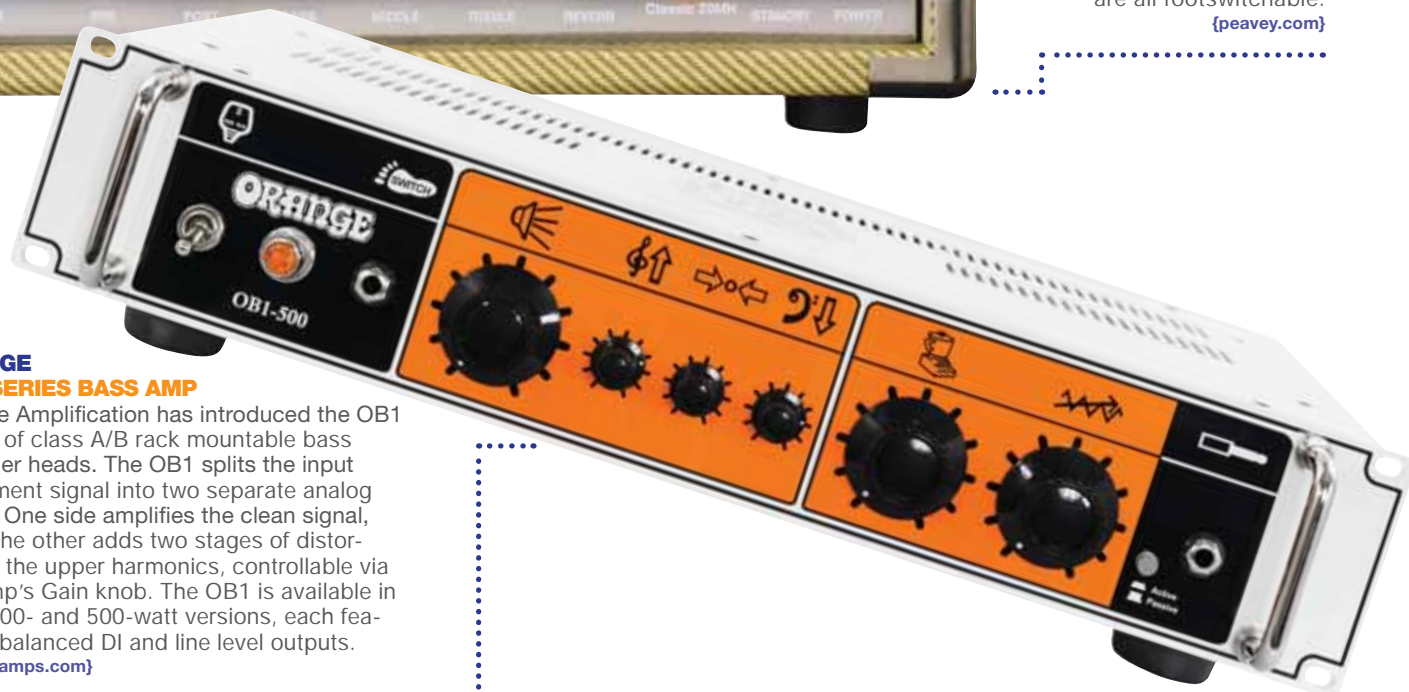
{peavey.com}



ORANGE OB1 SERIES BASS AMP

Orange Amplification has introduced the OB1 Series of class A/B rack mountable bass amplifier heads. The OB1 splits the input instrument signal into two separate analog paths. One side amplifies the clean signal, while the other adds two stages of distortion to the upper harmonics, controllable via the amp's Gain knob. The OB1 is available in both 300- and 500-watt versions, each featuring balanced DI and line level outputs.

{orangeamps.com}



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PRS P245

The P245 is a vintage-inspired single-cut-away guitar with the added versatility of the LR Baggs/PRS piezo system. The P245 provides players with both electric and authentic acoustic tones in one instrument. With two output jacks, the P245 can be plugged directly into an amplifier or plugged into a soundboard's direct input. By utilizing the separate blend control, the tone of the P245's 58/15 pickups can be combined with acoustic sounds through a single output. prsguitars.com

AGUILAR AMPLIFICATION LIMITED EDITION SL 112 IN "BASS CABERNET"

Aguilar Amplification has announced a new SL 112 in "Bass Cabernet," a limited addition color for 2015. Only 250 units of the SL 112 will be built using this color and finish. Each "Bass Cabernet" will feature a custom limited edition label on the crossover. The SL 112 features neodymium drivers and custom crossovers. These cabinets offer a blend of modern technology with a classic vibe. aguilaramp.com



EVH STAR GUITAR

EVH's Stripe Series Star guitar boasts distinctive body shape and a black-and-white graphic gloss finish. The Star model is one of the most eye-catching guitars in the Stripe Series lineup. There's nothing alien about the rest of this guitar, either. It features a basswood body, quartersawn maple neck with oiled finish, fast and smooth compound-radius rosewood fingerboard with rolled edges and 22 jumbo frets, single EVH direct-mount pickup with single black plastic control knob (master volume), EVH Floyd Rose bridge and locking nut, and EVH tuners. evhgear.com

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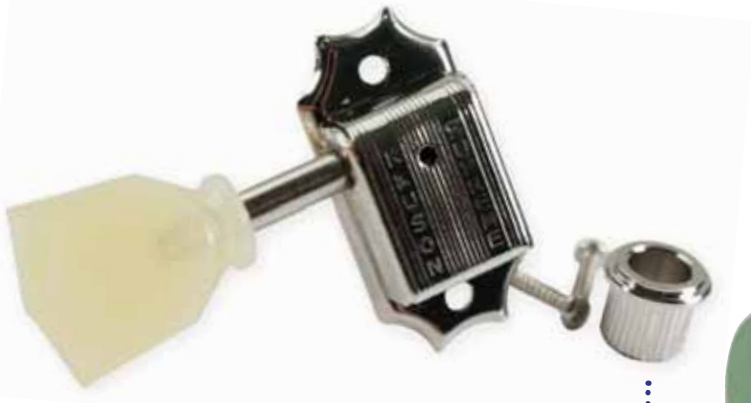
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GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



KLUSON SUPREME

Kluson has taken the original, stamped-steel design and added an 18:1 gear ratio, giving it even more tuning stability than ever before. This design bears the name "Kluson Supreme" in double-row lettering, which is the only visual difference. The Supreme gives players the vintage, stamped-steel appearance without altering the basic design of the original tuner, meaning they can be retrofitted with no modifications to a vintage instrument. wdmusic.com/kluson



REVEREND CHARGER 290 LE

Reverend Guitars has taken its Charger 290 guitars and turned up the volume to make a limited-edition model. The model will be released in Metallic Alpine Green, Metallic Red and Lakeshore Gold, all with cream pickguards and cream pickup covers. Each has a Bigsby B-50 with Reverend's own soft-touch spring. Loaded with Reverend's CP90s, the Charger 290 has a Korina body and three-piece neck, a graphite nut and locking tuners, Reverend's Bass Contour Control, and a dual-action truss rod. reverendguitars.com



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{tkl.com}



YELLOW JACKETS NOS TUBE CONVERTER

The new Yellow Jackets NOS (New Old Stock) Tube Converter is a limited edition converter made for use in most amplifiers under 100 watts and using 6L6, EL34, 7027 or 6V6 output tubes. The converter lowers the overall power in an amplifier and gives you a unique vintage tone. This NOS Yellow Jacket is designed with an NOS 6AQ5 seven-pin miniature beam power tube, which is included with the converter.

