

COMPLETE 2015 NAMM SHOW COVERAGE

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

MARCH/APRIL 2015
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RETAIL JUNGLE

The Music Zoo breaks away from the pack through its online presence and swanky showroom

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PLUS: 10 Ideas for Celebrating International Drum Month in Your Store

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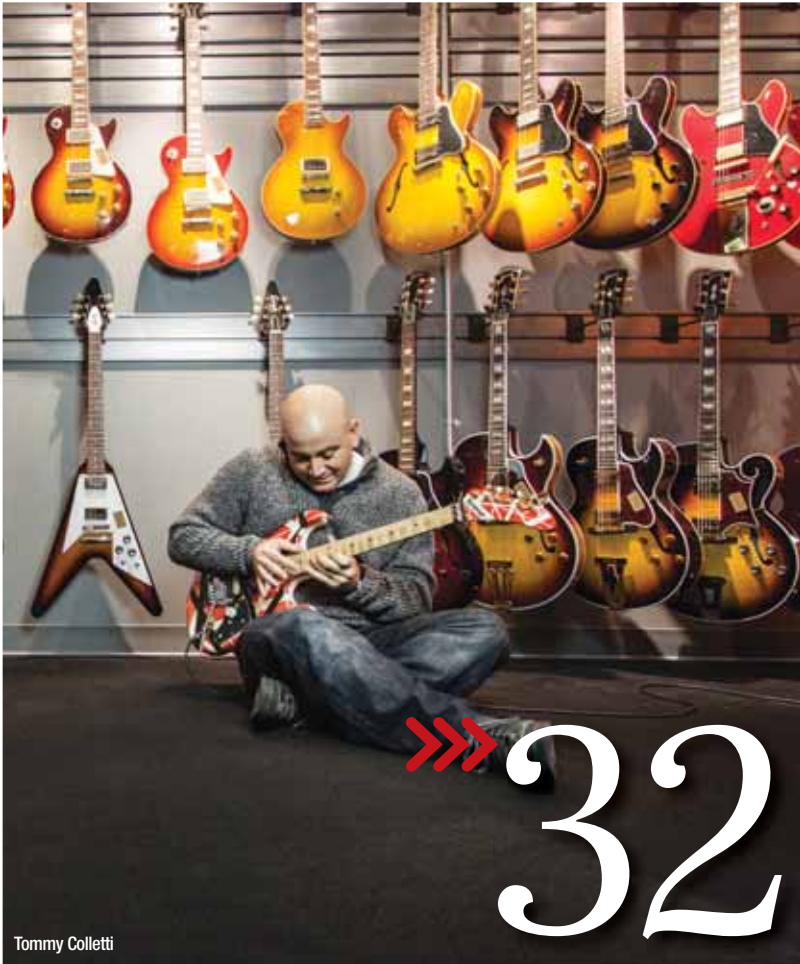
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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY FRANK ALKYER

COPY? OR CREATE & INNOVATE?

There were big smiles all over The NAMM Show in January. And why not? For the first time since 2007, industry veterans weren't looking over their shoulders to see when the next sea change or economic crisis would hit the industry.

Off-shore manufacturing is maturing and prices are stabilizing. The Internet is now, or damn well should be, part of the fabric of every organization in the musical products industry. Competition remains fierce, but the Great Recession is slowly fading into memory.

So, what do we worry about now? Plenty, as always, but let's deal with respecting and protecting intellectual property for this column. In short, it's easy to copy in this digital age, difficult to create and innovate. And two events happened recently in this vein that flat-out made me cringe.

First, we had Sweetwater Sound charging that more than 70 retailers directly stole copy from its website and placed it on their own (see page 18). I have no reason to doubt Chuck Surack, Sweetwater's founder and president, when he makes the claim; and he's right, it's shameful. Retailers need to create their own copy, in their own store's voice. That's a simple cost of doing business in 2015.

Second, we had New Bay Media — publishers of *Guitar Player*, *Guitar World*, *Bass Player*, *Keyboard*, *Electronic Musician* and

more — coming to NAMM with an advertising scheme called "Best of Show" when NAMM U already hosts the annual Breakfast Session "Best in Show." New Bay changed one two-letter preposition ("of" versus "in"), created confusion with exhibitors, then asked them to pay \$495 to enter each product they wanted to be considered. Ouch!

In full disclosure, the "Best in Show" panel discussion created by NAMM celebrated its 10th anniversary at this past show. I serve as the moderator (see page 87). Six retail experts shop the show and come back with selections for the best products and services they see. No one has ever been charged an entry fee.

In both cases, we're talking sheer laziness, at a minimum. But it points to a larger ethical issue. As professionals, we have to respect the work of others. Any time you think about taking a name, a photo or text and using it as your own, ask this question: "How would I feel if someone took this from me?"

If the answer is "pissed," "wronged" or "litigious," then the answer is simple — don't do it. If your ethical compass is off, ask a friend. **MI**



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RETAIL

ISLAND MUSIC CO. | BY JOHN JANOWIAK

ISLAND DESTINATION

In just seven years, Island Music Co. has grown from a miniscule startup into, well, a pretty big deal. From an initial 10- by 10-foot store with just 12 guitars, it rapidly blossomed into a NAMM Top 100 Dealer, selling \$3.5 million worth of instruments annually.

The company's current 8,500-square-foot store in La Plata, Maryland, stocks around 2,500 guitars, plus keyboards, pro-audio gear and band and orchestral instruments.

"If you come in our store, every square inch is covered with product," said Keith Grasso, president of Island Music.

That's putting it mildly. The store carries a mind-boggling variety of instruments, encompassing virtually every major line, but also many rare, hard-to-find and vintage conversation pieces. These have included a historic 1959 Strat and just about every Rickenbacker that exists, not to mention out-of-the-ordinary items like didgeridoos and sitars.

Island Music has created a buzz in its region as well as online, and none of this has occurred by accident.

"My whole idea was always to make our store a destination," Grasso said. "Even if they're not coming out to buy, it's someplace



Island Music tries to be all things to everyone — and succeeds

people want to go to see unique things and kind of make a day trip out of it."

FUELED BY PASSION

Grasso's business success starts with having a passion for what he does.

"Music retail is really all I've ever done in my life," he said with a laugh. "And I love it."

He learned the ropes working for several years at Bill's Music in Baltimore, but as much as he enjoyed his experience there, he decided to take a break. He worked in commercial real estate, but after a year, he knew retail was his calling. He thought he had what it took to run his own store.

"I decided to strike out on my own and see if I was as good at it as I thought I was," Grasso said.

He launched Island Music Co. in trying times — during the economic slump of October 2007, but that didn't deter him. Nor did it deter his wife, Nicki, who has been with the business from the start.

As Island Music Co. grew, so did its staff, and today Nicki is one of 12 full-time employees. They also have three service technicians, two designated online sales associates and 20

teachers who conduct 350 lessons a week. Venturing beyond its roots as a guitar store, the company gained footholds in other areas, such as recording consultation and local school music business.

Grasso credits much of the store's appeal to the expertise of his sales staff, who undergo thorough ongoing training. Weekly morning training sessions arm them with knowledge about sales technique, and manufacturer reps come in to inform them about new products.

"The more you can give them to talk about with customers, other than price, the better off you're going to be," Grasso said. He tries to sell Island Music as a value-added store, not a blowout discount house.

"I want the customer to see the value of having a good sales staff, a good service department and a wide selection."

DRAWING 'EM IN

Grasso was never the type to sit and wait for customers to come in his door, or even venture to his town. He serves as president of the La Plata Business Association, and through that, he aims to stir up business for all independent businesses in the town's walkable Main Street-type district.

The approximately 40 businesses in this group designated Nov. 29, 2014, "Small Business Saturday," pooling their resources to attract holiday shoppers from nearby Baltimore, Washington D.C., and everywhere in between. The cross-promotion paid off handsomely.

"That was probably one of the biggest days that we had in the business, not only us but the other businesses as well," Grasso said. "We saw different customers than we normally would sell to."

ONLINE RESPONSE

Grasso has managed to make Island Music a destination on the Internet as well as its brick-and-mortar store. Besides having his own online shop, he sends out weekly email blasts and utilizes eBay, Shopatron and Facebook to spread the word about his company and its wares.

"I'm always looking for new ways to reach customers," he said.

He was one of the first music retailers to

take advantage of Reverb.com, for example, and he finds it a useful tool. While eBay and Amazon are flooded markets that draw a more general crowd, Reverb tends to offer more specialized instruments for pros and serious hobbyists. It's just one more way to generate calls, emails and conversations with potential customers.

"We're competing against the iPad, computers, skateboards, you name it," he said. "So what we need to do, as an industry, is make sure we are forefront — that playing guitar is cool, being in school band is cool, that this is what you want to spend your disposable income on." **MI**

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NAMM | EVENT

THE NAMM SHOW KICKS OFF WITH RETAIL BOOT CAMP

While distributors were still setting up their booths inside the Anaheim Convention Center, retailers started The NAMM Show a day early at the annual Retail Boot Camp, held in the California Ballroom at the Anaheim Hilton.

More than 350 people attended the all-day training session designed to help music retailers grow their businesses in 2015. It included segments on both front- and back-office operations.

The speakers this year were sales and leadership expert Brian Parsley, social media maven Ben Blakesley, and music retail financial gurus Alan Friedman (*Music Inc.* columnist) and Daniel Jobe. They spoke on a range of topics including: increasing sales, creating lifelong customers, social marketing, inventory management, reading a financial statement and buying for maximum profitability.

“This year’s Retail Boot Camp featured

an incredibly powerful program,” said Zach Phillips, NAMM’s director of professional development. “NAMM members who invested their time to be there got a full day of training and a strong start to 2015. Everyone from seasoned store owners to new salespeople, from the U.S. and abroad, could take away new ideas from Boot Camp and benefit from them right away. I can’t think of a more productive way to kick off The NAMM Show — and the new year.”



PMC | EVENT

PMC Members Express Passion for Drums

The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) held its annual all-membership meeting at the Hilton on Jan. 23, highlighted by a roundtable discussion with leaders from retail and manufacturing.