{yellowjacketstc.com}

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HK AUDIO

CONDENSER

CAD
GXL2600USB

CAD Audio has added the new GXL2600USB to its line of USB Series microphones. The GXL2600USB is a large diaphragm studio condenser mic that features a 1-inch Aoedein large diaphragm condenser capsule, which enables the mic to achieve full range studio fidelity with transient response. The Aoedein capsule is paired with CAD's PureTone A/D converter to further ensure a clear and efficient signal path. cadaudio.com

AUDIX
D6 SPECIAL EDITION MICROPHONE

Audix has unveiled a special limited edition D6 microphone to mark the company's 30-year anniversary. It features a five-layer, hand-dipped anodizing process, giving the mic a unique finish. Because of this intricate creative process, no two mics are alike. The limited edition mics are numbered and serialized, and only 750 have been produced. audixusa.com

FOCUSRITE
SCARLETT SOLO STUDIO PACK

Focusrite has bundled together everything any singer-songwriter needs to start recording. It includes a genuine Focusrite mic preamp and high headroom instrument input, a large diaphragm CM25 condenser microphone, professional closed-back HP20 headphones and a three-meter microphone cable, as well as all the software and sounds you need to start recording straight away. focusrite.com





COLLECTION



AUDIO-TECHNICA **AT8024**

Audio-Technica has introduced the AT8024, a fixed-charge condenser microphone designed for a wide variety of video applications. The AT8024 can work with either a camcorder or DSLR, or non-traditional video devices, such as tablets and mobile devices. This microphone offers mono and mid-side stereo modes. {audio-technica.com}

SHURE **5575LE UNIDYNE**

Shure has announced a special limited edition Unidyne microphone to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 55 Unidyne microphone. The 5575LE Unidyne Limited Edition Cardioid Dynamic Microphone is a recreation for collectors with improvements in durability and sound quality. {shure.com}

BLUE **HUMMINGBIRD**

Hummingbird is a versatile and precision-engineered Class A small-diaphragm condenser microphone. With a precisely tuned diaphragm based on Blue's B1 capsule, Hummingbird is ultra-responsive and delivers extended frequency response. It features an adjustable pivoting head that allows for 180 degrees of rotation.

{bluemic.com}



GIBSON

LES PAUL REFERENCE MONITORS

Gibson Brands has created the Les Paul Reference Monitors, a line of monitors that represent the iconic Les Paul styling — utilizing superior material, including diamond-like carbon-coated titanium tweeters, non-woven carbon woofers and custom-made amplification to ensure ultra clean transient impulse response and large headroom. They will be available in three different sizes and multiple color variations, such as cherry, tobacco sunburst and cherry sunburst.

{gibson.com}



RICH WILLIAMS
LunchBox Audio
Shoreline, Washington

What's Selling?

Last Year: "There's been a resurgence of analog synthesizer [sales]. For me, as a small shop, at the forefront of that has been Moog Music. I'm seeing more sales of Voyager synthesizer sales. There are people that want me to get more lines of Moog synthesizers. Sennheiser was also a big seller. A category that did well was wireless systems — microphones and assisted listening systems. And Universal Audio with its Apollo interfaces."

This Year: "Synthesizers will remain hot. I don't think that's going away. If anything, I have people asking me to get other brands. I'm getting a lot of feedback from customers who, at least in my area, would like to have a store [that sells] Elektron, a brand from Sweden. The 500-series market, it seems like people just keep coming out with new modules, and there's doesn't seem to be any slowing down to that."

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AUDIO & RECORDING



JAMHUB

TRACKER MT16

JamHub's Tracker MT16 lets musicians record studio quality multitrack files of their live performances and rehearsals. This portable, rugged hardware solution connects to all JamHub studios and most mixing desks. With the Tracker MT16's built-in Wi-Fi capabilities, musicians can now easily upload up to 16 tracks wirelessly to Drop-box for convenient sharing and backup.

{jamhub.com}



EPSILON EPM SERIES

Epsilon has introduced EPM Series, which features the EPM-6.5 and the EPM-8 studio reference monitors. The EPM Series are bi-amped, two-way monitors, offering professional audio quality at reasonable prices. Both monitors feature balanced XLR, TRS quarter-inch or unbalanced RCA input, and a 1-inch silk-dome high-frequency tweeter.

{epsilon-pro.com}



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AUDIO & RECORDING

BLACK LION AUDIO

B12A MKII

Black Lion Audio has announced the release of the B12A MKII, a single-channel microphone preamp in the style of an API 312A. Known for the classic API American rock sound, the MKII version features an upgraded input transformer, higher gain and lower noise than the original B12A. It also features an output transformer, a Hi-Z input, phantom power, pad, phase, and is housed in a 1U, 1/2 rack chassis.

{blacklionaudio.com}



MXL

MM-4000 MINI MIXER +

MXL Microphones has announced its new MM-4000 Mini Mixer+ portable audio mixer for mobile phones, tablets, DSLRs and computers. With it, the user can record audio to a device using up to four electret microphones simultaneously, essentially turning four analog inputs into one analog or digital output.

{mxlmics.com}



Mutec Mutes

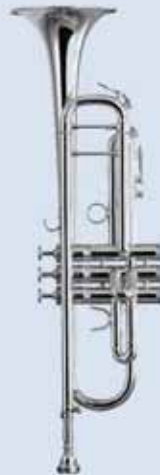
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AUDIO & RECORDING



CROWN DCI SERIES

Crown Audio has debuted its new Drive-Core Install (DCi) Series power amplifiers. Successor to the company's acclaimed CTs Series, the DCi Analog two-, four- and eight-channel amplifiers incorporate a host of improvements. Twelve models in the DCi Series are available ranging from 300-600 watts of minimum guaranteed power into four and eight ohms and 70Vrms and 100Vrms.

{crownaudio.com}



LISTEN TECHNOLOGIES

LISTENLOOP

Listen Technologies' Loop Induction Assistive Listening Systems (ListenLoop) technology makes it possible to extend users' assistive listening solution to anyone with a t-coil enabled hearing aid or cochlear implant. That means users can offer their visitors or patrons the uniquely personal and discrete experience of listening to an audio signal directly through their own hearing aid. {listentech.com}

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AUDIO & RECORDING

KRK ROKIT G3

KRK Systems has debuted its ROKIT Generation 3 Studio Monitor Series. Available with 5-, 6- or 8-inch drivers, this line of two-way active monitors features a lightweight yellow composite woofer ensuring dynamic impulse response. The ROKIT G3s offer professional performance, defined and tight low end, clear midrange and accurate top end.

{krksys.com}



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- Multiband Limiting for Extremely Transparent Listening Experience
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AUDIO & RECORDING

TK AUDIO MONO BLENDER

TK Audio has unveiled the Mono Blender, a single-channel version of its MB1 Mini-Blender introduced earlier this year. The Mono Blender is a tool for parallel processing. Insert any compressor into the front panel XLRs and blend it with any other audio signal being simultaneously fed through the unit with no degradation to either source. All inputs and outputs are electronically balanced, and the rugged blend control has 21 steps for precise adjustments. tkaudio.se



GRUNDORF GP SERIES

Grund Audio Design has introduced the new GP Series loudspeakers. Featuring lightweight injection molded enclosures designed to provide years of trouble-free operation and easy transport, these self-powered general purpose sound reinforcement loudspeakers are ideal for a wide range of applications, including clubs, mobile DJs, performing musicians, corporate AV, houses of worship, and education. grundaudio.com





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AUDIO & RECORDING



SOUNDRAFT Vi3000

Soundcraft has introduced its new Vi3000 all-in-one digital live sound console, offering a host of state-of-the-art features, including the internal DSP Soundcraft SpiderCore, a new industrial design, 96 channels to mix and onboard Dante compatibility. The Vi3000 uses the new internal DSP SpiderCore with Soundcraft's Vi Version 4.8 operating software, offering the new 3D Vistonics user interface. [\[soundcraft.com\]](http://soundcraft.com)



FISHMAN PLATINUM PRO EQ

Fishman has shipped its new Platinum Pro EQ acoustic preamp. The all-analog Platinum Pro EQ integrates critical performance features, such as adjustable volume boost and balanced XLR D.I. outputs housed in a road-ready design. Classic Fishman tone centers with sweepable mid are combined with a switchable guitar/bass EQ mode, making the Platinum preamp more musical for bass instruments and more universal for recording and performing musicians. [\[fishman.com\]](http://fishman.com)

DBX AFS2

The new AFS2 Advanced Feedback Suppression Processor from dbx is designed to completely eliminate feedback from a P.A. system. The AFS2 offers a host of upgraded features including a Wizard auto-setup function, a completely re-designed Advanced Feedback Suppression module, and a large LCD display. [\[dbxpro.com\]](http://dbxpro.com)



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DM10 X MESH KIT

SIX-PIECE ELECTRONIC DRUM KIT WITH MESH DRUM HEADS

- Tightly woven black mesh drum heads enhance feel and playing response
- 6-piece kit with 10/10/12/12" Toms and 12" Snare
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Alesis.com

GEAR GUIDE

AUDIO & RECORDING



IZ TECHNOLOGY RADAR STUDIO

RADAR studio is a finely tuned professional audio appliance — the world's first integrated turn-key DAW. The RADAR studio is a single box containing your favorite DAW, iZ converters and a powerful recording environment. It features a compact 4U frame containing popular software, such as Pro Tools, Nuendo, Mixbus and plug-ins. izcorp.com

HOSA TECHNOLOGY ZAOLLA SILVERLINE

Hosa Technology has relaunched the Zaolla Silverline brand. The Zaolla Silverline catalog encompasses guitar and microphone cables, analog interconnects, and digital audio cables and snakes — all designed to provide the most transparent signal transfer possible. Featuring solid-silver conductors and premium connectors, Zaolla Silverline cables are designed with redundant shielding that ensures EMI and RFI interference does not penetrate the cable and corrupt the signal. hosatech.com



STEINBERG UR12

Steinberg Media Technologies has released the UR12, a USB 2.0 audio interface featuring a 24-bit/192 kHz audio quality, class compliant support for the iPad alongside a microphone input with D-PRE preamplifier and one high-impedance line input plus line outputs. steinberg.net





Electro-Voice



SONICIMPACT

Maximize the power of your performance with best-in-class features including single-knob QuickSmartDSP control.



Meet EKK, the newest member of the Electro-Voice portable loudspeaker family.

Superior EV-engineered components, exclusive Signal Synchronized Transducers™ (SST) waveguide design, and high-efficiency Class D amplifiers coupled with QuickSmartDSP all work together to provide exceptional sound quality.

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[The EKK Series]

EKK-12P | EKK-15P | EKK-15SP | EKK-18SP

Passive versions also available.

www.electrovoice.com/EKK

GEAR GUIDE

AUDIO & RECORDING

QTX QX SERIES

QTX has released its QX series. These active P.A. speaker units are housed in contemporary-styled moulded cabinets, with integral carry handles and constant directivity horns. Their built-in mixer sections include mic, line and Bluetooth connection. Powerful built-in amplifiers complete the feature set. [\[avsl.com\]](http://avsl.com)




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User button assignments



iOS app for iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch



Personal monitor mix control



Remote control permission set-up



Android App (coming soon)

The world's most powerful, portable and easy-to-use digital mixer just got an upgrade. New features include:

- Support for password protected, multi-level security access
- Expanded Wi-Fi options (including wired connection to an infrastructure router)
- Programmability of User Buttons
- More options for auxiliary mix pick-off points
- Expanded channel presets
- Updated iOS app
 - Personal monitor mix application for both iPhone and iPod Touch
 - Operator may limit or allow access on a per-device basis
 - iPhone control of the record/playback transport controls and programmable user buttons

Android support (coming soon)

TouchMix v2.0 software standard on new TouchMix-16 and TouchMix-8 models and available as a free download at QSC.com for existing TouchMix owners.

For more information, visit us online at QSC.com



GEAR GUIDE

AUDIO & RECORDING



YAMAHA DBR SERIES

The DBR Series represents the most portable powered loudspeakers that Yamaha offers. Three new models, DBR10, DBR12 and DBR15, feature state-of-the-art DSP technology inherited from their predecessors, ensuring superior performance and versatility, along with safe, consistent operation. usa.yamaha.com



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NEW FX CYMBALS

STACK UP PLAY OUT



Zildjian introduces five new effects cymbals to satisfy all of your stacking and effects needs. The new 10" and 12" fx Spiral Stackers are paper thin and stack well with practically any other cymbal to get all those quick attack/quick decay sounds you've been looking for. Or check out the fx Oriental China "Trash" in 8" and 10" sizes and the 7.5" Volcano Cup Zil-Bel, and create your own signature sounds.