The roundtable participants were Randy Pratt (Musician’s Friend), Jim Rupp (Columbus Percussion), Rob Andre (Chicago Drum Exchange), Shane Kinney (Drum Center of Portsmouth), Remo Belli (Remo Inc.), Don Lombardi (Drum Workshop), Andy Zildjian (Sabian Ltd.) and Alan Vater (Vater Percussion).

The discussion was moderated by Kevin Kearns of *Modern Drummer*, who asked each leader to comment on the current state of the industry and predict what the industry will look like five years from now.

A theme throughout the conversation was the intense level of passion that man-

ufacturers, dealers and customers have for playing a drum set.

Kinney, whose store is based in New Hampshire, offered a retailer’s perspective.

“When people come in [to my store], their eyes light up when they think about drums or drumming,” he said. “It really doesn’t matter what’s popular — there seems to be a large amount of people who want

to play drums and have an enthusiasm for drums. Part of the problem is inexpensive electronic drums that don’t allow a student to really learn; it creates frustration, and they just give up.”

Karl Dustman, co-executive director of the PMC, brought members up to date on various educational initiatives, including Roots of Rhythm.



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FODERA | AWARDS

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Fodera basses held its inaugural Platinum Dealer Awards during the NAMM Show at the Anaheim Hilton.

At the event, Fodera honored six of its top performing domestic and international dealers.

“These dealers have gone above and beyond and helped catapult us,” said Jason

DeSalvo, partner at Fodera. “We couldn’t have done it without them.”

Winners included Bass Central in Fern Park, Florida; Bass Club Chicago in Chicago; Bass San Diego in San Diego; Music Force Global in Korea; Thomann of Germany; and VEN Corporation of Japan.

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KAWAI | AWARDS

Kawai Honors Top-Performing Dealers

Kawai named the winners of its 2014 dealer awards during a reception held on Jan. 22 at the Sheraton Park Inn in Anaheim, California.

Retailers receiving the company’s prized Pinnacle Awards included Kim’s Piano, named Dealer of the Year for both Kawai America Corp. and Shigeru Kawai Piano Co.; Merriam Music, Dealer of the Year, Kawai Canada Music; Schmitt Music, Dealer of the Year, Digital Pianos; Kraft Music, Dealer of the Year, Professional Products; Evola Music, Acoustic Piano Market Performance; and Lacefield Music, Digital Piano Market Performance.

“All of us in this room share a common goal,” said Hirotaka Kawai, president of Kawai Global Group. “We want to get better at what we do. No amount of past success can lessen our desire to make our future better. This passion to improve has always led to positive outcomes.”

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GRUHN GUITARS | ANNIVERSARY

GRUHN GUITARS CELEBRATES SAPPHIRE ANNIVERSARY

On Jan. 16 and 17, Gruhn Guitars in Nashville, Tennessee, celebrated its 45th anniversary with two-day sales event, including a raffle and an after-hours party Saturday that was open to the public.

“We got some awesome contributions from folks at DR Strings and a couple different publications like Premier Guitar and Vintage Guitar, and manufacturers like Martin, Taylor, National, Collings and Larrive,” said Sarah Jones, operations manager. “The grand prize was a Larrive, really cool, OM-3 Zebra Wood guitar. We also gave away a

Taylor GS Mini and Martin LX1E.

“We had a blast,” Jones continued. “We had a whole bunch of people through the doors and they left with a lot of guitars. People entered the raffle over the two days that were the public celebration and then we had a party on Saturday night that wasn’t advertised, but was basically an open house. A lot of people came to visit, and a lot of people entered the raffle. The party on Saturday night was a little bit more festive. It was just a little bit looser and a little less sales-oriented.”

SWEETWATER | LEGAL

Sweetwater Alleges Copyright Infringement

Sweetwater Sound has gone on the attack against more than 70 retailers who the company claims have plagiarized copy from sweetwater.com. The alleged violations range from a few pages of content to as much as hundreds and even thousands of pages, according to Sweetwater. In response to these infringing acts, Sweetwater has increased its efforts to defend itself and its intellectual property rights.

“It’s amazing to me,” said Mike Clem, vice president of e-commerce at Sweetwater. “In many cases they don’t even bother

to remove references to ‘Sweetwater’ or to ‘Sales Engineers,’ which obviously come straight from our site. We’ve even found examples where they’ve left in ‘Contact your Sweetwater Sales Engineer for more information or to make your purchase!’”

Sweetwater claims if an infringing company ignores its initial requests to have the infringing content removed, it will contact the retailer’s Internet service provider (ISP) who could shut down a website for engaging in copyright infringement.

GUITAR CENTER | LEGAL

Guitar Center Sued Over Handicap Accessibility

Guitar Center was issued a class action lawsuit Jan. 2 in a Los Angeles court, alleging the musical instrument retail stores lack suitable handicap accessibility accommodations.

The suit outlines handicap accessibility obstructions at several California Guitar Center stores, including a lack of handicapped parking spaces, bathrooms containing heavy doors and high soap dispensers and hand dryers. These facilities violate the state’s Unruh Civil Rights Act, according to the suit.

“Plaintiff and others similarly situated have been denied access to the benefits of the goods, services, programs, facilities and activities of defendant’s stores, and have otherwise been discriminated against and have suffered damages caused by defendants’ accessibility violations,” the complaint said, as referenced by law360.com

Lead plaintiff Hector Velarde has a mobility disability and is dependent upon a wheelchair, according to the complaint. Velarde visited a Guitar Center in Cerritos, California, in November 2014 and says he suffered discrimination as a result of the store’s lack of handicap accessibility.

Velarde was unable to use the sink, soap dispenser and toilet seat during his time in the store, according to the complaint. He said he wrote to Guitar Center November 25 to alert them of the issues, but received no response.

A private investigator inspected several Guitar Center locations across California that also lacked adequate restrooms, parking spaces and appropriate signage, said the complaint.

“To date, barriers and other violations still exist and have not been remedied or altered in such a way as to effectuate compliance with the provisions of the California Standards or the [Americans with Disabilities Act],” the lawsuit said.

BRICK & MORTAR MUSIC | OPENING

Brick & Mortar Music Rises From Ashes of Northern Music

Following the store-closing of Northern Music and Video in Potsdam, New York, on Dec. 20, 2014, former employees Jeremy and Allison Carney decided to open a music store of their own, Brick & Mortar Music, three doors down from the former site of their former employer.

“Our first thought when that happened was, ‘What are the schools going to do in this area?’” Jeremy Carney, co-owner of Brick & Mortar music with his wife, Allison, told *Music Inc.*

“We felt horrible because the schools were not going to have that outlet to have the kind of service they were used to. And in our area, a lot of the schools are quite rural; so, without that, the programs can

suffer dramatically.”

Though the shop’s primary focus will be on servicing school programs in the region, the owners intend to make Brick & Mortar Music “a full-line music store that caters not only to B&O, but to professionals, amateurs and whoever in the area wants to play.”

The store held a soft opening on Jan. 15, “because SUNY Potsdam (the college) started on the following Monday, [Jan.] 19, which also brought the Crane School of Music kids back in session. We wanted to make sure that we were opened ahead of time for them because we actually provide most of their textbooks, a lot of their accessories and a lot of music that is required.”



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Note From Joe

Lessons From the Craft Beer Industry: Innovation and Collaboration

I recently read an article titled "Small business advice: What your company can learn from the rise of craft beer" about how, in the midst of the recession, craft beer sales skyrocketed and small companies experienced significant growth even as overall beer sales were flat. Based on writer Drew C. Marshall's perspective, some basic concepts were at the foundation of this success: *small business innovation*, *a group effort in promoting the industry* and *friendly competition*. You can read the article on www.washingtonpost.com.

It occurred to me that these ideas could easily translate to and, in many cases, describe the music products and sound industry. After all, both industries have long and storied histories dominated by major brands that have enjoyed a significant portion of the market share for years. And yet, both industries are on the move, offering great opportunities for innovation and shared excitement as these new brands work to build and define their unique segment in the larger industry.

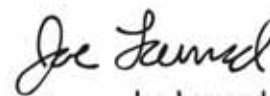
Small business innovation is exploding in the world of music products. New NAMM exhibitors are creating handcrafted and custom-built instruments, and pushing the boundaries of music with new technologies. While there will always be deep respect for larger household brand names, these new folks are seeing success as retailers and consumers seek specialized products with a unique story to tell, just like the craft brewers are doing. This mindset of innovation and new products excites consumers and drives market growth.

Leading *a group effort in promoting the industry* is something NAMM has been doing for awhile now, but we can learn a lot from the craft brewers about how to work together more

effectively, especially on the local level. In my opinion, promoting the benefits of music and advocating for music education is the responsibility of everyone who makes their living in our industry. There are many opportunities for you to work with your fellow NAMM members to promote music in your community, in your schools and on a broader stage by joining us in our lobbying trips to D.C. Will this be the year that you connect and get more involved?

Friendly competition is, from my perspective, one of the things that makes our industry the one that people *want* to spend their lives in... We're passionate people who love music and everything about making it. Marshall describes a similar camaraderie that exists in the craft beer industry: "...as experiments succeed, brewers don't hoard their secrets. Many smaller breweries build on loans and advice from larger peers." NAMM members help each other every day: They volunteer to teach NAMM U sessions and share their hard-earned lessons, they form associations like GAMA to promote guitars in school music programs, and they participate in the annual NAMM Shows, which feed our "Circle of Benefits" business model that promotes the industry for everyone.

We have always been an industry of entrepreneurs, and it seems the trend is only increasing. And although we cannot predict the future, lessons from the craft beer industry make a lot of sense to me as we continue to promote innovation and collaboration within our own community.



Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



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SUPPLY

KHS, HOHNER | BY KATIE KAILUS

KHS ACQUIRES HOHNER

On Jan. 12, KHS America acquired Hohner, Inc. from German-based Matth. Hohner GmbH. Hohner is the North American provider of Hohner branded harmonicas, accordions, melodicas, guitars and bluegrass instruments as well as Sonor Drums and Orff Instruments, Lanikai and Kohala Ukuleles, H. Jimenez guitars, Hohner Airboard, Hohner Kids and Greentones children's instrument brands. *Music Inc.* exclusively spoke with Tabor Stamper, president of KHS America, about the acquisition.



Tabor Stamper

MI: Why did KHS decide to buy Hohner, and why now?