Visit zildjian.com/newfor2015

#ZNEWFOR2015

Zildjian

DRUMMER'S

LATIN PERCUSSION

CAJON ACCESSORY PACK

LP has taken its three most popular cajon accessories — the Cajon Throne, Foot Tambourine and Small Cajon Castanet—and packaged them as one grab-and-go item: The LP Cajon Accessory Pack. In the hand-percussion market, the versatile and portable cajon continues to increase in popularity and importance. The LP Cajon Accessory Pack makes individualizing the instrument quick and easy. MSRP: \$60.99. lpmusic.com

GIBRALTAR

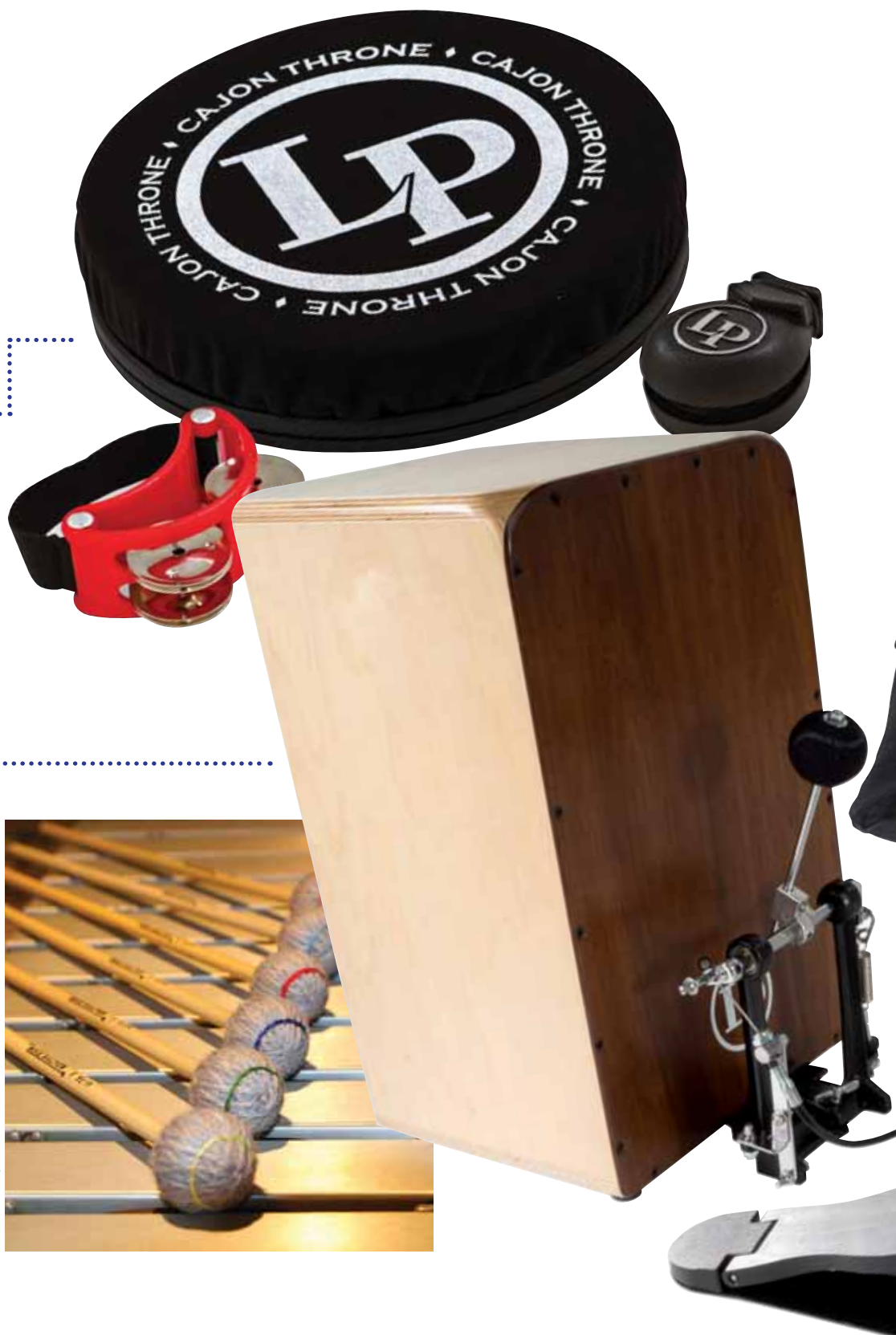
CAJON ACCESSORY PACK

Gibraltar Drum Hardware has made subtle but essential advances to its Strap Drive Cajon Pedal. This pedal lets drummers use a cajon like a bass drum. Changes include fixed-position cable housings that keep the cable inline, along with fixed-adjust CAM drives. Gibraltar's second-generation cajon pedal lets users express themselves traditionally without overpowering other instruments in low volume playing situations. MSRP: \$169.99. gibraltarhardware.com

MIKE BALTER

TITANIUM SERIES

Mike Balter's new Titanium Series is a crossover concept that lets the player use the same mallet on both vibes and marimba. Each model produces a big, full fundamental sound with great overtones and lets the player jump between instruments without changing mallets or sacrificing sound quality. They are available in Satin Birch or Rattan Handles. mikebalter.com





TOOL KIT



DW

DRUM SET HARDWARE

Drum Workshop recently released a new line of price-conscious drum set hardware under the PDP Concept banner. The line boasts a range of stands and thrones that includes a two-legged and three-legged hi-hat, snare stand, straight cymbal stand, boom cymbal stand and a throne. All of these stands feature heavy-duty steel tubing, double-braced legs and a new Concept tube joint.

{dwdrums.com}

KICKPRO PILLOWS

The KickPro Bass Drum Pillow offers a new, equally advanced approach to bass drum muffling and sound enhancement. The KickPro combines a weighted core with a non-skid, rubberized bottom and a fleece cover. This unique design lets the Pillow be easily and flexibly positioned with as much or as little contact with the bass drumhead as desired yet keeps it securely in place without applying Velcro or other adhesives to the drum.

{kickpropillow.com}

LOS CABOS DRUMSTICKS NEW PINK STICK ADDITIONS

Los Cabos has added to its existing pink stick line. The 5B and 7A will be joining the 5A in the pink stick treatment and a portion of the sales will continue to go to support breast cancer research.

{loscabosdrumsticks.com}



GEAR GUIDE

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

TAYE DRUMS SPECIALTY SNARE

Taye Drums has released the next three editions in its series of Taye Specialty Snare Drums. The TSWN-MPS-XX, TSMPMHS-XX and TSBB-MPS-XX snares are all hybrid shell snares. The TSWNMPS-XX uses both walnut and maple in the same shell for a brilliant attack and full sustain. The TSMPMHS-XX features maple and mahogany for a unique warm, dry tone. The TSBBMPS-XX uses bubinga and maple to create a powerful, yet musical voice.

{tayedrums.com}



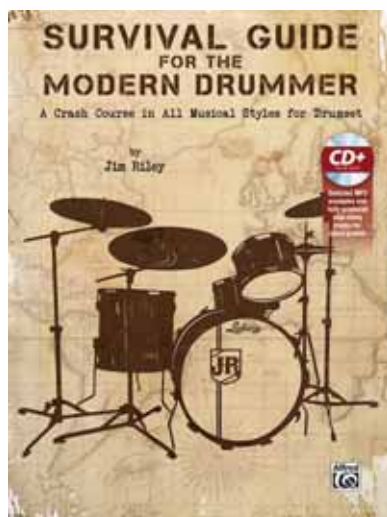
What's Selling?



ADAM JONES
Bandland
Clarksburg, West Virginia

Last Year: "For us, the staples always sell well — sticks, heads and Moongel. Sets are slow, cymbals are slower and snares are slowest. Although not flying off the shelves, I really like Sabian's SR2 line of pro-level cymbals at used prices that I can get pretty consistently."

This Year: "I'm looking forward to getting in a couple of Pearl's Crystal Beat sets next year."



ALFRED MUSIC 'SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE MODERN DRUMMER'

Alfred Music recently released its *Survival Guide for the Modern Drummer*. Written by Rascal Flatts drummer Jim Riley, the survival guide provides a crash course in all musical styles for the drum set. It contains a number of tools to help prepare the drummer for any gig situation likely to be encountered as a working drummer. The book includes an MP3 CD containing audio drum examples and fully produced play-along tracks for every groove.

{alfred.com}

YAMAHA 3300 SERIES TIMPANI

Yamaha's 3300 Series Timpani integrates features from the company's top of the line timpani to provide great sound in a portable and easy-to-operate model, including the tuning mechanism, bowl shape and design, pedal adjustment clutch, pedal size, color, and hoop design. The bowl configuration, Renaissance heads and hoops work together to create a deep, sustained tone. A new optimized spring design for the pedal adjustment clutch makes for smoother, more stable operation when playing at any pitch.

{usa.yamaha.com}



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GEAR GUIDE

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

ZILDJIAN

NEW KEROPE MODELS

Zildjian has expanded the weight range of two models in its Kerope cymbal line in response to requests by drummers and dealers alike. The slight increase in weight allows for greater stick and bell articulation while maintaining the rich, dark and dirty sound of this series. The 20-inch Kerope Medium now features a range of 2,126–2,381 grams, and the 22-inch Kerope Medium has a range of 2,523–2,721 grams. Both models' weights start at the highest spec of the current Kerope series and increase in weight from there.

{zildjian.com}



GRETSCH

RENOWN WALNUT

Renown Walnut is Gretsch's new line designed for the experienced player who is looking for a different kit that delivers deep, rich tones with clear attack. After Renown's successful 2013 reintroduction, Gretsch wanted to make more sonic options available for more players.

Renown Walnut, with its resonant low end and bright, smooth upper register, does just that. Each Renown Walnut drum features 6-ply North American walnut shells with 30-degree bearing edges, and is available in Gloss Natural and Walnut/Black Fade. {gretschdrums.com}

SONOR

VINTAGE SERIES

Sonor has brought back the iconic look and sound of the time between the 1950s and early '70s. The Vintage Series are as close as possible to the look, feel and sound of its predecessor, the Teardrop drums. Like the original Teardrop drums, the Vintage Series models feature hand-selected premium German Beech shells with rounded bearing edges. Sonor has carefully recreated the look of the '50s teardrop lug and updated it with Sonor's exclusive Tunesafe tuning system.

{sonorusa.com}



THE LATEST INNOVATIONS FROM VIC NEW FOR 2015



AMERICAN CLASSIC® 5A BARREL

Our classic 5A design, featuring a proportionately perfect barrel shaped tip. An impeccably balanced stick creating supreme clarity with beautiful tone.
\$40.00



AMERICAN CLASSIC® 5B BARREL

A 5B profile with a barrel shaped tip. The tip's reduced surface area provides a more focused cymbal sound while retaining great playability and versatility.
\$30.00



STEVE SMITH TALA WAND SLATS

A foam center surrounded by four flat bamboo slats wrapped in thin PVC. Softer than sticks, but louder than other Tala Wand and Rute models.
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UNIVERSAL PRACTICE TIPS

Rubber tips that fit over virtually all drum set and concert sticks. Great for practice and creating interesting timbres on drums and cymbals. (2 pairs)
\$12.00

SPLIT BRUSH

Designed with 2 separate rows of wire producing unique weighting of sound with different qualities of articulation. Triple crimped pull-rod for enhanced setting capability.
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VIC GLOVES

Protect your hands while improving your grip without sacrificing feel! Premium cabretta leather with ventilated synthetic mesh palm and back. Unique synthetic rubber grip on thumb and forefinger.
VIC145L, VIC145M, VIC145L, VIC145R

HIGH TENSION DRUM KEY

Designed with extended "T" for added power and faster tuning. Special grip handle for added comfort. Carabiner clip for easy access.
\$12.00



GEAR GUIDE >

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

MAPEX SATURN V

Mapex has taken the next step in the evolution of professional drum sets with its Saturn V. The SONIClear bearing edge and the new SONIClear tom holder are standard features on every Saturn V set. The SONIClear eliminates the problem of rack toms not resonating to their full potential after they're mounted on a stand. Saturn V MH and MH Exotic are available in the same finishes as Saturn IV and boast the same features, including SONIClear tom suspension, SONIClear floor tom legs, low-contact bass drum claws, Memory Mark bass drum spurs and a free-floating bass drum. {mapexdrums.com}



TOCA FREESTYLE COLORSOUND DJEMBES

Toca Percussion has expanded its range of available colors in its line of Freestyle Colorsound Djembes. Now available in five new pastel colors, the Freestyle Colorsound Djembes are 12 1/2-inch high with a durable 7-inch synthetic head, a nylon rope tuning system and a protective rubber bottom. Each djembe is made from a lightweight, seamless synthetic shell material, making them ideal for music educators and drum circle enthusiasts. MSRP: \$59. {tocapercussion.com}