TS: Acquisitions and mergers tend to be either strategic or opportunistic in nature. This one was a little bit of both. Hohner, Inc. and its iconic brands have been around for a long time and are an important part of music making history. KHS America is a much younger company which over the past several years has established itself as a major player in the wind and percussion segment of our industry. We have many customers in common, yet our product offerings are very different. When we began to look at the possibility of merging these two successful

companies we quickly learned that we are remarkably similar in culture and in the way we work with our dealers. The differences that do exist are complimentary, which will serve to strengthen the combined organization.

The timing is perfect as well. Hohner GmbH in Germany reorganized just last year and, with some relatively minor investment KHS America's new facility in Tennessee, will accommodate both companies. It's a perfect combination that will benefit both the consumer and the music retailer.

MI: On that note, how will

this acquisition affect retailers?

TS: Initially there will be absolutely no effect on our dealers. It is business as usual for both companies. Over time, we intend to capitalize on this unique opportunity to structure the new organization in a way that will enhance our ability to better provide for our dealer partners. We will take our time, making sure that the changes we do make are the right ones for everyone involved. That includes our dealer partners, of course, but also the consumer and our employees. In the end, the focus will be on the customer experience. We have learned that when

we start with the customer and work backwards, decisions made are those that tend to provide the best result for everyone.

MI: How is the transition going to unfold?

TS: It'll take time. We will not rush it and will work to ensure that nothing is lost in the process. When we do begin the integration, it will be done in a way that will have minimal impact on our dealers. We fully understand our responsibility to maintain the value of all of our brands while executing the necessary logistical changes.

MI: What does KHS bring to Hohner? What does Hohner bring to KHS?

TS: This is what is most exciting about bringing these two companies together. Although there are many areas where we can gain synergy, some of the more obvious are that KHS America has a strong outside sales team while Hohner, Inc. has a strong inside sales team. KHS America has a talented creative team while Hohner, Inc. is very strong in product management. KHS America has a strong presence in the school music and combo markets, while Hohner, Inc. reaches a wider base of consumers with harmonicas, accordions and ukuleles. **MI**

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NAMM | MEETING

NAMM ELECTS NEW DIRECTORS TO BOARD

NAMM's annual meeting of members took place on Jan. 24. During the meeting, NAMM's voting members elected a new group of members to the association's board of directors. The eight new directors joining the board for 2015–2018 are: Joseph Castronovo, president of Korg USA; Paul Decker, owner of Music Villa; Greg Deering, founder of Deering Banjo Company; Michael Doyle, senior vice president of guitars, amplifiers and accessories at Guitar Center; Ron Losby, president of Steinway & Sons; Brian Reardon, president of Monster Music; Peter Sides, president of Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers; Martin Szpiro, president and CEO of Jam Industries. namm.org



PEAVEY | ANNIVERSARY

PEAVEY CELEBRATES 50TH WITH ALL-STAR CONCERT

Peavey held a press conference on Jan. 22, before the company's 50th anniversary concert, which featured many of the musicians performing that night, including members of Lynyrd Skynyrd and Blue Öyster Cult. During the conference, Hartley Peavey (third from left), discussed how his passion for music has driven his company over the past 50 years. Pictured, from left: Lynyrd Skynyrd's Rickey Medlocke and Gary Rossington, Hartley Peavey, all-star drummer Kenny Aronoff, Lynyrd Skynyrd's Peter Keys and Blue Öyster Cult's Eric Bloom. peavey.com

NAMM | EVENT

Worldwide Coalition

The tradition of networking on an international level was alive and well at The NAMM Show. On Jan. 21, the International Coalition met to exchange information on the current state of music markets around the world and to discuss industry issues, such as music education advocacy and re-

search on the benefits of music making. The coalition, which meets every year at the show, is made up of more than 40 association heads and opinion leaders from more than 20 countries, including representatives from the International Society of Music Education. namm.org





NAMM | PHILANTHROPY

NAMM Service Day

NAMM enlisted more than 50 members of the musical products community to do something great on Jan. 20, two days before The NAMM Show began. The association dedicated a day of service at John Marshall Elementary School in Anaheim, California, to inspire students, donating a day

of teaching, \$10,000 and 12 guitars to the school's re-introduced school music program. Back row from left: NAMM's Mary Leuersen, Principal Louie Magdaleno, Superintendent Dr. Linda Wagner, NAMM's Joe Lamond and music teacher Julie Ernst with students.

{namm.org}



SKB | AWARDS


SKB HONORS INDUSTRY LEADERS AT 2014 SALES REP AWARDS

Representatives from On the Road Marketing received awards for 2014 Top Camera Sales and 2014 Top Sales. From left: Steve Szucs, sales; Doug Brown, principal/sales; Chris

Grajewski, sales; Mark Meding, sales manager; Frank Portaltatin, sales; and Eric Sands, SKB national sales manager, Music Pro AV Division. {skbcases.com}

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FOCUSRITE | COMPANY

Focusrite Goes Public

Focusrite has been listed on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) of the London Stock Exchange. The ticker symbol is TUNE.

Focusrite Plc (public limited company) is the listed entity. The business was established in 1989 by Phil Dudderidge, executive chairman, known also for having co-founded Soundcraft in 1973.

“The company has reached its first 25 years of operation; becoming a public company puts the business on a strong corporate foundation, with wider share ownership and access to the capital market,” Dudderidge

said. “Focusrite proved an attractive investment to institutions who were impressed with the company’s historical performance and its growth strategy.”

Focusrite employs 114 people in the United Kingdom and 25 in the United States. The wholly owned U.S. subsidiary, Focusrite Novation Inc., run by Phil Wagner, is a marketing, training and customer support operation that sup-

ports the sales activities of Focusrite’s U.S. distributor, American Music and Sound. us.focusrite.com



APPOINTMENTS

Wanamaker Named President, CEO of Roland Corp. U.S.

Roland Corp. recently announced two senior management appointments. Effective Feb. 1, Jay Wanamaker will become the president and CEO of Roland Corp. U.S., while Kim Nunney (the former president and CEO) will become executive vice president of global business development for professional A/V for Roland Corp.

Nunney became president of Roland Corp. U.S. in late 2012. Under his direction, the company returned to stable profitability and growth, according to Roland executives. Jun-ichi Miki, CEO of Roland Corp., credited the entire Roland U.S. team, under Nunney’s leadership, for the turnaround, citing strategic and structural changes as well as steady investment in a stronger sales channel and strong product introductions.

“It’s been an extreme honor to lead the team through a highly successful regrowth,” Nunney said. “At the same time, the opportunity for Roland’s video and audio technologies within the professional A/V space is incredible. With significant investments in our new M-5000 configurable live mixing console and numerous video technologies,

the opportunity to bring a global focus to our overall sales and marketing development for the pro A/V space is very exciting.”

Wanamaker has served as a senior executive with Yamaha Pro Audio & Combo Division, Yamaha Band & Orchestral Division, Guitar Center, Music & Arts, KMC Music, Alfred Music and Amati USA.

“I am really excited to lead this world-class corporation, which is an iconic brand known for creating truly innovative and compelling products,” Wanamaker said.

“My deep background in wholesale and retail will be a tremendous asset as I dedicate myself to, and focus on, leading Roland U.S. into its next phase of growth.”

“We are very excited about the appointments of both Mr. Wanamaker and Mr. Nunney,” Miki said. “Building on his vast experience across different aspects of the musical instrument industry and the momentum of successes at Roland U.S., Mr. Wanamaker will lead the next chapter of Roland’s development.” rolandus.com



From left: Jay Wanamaker, Jun-ichi Miki and Kim Nunney

HAL LEONARD | ACQUISITION

Hal Leonard Expands Internationally With Acquisition of Dutch Publisher

Hal Leonard has expanded its European operations by acquiring the European Music Centre (EMC), the print music division of Strengholt B.V., a multimedia corporation based in Naarden, Netherlands.

EMC represents 50 Dutch and other international music publishers through publishing and distribution of printed music. EMC is not only a supplier of classical and

popular music in many European countries, but has also released matching folios of various Dutch artists. EMC is also known for its educational publications, including the guitar methods of Cees Hartog, which are available in several languages.

“We are excited about our acquisition of EMC,” said Mark Mumford, Hal Leonard’s managing director for Europe. “It is a

company with an established name in the music world, and we are looking forward to the valuable contributions this will bring to our catalog, both in the Netherlands and abroad.”

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FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

ANDY ZILDJIAN | SABIAN

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

By freezing my butt off on the way to the car — it's cold up here in Canada during the winter! Once I'm in the office, I say "hi" to everybody and grab a cup of coffee. Then I take care of email, once in the morning and again later in the afternoon.

SO YOU'RE NOT INSTANTLY ACCESSIBLE VIA EMAIL ALL DAY.

I'm not, and it's been hugely helpful. The separation allows me to keep a train of thought going. If I want to write a letter, program, or plan, I actually turn off the computer, walk over to another desk, and write with pen and paper, standing up. It puts me in a different mindset and allows me to focus purely on what I'm doing at that moment.

WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES AT SABIAN?

Setting the company's direction and goals, empowering people under me to achieve those goals, and ensuring that we stay on target to achieve those goals. Those would be my daily, at-the-office functions. At the same time, there are a lot of important relationships, both within the company and the industry. It's important for me to keep in touch with everyone and make sure that the goals that I have in mind for the company are realistic in the marketplace of today's world.

WHAT SORTS OF GOALS IN PARTICULAR?

We start off with year-end goals, then we have to figure out a direction to achieve them in sales, marketing, products and financial goals. Beyond that, an important goal of mine is keeping the overall direction and attitude of the company going in the right direction, and that can be a daily responsibility, too.

That said, attitude is something I don't have to worry about too much since being nice is so ingrained in everybody at Sabian.

CAN YOU ELABORATE?

We want the Sabian brand to be relevant, approachable, kind and professional. That's been the corporate culture since we started. That's the way my father did it and everybody who worked under him, and everyone who I have worked with has followed the same course.

WHAT'S YOUR OWN MUSICAL BACKGROUND?

My guitar teacher told me to quit guitar and take up drums [laughs] so that's what I did. I played in rock bands in high school and still play with a few friends around home, but nothing on a steady basis. I do love playing drums, though — it's a huge amount of fun. As far as listening, I like hearing anything played with skill, joy and passion.