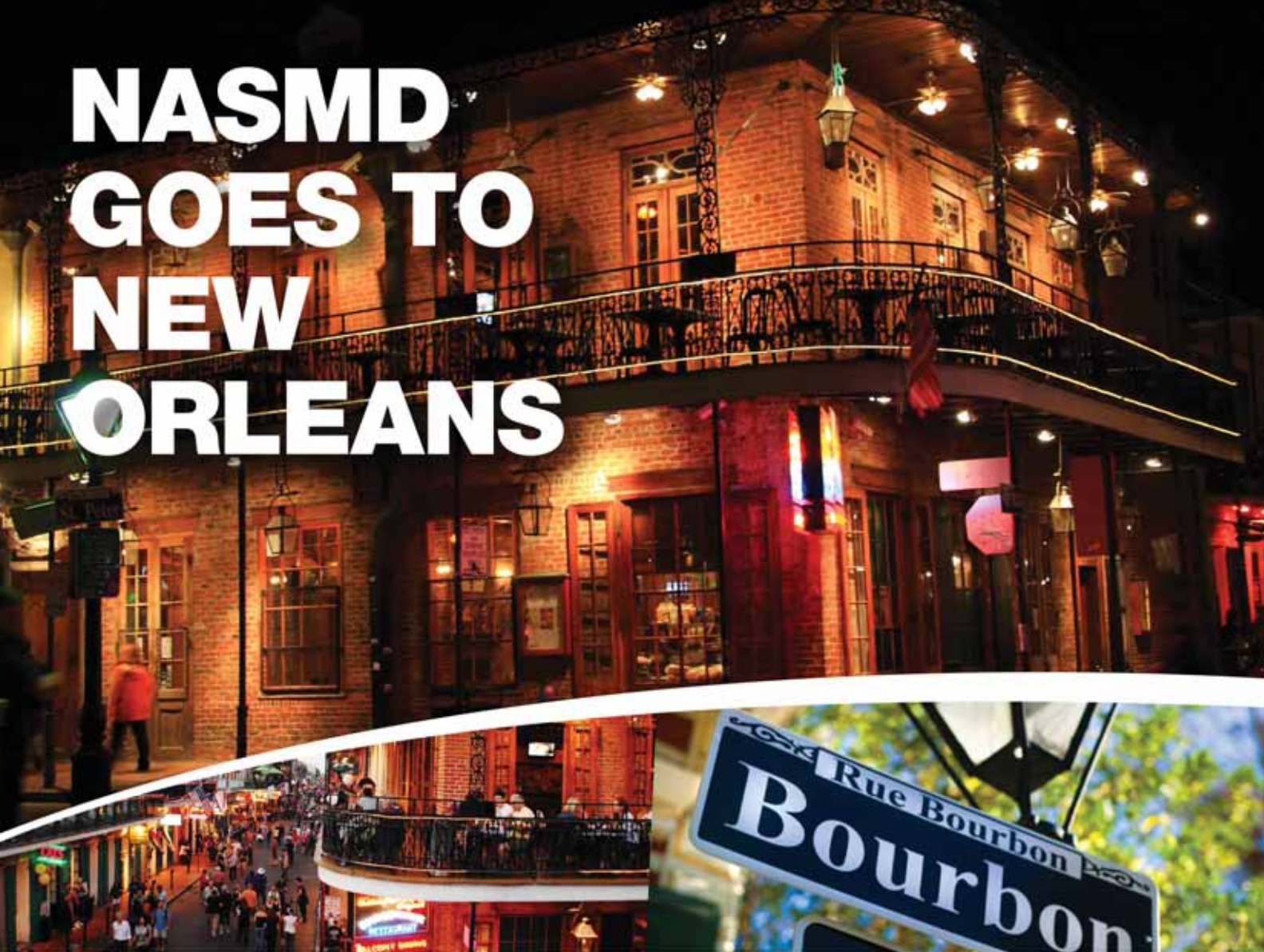


REMO POWERSTROKE 77

The new Powerstroke 77 snare drumhead from Remo consists of two free-floating plies of 7-mil film with a 7-mil inlay ring and a 5-mil top clear dot. This combination gives this drumhead excellent response and projection, combined with outstanding warm full tones. The inlay ring reduces overtones and the 5-mil top clear dot adds durability. They are available in coated or clear and in sizes 10, 12, 13 and 14 inches. {remo.com}



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New Orleans, March 18-21

GEAR GUIDE >

PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

KAWAI

CONCERT PERFORMER SERIES

Kawai America recently released its Concert Performer (CP) Series of digital pianos. The new CP1, CP2 and CP3 models follow a long line of Concert Performer instruments, but include new thinking behind them. The CP1 is a 5-foot, 3-inch digital grand piano with a powerful 200-watt/9-speaker sound system. The CP2 features an upright piano style cabinet with a 100-watt/4-speaker sound system, while the CP3 comes in a tradition digital piano cabinet with a 100-watt/2-speaker system.

{kawaius.com}

YAMAHA

PSR-E353, PSR-E253

Yamaha's new PSR-E353 and PSR-E253 portable keyboards offer beginners and aspiring musicians high-quality voice and style content. The Yamaha Education Suite (Y.E.S.), featured in both models, uses the latest learning tools and technology to make studying and practicing more enjoyable and fulfilling than ever before. Both the PSR-E253 and the PSR-E353 feature 61 full-size keys that ease the student's transition to playing an acoustic piano or a more advanced digital keyboard as their skills develop.

{usa.yamaha.com}

Hohner

AIRBOARD RASTA

In response to the success of the original AirBoard, Hohner has rolled out the new AirBoard Rasta. The new AirBoard Rasta was designed for players of roots and dub reggae styles. The instrument features a tri-color look, a padded travel bag and Blowflow mouthpiece.

{playhohner.com}





CASIO CELVIANO, PRIVIA LINES

Casio has added four new models to its Celviano and Privia digital piano lines. Casio's Celviano AP-260 and AP-460, as well as the Privia PX-760 and PX-860 offer a number of new features, including a Hall Simulator and Concert Play that appeal to both beginners and advanced musicians. The latest Casio Celviano and Privia models are equipped with new modes and features to help enhance a musician's experience. Concert Play lets musicians play along to 10 classical pieces. For each of these 10 pieces, recordings of a symphony orchestra are included and users can select to hear them with or without the piano part.

{casiomusicgear.com}



ALFRED MUSIC

'SITTING IN: JAZZ PIANO' AND 'SITTING IN: BLUES PIANO'

Alfred has debuted *Sitting In: Jazz Piano* and *Sitting In: Blues Piano*, method book and DVD-ROM packages that let piano players and keyboardists sit in with top-notch professional bands and bring their playing to life. *Sitting In: Jazz Piano* offers tips and techniques from veteran jazz educators Noah Baerman and Jen Allen to give life to practice sessions and inspire players to add new sounds to their jazz vocabulary. *Sitting In: Blues Piano* features tips and techniques from in-demand blues and rock performer and touring keyboardist with The Who, Loren Gold.

{alfred.com}





HYDRA STAND

NEW FOR NAMM



BOOTH#5690 HALL B
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Motif



GEAR GUIDE

PIANOS & KEYBOARDS

What's Selling?



PETER SIDES

Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

Last Year: "The Roland F20CB keyboard was a nice addition that bridged the gap between low-end 88 key slabs in our MI department and full digital pianos with cabinets in our piano department. The wireless connection option for iPad apps is very useful for folks who want to interact with it in a more visual way. Selling and demoing products using smartphones and apps is part of the presentation now."

This Year: "In most of our company, [sales in particular categories] don't drastically change from year to year. Trends seem to happen over multiple years in stable categories like band and keyboards."

Piano Manufacturers Association International & the National Piano Foundation

- www.PianoNet.com is your comprehensive guide to everything about pianos – their history, noted artists, pianos in the news and more. The piano may be 300 years young, but there's always more to learn about everyone's favorite instrument!
- Join PMAI as a manufacturer and participate in all this plus an industry statistics program.
- Join PMAI as a retailer and join the NPF/PMAI dealer network!
- National Piano Foundation – promoting the benefits of music education through the piano and RMM!
- Shipment statistics
- Major market statistics
- Partnership with Music Teachers National Association and RMM Outreach
- Retailer & Manufacturer Code of Ethics



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www.pianonet.com

GEAR GUIDE >

BAND & ORCHESTRA

MEISEL

GS76 STAND

Meisel recently released a new stand for most stringed instruments, including violin, viola, ukulele and guitar. Made of 25mm aircraft-grade tubular aluminum, the GS76 stand is lightweight and, when collapsed, will fit many cases and gig bags. Cushioned silicon rubber slip resistant pads assure no finish damage, and height and depth are adjustable to accommodate almost any sized instrument.

{meiselaccessories.com}



JODYJAZZ

GIANT TENOR

JodyJazz has added two new models to its recently launched Giant Tenor range of mouthpieces. Working with world-renowned tenor saxophonist George Garzone, the company has developed the Giant Tenor 9* and 10* models both of which will be launched as George Garzone "Signature" models. The JodyJazz Giant Tenors were the first saxophone mouthpieces to combine the shape of a hard rubber mouthpiece with the precision of metal. They were constructed from anodized aluminum and made on the company's five-axis CNC mill at its factory in Savannah, Georgia.

{jodyjazz.com}



YAMAHA

XENO ARTIST MODEL CHICAGO B-FLAT TRUMPET

Yamaha's Xeno Artist Model Chicago B-flat trumpet has been updated with the input of John Hagstrom, second trumpet in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra brass section, to offer ideal response and a clear high register. The YTR-9335CH-SII features a new bell taper, heavier leadpipe and geometric changes in the tubing, which combine to create an instrument capable of delivering even the most complex musical passage with a responsive playing feel, nuanced sound characteristics and accurate, even intonation.

{yamaha.com}





HAL LEONARD

'TRUMPET PLAY-ALONG'

Hal Leonard's *Trumpet Play-Along* series helps trumpeters play their favorite songs quickly and easily. They simply follow the printed music, listen to the sound-alike recordings to hear how the trumpet parts should sound, and then play along using the separate backing tracks.

Each *Trumpet Play-Along* volume contains eight great tunes with standout trumpet riffs. They are:

Vol. 1 – *Popular Hits*, Vol. 2 – *Trumpet Classics*, Vol. 3 – *Classic Rock* and Vol. 4 – *Great Themes*.

{halleonard.com}

NOMAD STANDS

NIS-C049 FLUTE PEG

Nomad Stands has rolled out a new collapsible flute peg for busy musicians needing sturdy instrument protection in a compact design. Just like the Nomad collapsible trumpet and clarinet stands, the new NIS-C049 Flute Peg uses Nomad's patented fully collapsible design. The Flute Peg is ideal for any stage and almost disappears when you're packed up and heading home from a performance.

{nomadstands.com}

JUPITER

JCL 1100S

Jupiter has added to its 1100 stepup series by launching the Jupiter JCL1100S Clarinet. The JCL1100S B-flat Clarinet is designed for advancing students and serious hobbyists. It possesses professional features usually found only on high-end clarinets, eliminating performance limitations for students with maturing abilities. Featured is a left hand Eb key that comes standard for assistance in technical passages, an ergonomic register key for a more relaxed left-hand position and an adjustable ergonomic thumb rest for precise right-hand positioning.

{jupitermusic.com}





PETER ELLMAN
Ellman's Music Center
Naperville, Illinois

Last Year: "In 2014, we once again did an increased amount of stepup sales — mostly Yamaha equipment, especially the new Xeno model trumpets. One particular

What's Selling?

product that has done very well for us is the new Yamaha Silent Brass. This is a terrific product that can be used in a variety of situations. The trumpet and trombone Silent Brass have been the hottest items for us. The Yamaha trombone slide oil YAC-1021P has also been popular with professional trombone players. We have seen an increase in ukulele sales as well.

"Hal Leonard has really helped us increase our music sales with its different stocking programs, including the Safe

Program which gives us the ability to stock seasonal music and return what doesn't sell. The Halloween display and holiday music both did well."

This Year: "I expect the [strong] Silent Brass sales to continue as well as the Xeno trumpet sales. The slide oil is a small item but should continue to do well. We are looking to add a uke teacher to help us boost our sales of ukes and the music associated with them. We expect continued success with the Hal Leonard Safe Program."

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GEAR GUIDE

DJ & LIGHTING

CHAUVET GIGBAR IRC

Chauvet DJ's new GigBAR IRC is a traveling all-in-one light show package. It includes four different effects that all mount together on one convenient bar: a pair of LED pars, a pair of LED derbies, a red-and-green laser and four LED strobes. Ideal for DJs, bands and mobile entertainers, this multi-fixture setup is light-weight and comes with its own carrying bags, tripod and wireless footswitch for easy transport and set up, so you can create an "instant lightshow" anywhere.

{chauvetdj.com}

STANTON STANTON 150 SERIES

Stanton's new Stanton 150 Series include the Stanton ST.150 and the Stanton STR8.150 and the Stanton T.92 USB and T.55 USB professional turntables. Their durable construction is designed to minimize feedback, offer ultra-strong torque, stable platters and precision tone arms. The T.92 USB and T.55 USB turntables both offer USB connectivity and analog-to-digital converters, making it easy for DJs and music enthusiasts to digitize vinyl recordings.