WHEN YOU'RE CREATING PRODUCTS FOR MUSICIANS, ARE YOU TRYING TO INSPIRE THAT SAME SORT OF PASSION?

Absolutely. When you hit a cymbal, you're throwing out a voice, or screaming, or laying down a fat base on which everything else can stand. The tone of that cymbal has to be something that drummers are excited about, because it's either going to be their big, loud accent, or help define the personality of their entire sound.

Every time we design a product, it has to be based on as much discussion with players as possible. We want to know what they're looking for. I use this phrase often — if we can help drummers express themselves as they wish, with the passion that they feel, then we're doing the right thing.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN A NEW PRODUCT IS DONE?

If we're working with professionals on product development, it's done when they say that they've got what they want. When we're working from the research we've done with customers, it's when we think we've achieved what we believe the research is telling us. One of the best aspects of our research and development team is that it's being led by Mark Love. He didn't grow up as a drummer, so he doesn't have any bias or preconceptions when it comes to sound. He's just really good at hearing what people are looking for, finding it and making it.

WHAT MAKES YOUR CYMBALS UNIQUE?

We still make them by hand, including hand-hammering our HH and HHX series, which is something that no other major company does. That includes not just hammering, but also lathing and the other types of craftwork that are needed to make a cymbal.

When you work with your hands, you can feel the inconsistencies with the metal. When you feel those inconsistencies, you can compensate for them. So you have an inconsistent medium — the metal — and an inconsistent manner of manufacturing it, since you're doing it all by hand, but



THE DETAILS

ANDY ZILDJIAN, PRESIDENT

HQ: Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada

Founded: Dec. 4, 1981

Employees: 100-plus

Best selling product: AAX line of cymbals.

Fun Fact: Though his last name brings to mind another prominent cymbal-maker, the business run by Andy Zildjian has no official connection with the Avedis Zildjian Company. In fact, Sabian was founded by Robert Zildjian, Andy Zildjian's father, following an intra-family feud over control and the future of the Zildjian Company. To date, Zildjian and Sabian remain friendly competitors.

you end up with a much more consistent end product because of that process. Our cymbals are far more consistent in sound as a result.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE HAND-CRAFTING CYMBALS WITH KEEPING LABOR AND OTHER COSTS UNDER CONTROL?

It's not easy. Right now, our guys are working overtime, sometimes on Saturdays and holidays, and we can still fall behind on hand-hammered production. That's an issue. But at the same time, we make a quality instrument, and if it takes a little longer to make, so be it. We try to keep our expenses down by having the right people on board. Not a lot of people but the right people who can make great instruments.

HOW DO YOU FIND THEM?

Once we hire people who have the right kind of personality, we have them work in different areas and see what skills they have. Someone might have a great understanding of what makes a cymbal bow a certain way, so we give them a shot at hand hammering or lathing and see how it goes. It can take a while for someone new to break him or herself in, but after a while, you can really tell if someone has the skill or doesn't. Once we find people with the right skills, they are quite well prized.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ZILDJIAN COMPANY?

People ask me all the time about my relationship with my cousins — and it's a good one. I didn't know them very well when Sabian became a separate company from Zildjian — they were all 15 or 16 years older. There's no animosity there. It's just good, clean, fair competition.

ARE THERE ANY BIG INNOVATIONS AT SABIAN THAT YOU'RE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT?

We have a group of larger, thinner, very-cool-to-play ride cymbals called Big & Ugly. We also have a new B8 cymbal to address the student portion of the market. We've had those cymbals for almost 30 years, but the new B8 has a new sound and new look.

On the corporate side, for years, we've been entrepreneurial in our approach — "Here's a budget. Let's see how we can make this work." Now, we've started figuring out where we want to end up at the end of each year and working backwards to get to that point. We're planning our work in a way that we haven't before. It doesn't sound exciting, but once you start seeing all of the things you can do as a result of that sort of planning, it can be pretty damn exciting.

CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE?

Originally, we shipped directly to dealers in Canada, but then we started working with a distributor. On Jan. 1, 2015, we started going direct to dealers again. So instead of just saying that we need a certain inventory to fill our orders, we plan out exactly what we want to achieve through this shift. We're not simply trying to get more margin. The idea is to present ourselves better in the market than what was previously done. On a practical level, that means having sales and marketing work together more closely, for example.

THAT'S A BIG CHANGE. WERE YOU NERVOUS, EXCITED, OR BOTH?

Both, but less nervous than if we hadn't had solid plans in the works. It really is great being able to see how everyone has the year laid out in front of them.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE SOURCING ALL YOUR MATERIALS?

Our head of manufacturing, Nort Hargrove, is a genius. He's been at this for 40 years, and he knows what he's doing when it comes to cymbals and cymbal metal. He's the one who picks out the copper. The tin is pretty easy, since it's more consistent, but you have to find a specific type of copper to do what we do.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

There are two types. One is called electrolytic, which means that it is completely clean of everything but copper. The other is fire-refined, which means that it still has silver and a bunch of other metals in it. The silver and other elements help the copper and tin adhere to each other and become homogenous

bronze, but the electrolytic stuff doesn't blend so well. We've figured out how to make it work, but it takes a long time and isn't fun to do. So to get the materials that we need, Nort keeps a close eye on the markets and has friends in the copper trades that he's been working with for some time.

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH FLUCTUATING GLOBAL PRICES ON METALS?

That can drive you nuts or make you wicked happy. [Laughs.] In 2014, we budgeted \$3.40 per pound for copper and it had been averaging closer to \$3.20 or \$3.24 in price, so that was great for us. At the same time, though, the Canadian dollar wasn't where we thought it would be, so there are always ups and downs.

IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

My other passion is hockey, so I'd be involved in that industry somehow.

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RETAIL JUNGLE

By Michael Gallant

The Music Zoo breaks away from the herd with a killer website and custom guitar offerings most players only dream of owning

Just off of Old Northern Boulevard in the quaint, Long Island town of Roslyn, New York, lies a nondescript industrial park — but there's more to it than meets the eye. Pass by the scrap metal company on the left, head towards the waterfront, and you'll arrive at a warehouse that contains a dance studio, a collectible car dealer, an event space, and even some vintage, coin-operated arcade video games. It's an unusual place for a cutting-edge music retailer, perhaps, but time has proven it to be a successful one for guitar-selling pioneers The Music Zoo. In fact, through the careful blending of its unlikely-but-immaculate riverside showroom and impressively deep website, the company continues to achieve retail success.

GUITAR

FINDING YOUR FIT

The right pairing of shape and woods will lead you to a tone that sounds great on you.

Shapes Have Sounds

An acoustic guitar's physical body shape is largely responsible for creating its fundamental sound. In general, a bigger body creates a bigger sound, and vice-versa. In your search for the right acoustic guitar, body shape is a primary consideration. There are many shapes to choose from, and each comes with its own unique sound.



BUILDING A ZOO

Occupying a loft-like two-story space in this warehouse setting, The Music Zoo feels more like a posh, high-end recording studio-plus-lounge than a typical music store. The lighting is warm, the layout inviting, and the rooms clearly crafted to highlight both the instruments on sale and the experience of the customer playing them. Case in point, an upstairs acoustic guitar room has a rustic, hardwood vibe, letting the player hear the full tonal range of any instrument as it reverberates in the space. It's all by design, says owner Tommy Colletti — and such intentionality reaches into cyberspace as well.

“The way the store was set up was not only as a local retail destination but also to emphasize the website,” said Colletti, who founded The Music Zoo in 1994. “The first thing you see when you walk into the store, besides a wall full of guitars, of course, is a tactile computer kiosk with our website. It's front and center, so anybody can pull up a guitar that they were potentially looking at online.”

And the Internet has played a large role in the retailer's success. According to Colletti, a whopping 80 percent of store's business comes from online, albeit online sales or customers merely discovering the store and its extensive inventory.

“Our website is really a huge advertisement for us,” Colletti said, adding that he and his team spend a lot of time bringing people to the site through social media avenues

and the store's blog.

“Our blog is highly trafficked, and we fill it with new guitars and guitarists that we love,” he said. “We focus on bringing all the latest and greatest information to guitar junkies just like us.”

Another major factor in The Music Zoo's online success is the early jump the retailer got on the Internet — launching the site in 1998.

“I love business, and I'm always reading business magazines or watching CNBC, and I remember, one time, CNBC was talking about the Internet being this information superhighway. And I thought, ‘Man that would be cool, especially with all the vintage and custom guitars we have,’” Colletti said.

Some 17 years later, customers are still checking out those vintage and custom guitars online, then stopping in to check them out in person.

“People come in and say, ‘Hey, I was looking at this guitar online,’” Colletti said. “They can easily dial it in so they can see the guitar in person and get a feel for it.”

“Probably about five percent of the guitars we have in stock are actually on the walls. The rest are in back.”

Rather than hiding its stocking shelves in a basement or off-site warehouse, Colletti and company store their inventory in plain sight of customers. Upon entering, customers notice a large glass wall at the back of the store, beyond which lie shelves upon shelves of guitar boxes. (The warehouse scene at the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

comes to mind).

“We kept the glass up on purpose, so people can see that there are thousands of guitars here,” Colletti said. “For guitar players, it's a ‘maybe they have it in the back’ sort of thing. That can be an enticement. At least for me, it is.”

The Music Zoo's operations bustle behind that glass wall. While guitars brought in by customers are repaired in the space, other instruments destined for sale are cataloged, set up as needed and photographed.

“We take very high-resolution photos and don't really do anything to the images,” he said. “Our photographer does a great job of shooting them, but the guitars are guitars. We want the guitar to sell itself. We're not really salespeople. We're guitarists and musicians, and we hope that somebody is going to love what we're putting out there, whether it's a standard guitar or an exclusive run. There's no high-pressure sales strategy.”

CREATING THE RIGHT GUITAR

The Music Zoo sells both new and used axes, with a unique collection of vintage instruments on hand. And while the company does carry the core line of products for every guitar maker that they do business with, they also offer a wide variety of exclusive instruments. In fact, the store's custom selection is one of The Music Zoo's great sources of institutional pride — and business.