{stantondj.com}

EPSILON PIXBEAM

Epsilon has added the PixBeam, which features 7-10W CREE 4-in-1 LEDs and emits 100 watts of total output power. PixBeam is an ultra compact beam fixture that produces the next level of colorful aerial effects with pure color mixing and individual LED cell control. Users with a variety of experience levels can easily create a spectacular lighting show by combining several PixBeam fixtures together. MAP: \$699.99.

{cepsilon-pro.com}





GIBRALTAR DJ RACKS

Gibraltar's three innovative pre-packaged DJ Racks — Foundation, Radius and Elevate — stand alone, or can be combined with Gibraltar's selection of mounts and accessories. These three workstations are designed specifically with their electronics in mind. Like Gibraltar's drum set rack systems, these workstations feature 1.5-inch steel rack bars, rack clamp options and mounting accessories.

{gibraltarhardware.com}

CASIO TRACKFORMER

Casio America has released its Trackformer series, which includes the XW-DJ1 DJ Controller and XW-PD1 Groove Center. The XW-DJ1 controller is designed with a large 7-inch platter that provides the feel of an analog turntable, filter controls and cross fader. It lets users enjoy the "scratching" DJ style when mixing and creating tracks. The Groove Center is equipped with the sound engine from Casio's XW series of synthesizers, which features preset patterns produced by professional beat makers that cover dance music genres like Trap and EDM. MSRP: \$399.

{casiomusicgear.com}



MARKETPLACE

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BUYERSGUIDE

Access Products Group.....	68
AIM Gifts.....	90
Allparts.....	112
Anthem.....	106
AP International.....	21
Avid.....	75
Avlex.....	88
Backun.....	3
Cannonball.....	13
Chesbro.....	15
Classifieds Ads.....	110-111
CrossRock.....	25
Dream Cymbals.....	30
Drum Clip.....	31
Dunlop.....	55
Eastman.....	30
Electro-Harmonix.....	65

Electro-Voice.....	87
Fishman.....	51
Fitness Audio.....	18
Fluid.....	20
Fodera Guitars.....	37
George L's.....	28
Getzen.....	41
Hohner.....	67
Hosa Tech.....	34
Hunter Musical Products.....	37
InMusic Brands.....	85
IQS Strings.....	18
JJ Babbitt.....	17
Jody Jazz.....	112
KHS America.....	45
KMC Music.....	63
Korg USA.....	69
Kyser.....	66
Lace Music Products.....	20
Levy's Leathers.....	5
LM Products.....	19
Messe Frankfurt.....	112
Mi-SI.....	102
Mojotone.....	29
Moku.....	25
Mono.....	57
Morris Guitars.....	20
Music Inc.....	107
Musiquip Inc.....	80
Mutec.....	76
NAMM.....	22-23
NASMD.....	99

Neutrik.....	83
OnBoard.....	33
Ozztosh.....	30
Paul Reed Smith Guitars.....	61
PMAI.....	103
QSC.....	89
Radial Engineering.....	73
Remo.....	32
Reverb.com.....	53
RKS.....	102
Roland.....	2
RPMDA.....	113
Sabian.....	95
Samson.....	118
Zymol.....	60
Samson.....	92
Schilke.....	115
Shubb.....	29
Shure.....	79
SKB Cases.....	39
Spitfire Audio.....	77
Swirly Gig.....	31
Taylor Guitars.....	6-7
The Music Link.....	27
Theo Wanne.....	10
Vic Firth.....	97
WD Music Products.....	4
Yorkville.....	81
WD Music Products.....	4
Zildjian.....	91
Zoom North America.....	11

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John Bertrand

**Bertrand's Music
San Diego**

For most accessories we use a sold history calculator on all items. If the item sells once every 30 days we stock a minimum of two, but possibly more. If it sells once every 60 days we keep a minimum of one. If it sells once every 90 days I look at the history a little more detailed and it gets considered to be stocked at a quantity of one. If it sells once every 120 days we mark it for "no reorder."

Inventory management is an area where most music stores lose profits without knowing it. Run reports so you know what is selling versus what you think is selling or will sell. For years we have all gone on instinct. But with the technology we have now, there is little or no excuse to not use sales reporting to determine what you should and should not stock. If you paid \$100 for an item and still have it after one year you actually paid 30 percent more, so in this case \$130.



Ellen McDonald

**Hartland Music
Hartland, Wisconsin**

We use the AMSI Tri-Tech system — an industry-familiar system — which tracks all of our skews in sales and reorders. So, we use that as our basis, and then we check it weekly for items that have sold that we need to replace.

It's a science and an art. The science is, we take the numbers. The art is, we see what's maybe available that is at a good profit margin for us at that time.

90 percent [of the "art" side] is personal taste. I have a 14-year-old, and sometimes she looks at things and says, "Mom that's really cool." And since we have a lot of kids that come through our store, sometimes that's it.

It's a lot of personal taste, it's demographic, what is going on in our area, and what promotions we're running. For example, if we have a piano teacher event or contest coming up, we will gear items that might appeal to the piano teacher. If old inventory has been here over 90 days, we really try to move it.



Gabriel O'Brien

**Larry's Music Center
Wooster, Ohio**

How do you **effectively purchase** inventory?

We try really hard to pick the things that we think are interesting — the stuff that we'd want to own, that we'd want to play and think is cool and unique. And then we talk to those [manufacturers], and we work with people who want to work with small independent retailers. We pick the coolest products first, and then we decide what we think is interesting and unique.

We do look for trends. We watch the things that are selling, and the things that aren't selling, we don't reorder. That part of it's pretty straightforward. We try to keep things simple and not get too far ahead of ourselves. There are things we're willing to take chances

on because we really like the product, and we really like the company. We just look at what sold in the last 30 days, and then reorder that.

We're usually pretty safe from making giant mistakes. We try to buy pretty carefully. There are trends. [For example,] small body guitars. Acoustic guitars have been swinging that way for a long time. Before I convinced our original store owner to buy them, I think we never had any in stock. It's one of those things that I pushed on him, and probably account for half [of our acoustic guitar sales] or more. But then, you look at parlor guitars, or banjos and mandolins, for instance. That's a trend

that's been taking off.

I really think that when we're talking about taking on something new, we bat it back and forth. We're a pretty collaborative group of people. I think that's fostered, from our store owner on down. He's never afraid to play devil's advocate with everybody. It's never not OK to contradict or argue a point. We want that.

At The NAMM Show, I'll just walk around and see what I think is awesome.

Like I said, cool and unusual small companies that are really hungry and really want our business and make awesome products — that's where we're headed.

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