“We don't have custom guitars from every company we work with, but if





there's something we're excited about, we jump," Colletti said. "There has to be a reason for a custom line, though. We don't just think about designing a custom guitar for the sake of doing something different. It has to be a situation where we've sat with a guitar and thought, 'You know, it would be really great if we moved the volume knob half-an-inch down, or if we used alder instead of poplar. Let's see what it sounds like!'"

Having built strong relationships with guitar manufacturers over his years in business, Colletti finds himself in the position of being able to call up nearly any one of them and get custom Stratocasters, Les Pauls or beyond in the works. It's a level of access he describes as usually available only to the most famous musicians.

"It started out just being fun," said Col-

letti with a laugh. "We would sit around and think about what we would do if we were in the Fender Custom Shop and could build anything we wanted. And then it morphed into something bigger from there. It really is almost like the rock star who has the ability to go to any company and ask for different fret wire or a lighter wood. As lay people, we don't have that ability, so it's great, through The Music Zoo, to be able to offer that level of customization to our customers."

Having played and studied countless guitars of all sizes, shapes and flavors, Colletti and his employees are in a prime position to suggest tweaks that might be subtle, but could mean significant improvement for their customers' playing.

"Whether it's using this kind of wood or those kinds of frets, certain things stick

out to me after playing thousands of guitars," he said. "Things can get vanilla after a while, so when something like that does stick out, we go to a company like Gibson and ask, 'Can we do this?'"

Sometimes suggestions for custom lines come from customers, who may be surprised that certain manufacturers don't offer a particular variation on their instrument of choice. But regardless of the source of inspiration, the custom guitars carried by The Music Zoo have been a success.

"Right now, we have somewhere around 20 custom guitars — instruments from the Gibson Custom Shop, Fender Custom Shop, Charvel, Suhr, Jackson and ESP," Colletti said. "We've had acoustic companies as well, like Taylor, where we select a body size that they might not normally make. We've experimented with different lacquers, woods, builds, frets, you name it."

Building custom guitars requires investment of time and resources on the part of any manufacturer, and sometimes The Music Zoo has to, in Colletti's words, "step up" and place a large order up front, while other manufacturers are willing to do a one-off sale of a custom instrument. Regardless of the nature of the deal, though, it's worth it for The Music Zoo team.

"We offer things here that you can't get anywhere else," Colletti said.

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

For any consumer, finding the perfect guitar can be much more involved than choosing the right pickups and body shape, sunburst color and type of wood. To help, The Music Zoo makes it easy for potential buyers to feel out an instrument before



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RETAIL JUNGLE

they purchase.

"We have tryout rooms upstairs where people can go on their own, play a guitar and really get to know it," Colletti said. "It's the same as when you send somebody a guitar and they're sitting on their couch or in their bedroom, or with their band. They're going to get a better idea of, 'Is this for me?' It's more comfortable than playing in front of a whole group of people on a showroom floor, which can be intimidating."

Colletti's experiences as a customer himself informed his decision to offer tryout rooms to his patrons.

"I was always one of those guys who walked into a music store and didn't want to play and have all of the sales guys, who were guitar players as well, listening and saying, 'Oh, I don't like the way he played that lick,'" he said, laughing. "It felt like a lot of pressure."

While some customers have no problem cranking up an amp and wailing, regardless of who may be listening, Colletti has noticed that customers react positively to the seclusion his store offers.

"You can see that there are a lot of people who want a more private experience testing out an instrument," he added. "We created the space to be comfortable for them as well."

SERVING THE CUSTOMER

Though fans of The Music Zoo might be initially drawn in via an online listing for a striking, vintage Wayne Charvel Phoenix electric guitar — or a product video of Colletti wailing on a Jackson exclusive Randy Rhoads RR 1.5 — it's the company's welcoming and knowledgeable staff that keeps them coming back.

"As a customer myself, I want to have a dialog with someone

who knows what he or she is talking about," Colletti said. "I need to feel comfortable and have the interaction be convenient and easy. I need to feel secure and trust the dealer. Buying a guitar is not like ordering a pizza. You're giving somebody your credit card information and buying something that could cost thousands of dollars. You want to trust that you're in the right place, and I've been working over the last 20 years on building that trust."

Colletti's work has been paying off, attracting sales from the likes of Joe Walsh, Pete Townshend, Steve Miller, Joe Satriani, John Mayer, Adam Levine and many more. Yet rock stars aside, The Music Zoo's clientele runs the gamut from gigging pros to vintage collectors, enthusiastic hobbyists to kids yearning to strum their first power chords, as well as the "guitar junkie who's always looking to trade up for the next new thing," Colletti said. The key to maintaining such an active and diverse customer base, he continued, is equal parts imagination and passion.

"I'm still a fan of all of this stuff, and that's what makes running The Music Zoo so much fun for me," he said. "I hope that that sense of passion, and the fun that I'm having, can be seen in the store. I want guitar players coming in to have these moments of, 'Hah, that's cool!'"

"It's about keeping things fresh and offering something new," he continued. "I don't want to sell someone the same guitar over and over again. It can be challenging to keep dreaming up cool ideas, but I'm so into it that it never stops. All we do here are fretted instruments, and things that accompany them. Within that, I'm just always looking for something different." **MI**



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WALK THROUGH

The Music Zoo offers its customers more than just a wide selection of products — it also provides an awesome vibe to shop in. Here, owner Tommy Colletti walks you through what went into the design of his store.



▲ SHOWROOM

“Between the guitars, the glamorous custom-framed rock photography, courtesy of Neil Zlozower, the building’s history and the design of the store, it’s full of inspiration,” Colletti said. “I’m hoping that guitar players have been and continue to be excited about being here and shopping at The Music Zoo, whether it be in our retail location or online.”

MAIN > GUITAR ROOM

“We had help with The Music Zoo’s store design from our architect and designer, Jim Acunto,” Colletti said. “My wife, Erin, and I spent countless nights Googling modern industrial spaces until we found the vibe, color and pictures we wanted to pull inspiration from. I was dead set against having the store look like every other guitar store. I certainly did not want and fluorescent lighting and peg board. I wanted to create an experience.”



GIBSON & BRAND-SPECIFIC ROOMS

"Since we specialize in certain brands, I thought it was fitting to make a 'shrine' for each brand," Colletti said. "I love Gibson Custom Shop and what they're doing and thought that the historic reissues and the rest of the famous Gibson line needed its own space. Separating brands gives the consumer a chance to digest all of our inventory in little pieces. I also didn't want to create only one room — this way it gives our favored manufacturers some love and shows that we specialize in their brands."

V



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STORE LOCATION

"This building's architecture and location really became the initial selling point for us at first," Colletti said. "Although slightly off the beaten path, the industrial design of the building was more reminiscent of downtown Brooklyn or SoHo rather than Long Island. The view of the bridge span and the Roslyn [Hempstead] Harbor made it even more appealing. The building also houses tons of classic automobile memorabilia and a collection of vintage and collectible cars on display that seemed to fit so well with the guitars we offer."

An advertisement for Kala Elite ukuleles. On the left, three acoustic ukuleles with different wood finishes are displayed vertically. On the right, the Kala logo is featured in a stylized font, with "KALA" in large letters, "PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA" below it, and "ELITE" in a smaller font. Below the logo, the text "Made in Petaluma, California" is written in red, and "COMING January 2015!" is written in yellow. At the bottom, the website "www.kalabrand.com" is listed in white.

10 DRUM PROMOTIONS TO CELEBRATE **IDM**



RANDY WOOD

OWNER, THE MUSIC SHOPPE & PRO-SOUND CENTER
Normal, Illinois

“We are located in Landmark Mall, and while we take up a large chunk of space, we decided to implement the large hallway leading to The Music Shoppe & Pro-Sound Center. We set up every acoustic and electronic drum set we had from our sales floor, and then unboxed the back stock of drum sets in our warehouse. After receiving permission from our landlord, we lined both sides of the hallway with drum sets, tuned and ready to play.

“We stepped out of our box on this one. We even had a live drummer playing an acoustic set on a podium along side of College Avenue, a busy street that runs in front of our store to Illinois State University. The impact to the bottom line wasn’t immediate, but our drum sales were up for a period of several months. The visual effect was huge especially because customers walked in the front door to the hallway and then found more drum sets in the showroom of our Pro-Sound Center. It paid off for quite a while and had a positive effect on our sales staff. They realized how much inventory we had in stock and were motivated to sell it.”

DAVID KIVINIEMI **OWNER, MUSIC WORLD & DRUMMER’S DEN** *Murfreesboro, Tennessee*

“I think our biggest draw has been our free drum clinics. We had a standing-room-only crowd of nearly a 100 people for our clinic with my friend David Northrup, who toured for eight years with Travis Tritt and is now on the road with The Oak Ridge Boys. That makes for a nice spirit of community, both from a drummer’s perspective and the city as a whole. We try to do those with a casual party-type atmosphere. My wife caters refreshments with homemade brownies, Rice Krispies treats, pigs in a blanket and plenty of chips and drinks. I think our customers appreciate the extra effort.”



Last year, International Drum Month moved to May. To help you prepare for this month-long celebration of percussion, Music Inc. has gathered **10 great promotional ideas** from some of the country's top drum retailers

By Stephen Hall



KYLE HOCK
PIANO & PERCUSSION
MANAGER, PLAYGROUND
MUSIC CENTER
Fort Walton Beach, Florida

"The best promo we have ever had is our 'Free Lessons For life' program. Customers would buy a kit and get a free 30-minute group lesson every single week for the rest of their life. They could learn something new every week. It's a great promo and has the local drum scene in a buzz. It's great for beginners and is a great way for me to move kits — especially at crunch time — Christmas!"



DAN FAIANO
DRUM DEPARTMENT MANAGER,
ALTO MUSIC
Middletown, New York

"When I think about our best promotion, two events come to mind. Over this past summer, we had a 'Customer Appreciation Event' in which we had reps from different companies at our location to interact with the customers. We also ran a sale that day, and it worked out very well. In the fall we had Mapex drums at our location to perform a clinic and discuss the new products. We ran a promotion that day as well. I think what I can take from this is that the more information the customer has about the item they are interested in, the easier it makes it to purchase, because they are more knowledgeable."



DON FRANK
DEPARTMENT MANAGER,
GELB MUSIC
Redwood City, California

"We have put on hundreds of events over the years, so our customers expect to have some events each year. When we plan an event we look at key aspects of the event, centering around education, a supporting company and artist, and doing something for the community.

"Our best events recently have taken advantage of technology. Our ability to stream live events, so you can watch on your computer or smartphone and chat with the presenter in real-time, has been great. We also archive the event so you can watch it later on YouTube. By conducting these events, we have extended our brand, created new customer contacts while sustaining existing ones and strengthened manufacturer relationships."



MIKE HENRY
CEO AND PRESIDENT,
PERCUSSION CENTER
Houston

“During the Sabian Vault Cymbal Tour, the Sabian A team showed up with lots of cymbals, but also set up a shop in the front of our store and customized cymbals via hammering and lathing on the spot. Drummers were able to buy cymbals ‘direct from the factory’ in front of our store.”

PAUL FINKE
V.P. SALES & PURCHASING,
WILLIS MUSIC
Florence, Kentucky

“The best promotion we have had in the last few years was our ‘Cymbal-Land Cincinnati’ event. We ran it two years straight in the spring and partnered with four to five key cymbal vendors. We offered the public over 1,000 cymbals to choose from, with a fantastic variety and some prototypes as well. It was a great few days to hang, talk cymbals and sell quite a few. It was good for our bottom line as we were able to procure a great space just a few hundred feet from our own store for nothing.”



SCOTT FEEHAN
OWNER, SCOTT'S DRUM CENTER
Lafayette, Louisiana

“Our best promotion was a Christmas season contest. We had 10 prizes. Customers entered by coming into the store. We had different points associated with different days, bonus points for purchases. It ran from Black Friday through Dec. 31. We sent mail outs every week throughout the sale and offered different specials for each week. Our gross sales were up 66 percent over the previous year and margins were close to 40 points. It worked wonderfully, and we have done different versions of this contest ever since.”

JUSTIN SALAZAR
DRUM SALES, GRANDMA'S MUSIC
Albuquerque, New Mexico

“The best results I have seen for promotional events are clinics that put a spotlight on the gear a particular drummer is using. Anytime there is an event to see, customers are excited. Especially with cymbals, the results are great. I believe cymbals are very personal. When a person comes in to see a new line of cymbals they want to know what it will sound like in context, rather than simply hearing a cymbal by itself. When someone plays a few cymbals together, they want to buy them knowing what the cymbals sound like with drums and music.”

“At a Dave Weckl clinic, I had a customer buy both of his HHX Evolution crashes (16- and 18-inch) based off the performance. This is ideal for us as a business because it makes for a fast and large sale. People know what to expect from those cymbals and as a result the line does better in the shop. It helps consistent cymbal turnover.”

MATT KENT
DRUM DEPARTMENT, GEORGE'S MUSIC
Fernpark, Florida

“We bundled popular high-margin drum accessories. Basically we put together key popular items that were high-margin, making it a no-brainer for our customers to get drumming. An example bundle was a pair of sticks, a practice pad and a popular beginner technique book. For the more experienced player, we tried bundling a low margin cymbal and a higher margin cymbal attachment or cymbal stand. This helped the cymbal sales, as they can be harder to move at times.”

“I will underline all of this with a key feature of our location: lessons! We would promote our lessons along with the bundles, which was also a successful way for us to drive traffic into our store.”

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

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BREAKING RECORDS

The 2015 NAMM Show sees its largest show in its 114-year history with record numbers of exhibitors and registrants

By Katie Kailus

The MI industry showed up to the Anaheim Convention Center in record numbers, as NAMM recorded the largest NAMM Show in its 114-year history, with 1,621 exhibiting companies and 99,342 registered attendees.

Held from Jan. 22-25, this year's show saw a 6-percent increase in exhibiting companies over 2014's show.

"In an unpredictable and chaotic marketplace, The NAMM Show has become the reliable and predictable platform where our members can come for business, education and inspiration," said Joe Lamond, NAMM president and

CEO. "From fledgling entrepreneurs to the most established brands, everyone here has an equal shot. The industry showed up with unparalleled energy, and we hope they are leaving better prepared for success in the new year."

An 11-percent increase in international registration and a 2-percent increase in buyer numbers also made it the most diverse show. As a result of the record numbers, exhibitor's booths were swamped the entire show.

"The show was extremely good for us," said Robert Magargal, Taylor Guitars' service network manager. "Thursday and Friday were huge for us. We had some really big crowds up here."



Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue perform on the NAMM GoPro Stage.



Steve Wozniak and NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond during Saturday's Breakfast Session



Larry Morton and Joe Lamond



The annual Drum Circle



Andy Rossi and Joe Costantino of Korg USA



Richie Ramone signs autographs at the Amedia Cymbal booth.



The 2015 She Rocks Award winners

Armando Vega, marketing manager for guitars at Yamaha also reported heavy booth traffic.

“The show has been going really great for us,” Vega said. “We’ve seen a lot of people, and we have received tons of excitement about all of our new releases.”

Off the show floor, there were a slew of events and concerts for the almost 100,000 registered attendees to take in.

The TEC Awards, held on the evening of Jan. 24, honored legendary guitarist Slash with its annual Les Paul Award. Peavey celebrated its 50th anniversary with an all-star lineup that included Lynyrd Skynyrd and Blue Öyster Cult. On Jan. 23, the 3rd annual She Rocks awards took place at the Anaheim Hilton. Awards went out to a number of female leaders in the industry, including Zildjian CEO Craigie Zildjian, Saxophonist Mindi Abair and the all-girl rock band The Bangles.

But events aside, the real buzz was about all the hot, new products debuted at the show. The *Music Inc.* crew scoured the show floor to bring you the best and most innovative of this year’s show that are sure to keep customers’ attention all year long. Turn the page for a full roundup. **MI**



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ECLECTIC ELECTRICS

Guitar manufacturers brought a wide range of electrics to this year's show, from affordable beginner models to limited editions

By Katie Kailus

The electric guitar was on full display at The 2015 NAMM Show as manufacturers showcased their latest models, which ranged from affordable beginner axes to limited editions.

Yamaha increased its distribution of the Pacifica line of electrics, introducing several new models to the U.S. market.

"We have now launched the full-line of Pacificas," said Armando Vega, marketing manager for Yamaha's guitar department. "These models had been available in Europe for a while, but U.S. consumers were constantly asking how come they couldn't get them."

Available "at the working man's price," Vega said the models all street for under \$700. But what makes these affordable guitars really unique is the fact that they come already "hot-rodded" right out of the box.

"Normally with guitars at this price point you would have to change the electronics and change the hardware to your specifications," Vega said. "These models, however, are already hot-rodded. Not only do they have great solid alder bodies and great maple necks, but they also feature flame maple choices."



Fender's Justin Norvell



St. Louis Music's Aaron Williams



From left: Kala's Phil Slight, Michael Upton, Rick Carlson and Dave Caffero



Martin's Chris Martin



From left: Hal Leonard's John Cerullo and Keith Mardak, author of *Guitar Player: The Inside Story of the First Two Decades of the Most Successful Guitar Magazine Ever* Jim Crockett, current Editor-in-Chief of *Guitar Player* Mike Molenda and Hal Leonard's Larry Morton



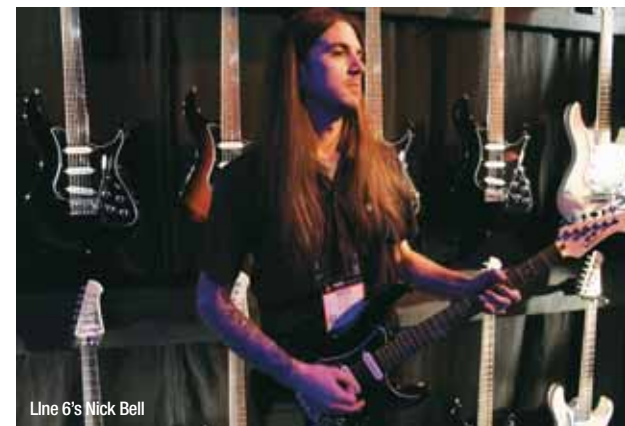
Killer Guitar & Instrument Straps' Amelia Rickwartz and Donna Foster



From left: Fishman's Matthew Schow, Kevin White, Rayne DuPaul, Rob Valyou and Gary Lopez



Yamaha's Armando Vega



Line 6's Nick Bell



They boast Seymour Duncan pickups, Wilkinson tremolos and graphite saddles and nuts. These are all the kinds of things someone would do to a guitar if they were to say, 'Hey, I'm going to do this guitar my way.' But the Pacifica already comes that way."

In other Yamaha news, the manufacturer teamed up with Line 6 — which it acquired last January — to create the Variax Standard. This guitar boasts Yamaha's craftsmanship with Line 6's Variax HD technology and lets players switch up their tunings on the fly.

"The Variax Standard is the first product collaboration with Yamaha," said Mark Williams, public relations and social media manager for Line 6. "It delivers a guitar unlike any traditional guitar on the market at a breakthrough price."

Godin rolled out its Summit Classic CT, which media and artist relations' rep Richard Brunze said was, "the hottest thing we have at the show," while The Loar debuted new its fully hollow LH-302 and LH-304 thinbody archtops.

"There's something about an electric guitar with resonant chambers; having a fully hollow soundbox really creates a sound that can't be duplicated by any other means," said Travis Atz, The Loar's director of product development.

Taylor added to its T5 line of electrics with the new T5Z, a smaller, more compact model.

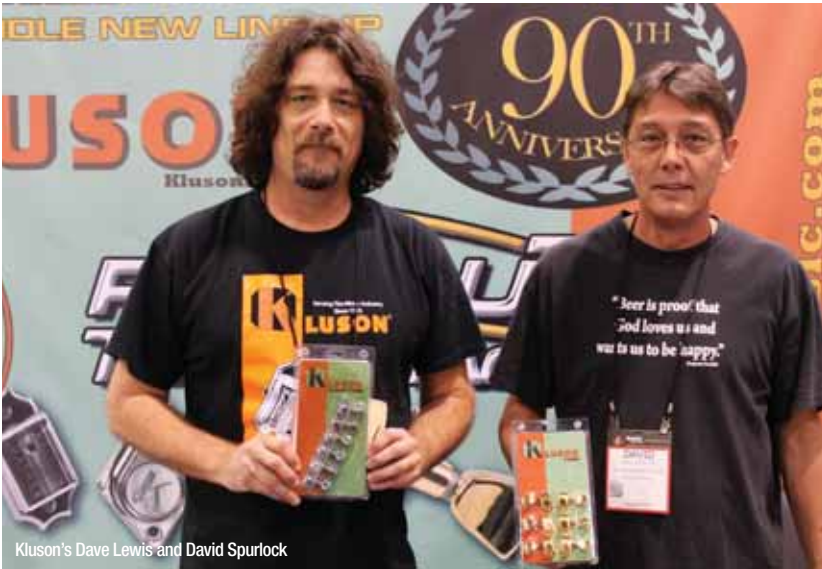
"This guitar is more for the electric guitar player," said Taylor Guitars' Robert Magargal. "This model has jumbo frets, a 12-inch radius fingerboard and a little smaller headstock. So, when someone that is used to having a Les Paul on stage picks up this guitar up and holds it it'll feel very familiar."

Also at the show, Fender debuted its "10 For '15" Limited Edition Collection which serves like a guitar of the month program running from March–December 2015. The collection will include a different, unique model each month with availability limited to 500 models. Dealers must opt into the program in order to be able to snatch up the unique guitars.

SMART ACCESSORIES

New guitar models were accompanied by a slew of new, tech-savvy accessories, including Line 6's AMPLIFi TT. The follow-up to last year's AMPLIFi, Line 6's new AMPLIFi TT makes it possible for guitarists to turn any speaker system into a guitar amp and Bluetooth streaming system that mixes in guitar amp tones.

"AMPLIFi TT is all of the fun of AMPLIFi in



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a compact and powerful tabletop footprint,” Line 6’s Williams said. “AMPLIFi TT makes jamming, practicing, and recording easier and more fun than ever by instantly transforming any room into a jam space where you can escape to play guitar.”

DigiTech made it a little easier for beginning players with the release of its TRIO pedal. Named a ‘Best in Show’ product during annual the Breakfast Session, the DigiTech TRIO listens to the way a player plays and then automatically generates bass and drum parts, simulating a band sound that is ideal for first-time players.

“If you’ve never played in a band, how do you get good enough to play in one? Enter the TRIO,” said Chris Tso, Best in Show panelist and vice president of merchandising for Musician’s Friend. “You can even adjust the style of music or slow it down. It’s very cool.” **MI**



Godin's Richard Brunze



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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



**LINE 6
AMPLIFI TT**

Line 6's 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. Boasting powerful DSP processing power, AMPLIFI TT delivers over 200 award-winning amps and effects with great sound quality. Players can choose from thousands of professionally designed presets.

{line6.com}

**LEVY'S LEATHERS
MV17HD01**

These new guitar straps from Levy's are available in Burnt Olive, Tan and Burgundy. They boast a style reminiscent of the 1960s. The untreated natural veg-tan leather accepts the hand-dyed wash in a way that exposes the natural grain of the leather, making each strap unique.

{levysleathers.com}



**CORDOBA
GK STUDIO LIMITED**

The new Cordoba GK Studio Limited's zircote wood gives the instruments a rich, smooth sound which pairs nicely with the solid spruce top. Zircote is similar in appearance to rosewood, but has olive green and gray highlights.

{cordobaguitars.com}

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

RECORDING KING DIRTY 30'S 12-STRING

Recording King's new Dirty 30's 12-string dreadnought combines the classic jangly chorus of a 12-string with 1930s mail-order style. The foundation of the classic 12-string tone comes from the solid spruce top, while a bone nut and saddle help the strings resonate freely and ensure tuning stability. [\[recordingking.com\]](http://recordingking.com)



OUTLAW EFFECTS FIVE O'CLOCK, BOILERMAKER BOOST

Micro effects pedal builder Outlaw Effects has introduced a pair of new analog guitar pedals: Five O'Clock Fuzz and Boilermaker Boost. The Five O'Clock Fuzz offers rich, cascading sustain with crisp attack while Boilermaker Boost provides pure, pristine, transparent boost in a compact format.

[\[outlawguitareffects.com\]](http://outlawguitareffects.com)

HAL LEONARD 'ACOUSTIC & ELECTRIC GUITAR LESSON PACKS'

Hal Leonard's *Acoustic Guitar Lesson Pack* and *Electric Guitar Lesson Pack* let students get started with solid lessons using hit songs. The methods' logical teaching sequence helps beginning guitarists play easier than ever. The *Acoustic Guitar Lesson Pack* includes the *Acoustic Guitar Method*, *Guitar Chord Chart*, *Guitar Scale Chart* and *Guitar Theory*, plus the *200 Acoustic Licks DVD*. [\[halleonard.com\]](http://halleonard.com)

KALA ELITE U.S.

Kala's Elite U.S. ukulele line is the company's first range of U.S.-made ukes. The instruments are hand-built at the Kala custom shop in Petaluma, California. They include custom inlays and appointments. [\[kalabrand.com\]](http://kalabrand.com)



EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

DIGITECH TRIO

Harman's DigiTech has debuted the TRIO Band Creator Pedal. This pedal offers the ability to create a band that plays along with the user. The TRIO Band Creator Pedal listens to what is played and automatically generates bass and drum parts that match chord progressions and rhythmic feel. Plug a guitar into TRIO, press the footswitch to teach TRIO the chords and rhythm, then press the footswitch again to start playing with a customized personal band. [\[digitech.com\]](http://digitech.com)

MARTIN CEO 8

This is the eighth incarnation of C. F. Martin IV's "CEO's Choice" series, with favored specifications selected by company CEO Chris Martin. Martin's largest acoustic body size, the Grand Jumbo, offers great value. 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 PACIFICA

Yamaha has released the entire lineup of Pacifica electric guitars United States. The guitars feature solid tonewood construction with Alder bodies, Rosewood fingerboards and maple necks. Their versatility is due in large part to top-notch pickup and hardware selections, helping guitarists create a diverse tonal palette. [\[usa.yamaha.com\]](http://usa.yamaha.com)

PRS 30TH ANNIVERSARY CUSTOM MODELS

To honor the company's 30th anniversary, PRS is offering a series of 30th Anniversary Custom 24 guitar models in each of its electric guitar product families, including the U.S.-made Private Stock, the U.S.-made Core line, the vintage-inspired U.S.-made S2 and the PRS designed SE guitar. Each model incorporates the visionary design and craftsmanship that has become synonymous with the brand. [\[prsguitars.com\]](http://prsguitars.com)



EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



**REVEREND
BAYONET RA90**

The new Reverend Bayonet RA90 is armed with a pair of contrasting Railhammers. At the bridge is a chrome-covered Hyper Vintage Humbucker with ringing, open tones and the neck boasts a Gnarly 90, with fat and raw attack. {reverendguitars.com}

**ALFRED MUSIC
COMPLETE STARTER PACKS**

Alfred Music's new Complete Starter Packs include the *Teach Yourself to Play Banjo* complete starter pack, the *Teach Yourself to Play Mandolin* complete starter pack and the *Teach Yourself to Play Classical Guitar* complete starter pack. The classical guitar pack includes a full-size Firebrand nylon-string acoustic guitar with deluxe accessories. {alfred.com}



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THE SOUND ROOM

Pro-Audio suppliers offer updates to existing products for new and improved quality and capability

By David Ball

From recorded music to live sound, the overall focus for pro-audio manufacturers at this year's NAMM Show was bringing continued innovation to existing products, in order to offer updates to consumers who already have the basic platforms — improving sound quality, expanding technological capabilities, and increasing the overall functionality of equipment, for beginners and professionals alike.

POWERFUL PLUGINS

One prime example was Avid's release of Pro Tools 12, which allows the option for Avid customers to subscribe on a low-cost, monthly or annual basis. This upgrade in conjunction with the release of Pro Tools First — a free, entry-level version of Avid's industry standard software — grants beginners access to the same basic recording functions, with the opportunity to upgrade by subscription when more advanced functionality is required. With these releases, as well as Avid's upcoming Cloud Collaboration feature (coming soon to Pro Tools 12), Pro Tools users will be able to create and collaborate with peers and professionals across the globe, allowing for an unprecedented virtual recording ecosystem.

When it comes to recording live performances, Waves has debuted Tracks Live “a multi-track recording software solution designed to capture live performances of all kinds, from the smallest gig to the largest,” said Udi Henis, international marketing manager, during a pre-show press reception. “It enables easy switching



Electro-Voice's Brian Wisner



On-Stage's Jim Hennessey



Ultimate Ears' Philippe Depallens and United Science's Craig Jones



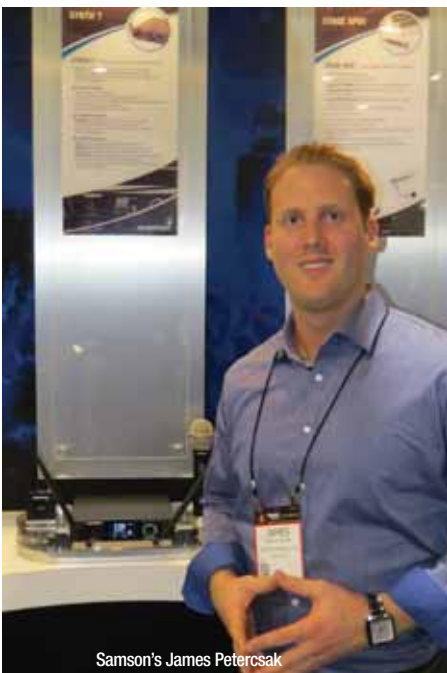
Producer Christian "Leggy" Landon demonstrates UA's Apollo Expanded.



MML's Scott Krueckeberg and Ian Cohen



Focusrite's Giles Orford



Samson's James Peterscak



Blue Mics' John Maier, Tommy Edwards and Adam Castillo



TC Group's Kevin Alexander

between stereo-out and multi-out modes, allowing you to toggle back and forth between recording and virtual sound check with the click of a button.”

To accompany the Tracks Live software, Waves upgraded one of its most successful plugins, the Waves Reel ADT, “the first plugin to successfully emulate Abbey Road Studio’s pioneering process of artificial double-tracking,” Henis continued. “[And] now it can be used live as well.”

Universal Audio’s release of the Apollo Expanded software, as well as Focusrite’s Clarett series of interfaces, now offer users updated Thunderbolt technology to both systems’ software, providing clearer conversion rates and greater dynamic range.

IN CONTROL

One of this year’s “Best in Show” winners, Akai Professional’s Advance Controller series, “allows direct control of virtual instruments, but it also comes with VIP software,” said Adam Polakow, product specialist. “We will soon have other third party plugins work with us [so that] it’s almost like an iTunes, where you’ll be able to buy plugins from within the software.”

The Advance Keyboard Controller features 8 velocity- and pressure-sensitive MPC pads with RGB illumination, and functions as a standalone MIDI controller, or allows the user to control plugins and DAW simultaneously.

Novation has also updated its Launchpad controller series with the Launchpad Pro, enhanced with RGB LED feedback and velocity and pressure-sensitive pads.

“The Launchpad has shaped electronic music — and I don’t say that lightly,” said Giles Orford, Novation’s marketing director. “It changed the way people perform, and how they share their electronic music. It has become the iconic Ableton Live controller. But the community has taken it as far as they can go. In four years they’ve been asking for more. And we haven’t yet delivered — until now.”

The Launchpad Pro has been specifically designed to keep musicians focused on their performance, to easily and immediately apply effects, dip in and out of specific mixer controls at the touch of a button and switch between four key modes. **MI**



From left: Zoom North America's Erich Barto, Micah Eberman and Samuel Greene



From left: Mackie's Henri Cohen, John Boudreau, Ben Olswang and Alex Nelson



Butch Vig makes a guest appearance at the Waves booth.



Yorkville Sound's Steve Long

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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

BLUE MICROPHONES MO-FI HEADPHONES

Blue Microphones Mo-Fi is the first headphone that features a built-in audiophile amplifier matched to high-powered, precision drivers for consistent accuracy on every device. bluemic.com



ELECTRO-VOICE EKX SERIES LOUD-SPEAKERS

Electro-Voice's EKX series is an upper mid-price-point speaker, featuring wood enclosures, onboard Quick Smart DSP, signal synchronized transducers and 1,500 watts. electrovoice.com



NOVATION LAUNCHPAD PRO

Novation's Launchpad Pro has been designed to help the musician easily and immediately apply effects, dip in and out of specific mixer controls and switch between four key modes. novationmusic.com



SAMSON SYNTH 7

Samson's Synth 7 system features dynamic LCD setup, which hosts the system's auto frequency spectrum analyzer and identifies the best channel for a given performance location. samsontech.com



MXL GOLAV LAVALIER MICROPHONE

The GOLav works with GoPro Hero3, Hero 3+ and Hero4 cameras. The GOLav is the first lavalier microphone for GoPro that has the right angle mini USB connector built into the microphone cable, so no adapter is needed. mxlmics.com





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TS6200VLQ

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TS6200VLQ



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STEVE NIEVES
AS6200VLQ



Find the Music in You

Alisha Pattillo photography © Pin Lim
Anthony Terry photography © Donovan Allen
Jason Weber & Steve Nieves photography © Heidi Wallin

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



WAVES
BUTCH VIG VOCALS

Waves' Signature series Butch Vig Vocals plugin recreates Vig's signature sound, using straightforward vocal processing with distortion and air frequencies, adding an uncompromising quality to any vocal track. waves.com

TC-HELICON
MP-76

TC-Helicon's MP-76 lets singers roam the stage freely while controlling their vocal processor directly from the mic - activating multiple effects, toggling presets, or building loops in real-time. tcgroup.tc

ZOOM
Q8 HANDY
VIDEO RECORDER

Zoom's Q8 is a compact video camera that uses Zoom's mic capsule system to record audio. It combines a high-definition video camera and a four-track audio recorder in one compact package. zoom.co.jp



PRESONUS
STUDIOLIVE 328i
LOUDSPEAKERS

Presonus' StudioLive 328i loudspeakers are compact, powered, three-way speakers, featuring custom-designed, 8-inch coaxial speaker with a 1 3/4-inch titanium compression driver. Class D power amplifiers deliver a combined 2,000 watts of power. presonus.com



EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

**GIBSON
LES PAUL
REFERENCE
MONITORS**

Gibson Brands' Les Paul Reference Monitors use carbon coated titanium tweeters and non-woven carbon woofers to ensure clean transient impulse response and large headroom. gibson.com



**ULTIMATE EARS
UE PRO SOUND
GUARD**

The UE Pro Sound Guard is a compact and portable device that connects in-line with any sound source and UE Pro in-ear monitor. It provides automated sound level management to limit unwanted noise from unanticipated high levels of sound and also enables greater sound fidelity. ultimateears.com






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CAJON CONQUEST

Cajons continue to dominate, while cymbal manufacturers expand their offerings

By Bobby Reed

The unrelenting popularity of the cajon was evident at this year's NAMM Show. Just like the ukulele did a few years ago, the cajon has emerged as a fun, accessible instrument for beginners, as well as an instrument that experienced pros can use to generate diverse sounds.

"The cajon is getting huge," said percussionist and clinician Jim Greiner, who demonstrated products in the LP booth. "I think it's because the cajon is so easy to play, it stays in tune, and you've got a lot of versatility with it. I've used it in a 10-piece show band in Las Vegas. You can close-mic the back of it, and you get this enormous sound. Then I use it in duos and trios in little club situations. So you've got a bass sound, you've got a slap that sounds like the backbeat on a snare drum, and then with all the new accessories, you have even more versatility."

Various accessories, such as Gibraltar's Strap Drive Cajon Pedal and the LP Foot Tambourine, have expanded the sonic palette for cajon players. One standout accessory launched at this year's show were LP's Cajon Hats, which let players create a hi-hat sound without the fuss of heavy cymbals and a stand. With these 9-inch Cajon Hats (manufactured from B20 bronze) players can explore a range of traditional hi-hat wash by opening and closing the Cajon Hats with the easily adjusted thumbscrew. Additionally, the specially designed



Sabian's Charlie Brown hammers a cymbal at the Sabian booth.



Piano Nigro plays the Wambooka at Dream's booth.



DW's Don and Chris Lombardi



Jim Greiner plays LP Cajon Hats at the LP booth.



Remo's Chris Wakelin



Peace's Mark Esquer



Vater displays its drumstick offerings at its booth.

striker allows for stick-free playing.

It was impossible to walk around The NAMM Show floor without seeing the increasingly prevalent cajon. Among the offerings were Pearl's Afterburner, CentiGRADE and Mach 3 cajons, Gon Bops' Commuter cajon, Peace's three new maple cajons, Remo's Dorado cajon, and Toca's Colorsound cajons, and the Bongo Flip-Cajon.

RIDE IT OUT

Also hot at this year's show was the introduction of many complex-sounding cymbals, especially rides.

David Levine, president of Full Circle Management, noted that cymbal manufacturers are delivering products that offer new levels of sonic diversity and nuance.

"It's not so much the cymbals leading the trend as the cymbals following the trend," Levine said. "The trend I see is that a lot of the younger drummers are getting back into the jazzier, more finesse styles of drumming. The [previous] generation [was] really playing heavy, hard and big — that's a great style with a lot of notes and a lot of power. But the pendulum is swinging back a little bit more toward finesse, the more musical styles of drumming."

Levine highlighted some of the features of the DRK series cymbals in the TRX booth. Made from B20 bronze, the DRK cymbals offer a dark, earthy, old-school sound. The classic tonal tendencies are enhanced via deep hammering, and the cymbals come with pre-drilled holes near the outer edge to accommodate TRX's two-piece Removable Rivets as well as other sound modifiers.

Cymbal manufacturers showcased a bevy of products at the show. Sabian unveiled its collection of six Big & Ugly ride cymbals, including the 22-inch HHX Phoenix. Zildjian showcased five new cymbals in its FX series (including the 12-inch FX Spiral Stacker), plus the 20-inch K Constantinople Renaissance Ride and 21-inch K Custom Organic Ride. Paiste highlighted its 22-inch RUDE Power Ride, developed with drummer Dave Lombardo.

Overall, one thing was clear: Cymbal manufacturers offered drummers interested in increasing the individual "personality" of their sound a wide array of new products from which to choose. **MI**



Paiste's Tim Shahady



Shariq Tucker, winner of Guitar Center's 26th Annual Drum-Off, jams at the TRX booth.



Mark Guiliana performs at Sabian's booth.

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EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

**NFUZD AUDIO
NSPIRE SERIES**

The NSPIRE Series Rock Full Pack lets players convert their acoustic drum sets to electronic drums, using real-size trigger pads and BFD Eco software with 55GB of 24-bit/44.1 Hz full-bandwidth drum samples. khs-america.com

**DREAM
WAMBOOKA**

Dream is the North American distributor of the Wambooka, a drum made from a single piece of polycarbonate. By adding water inside the drum, players can bend pitches, change the timbre and create many effects. dreamcymbals.com



**VIC FIRTH
VICGLOVES**

VicGloves are crafted in cabretta leather, with a ventilated synthetic mesh palm and back, as well stretch lycra between the fingers. The synthetic rubber grip on the thumb and forefinger provides outstanding grip and control. vicfirth.com



**SONOR
VINTAGE SERIES**

Sonor has brought back the sound and look of its iconic Tear-drop drum sets. Just like their acclaimed predecessors, the Vintage series drums feature hand-selected premium German Beech shells with rounded bearing edges. us.sonor.com

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VG010L, VG010R
VG020L, VG020R

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HTKEY12



EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



**SABIAN
BIG & UGLY
CYMBALS**

Sabian is offering six unique ride cymbals that are big, dark, loose and dynamic. All six models offer great complexity, versatility and a distinctive appearance. These models combine old world cymbal-making with 21st-century innovation. {sabian.com}



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ANALOG IS BACK

Keyboard manufacturers throw it back, debut slew of new analog offerings

By Ed Enright

Analog synthesis continues to make a strong comeback as keyboard manufacturers find creative ways to incorporate the decades-old technology into new products with modern features. News that Moog is bringing back three of its large-format modular synthesizers fed into the analog buzz that prevailed at this year's show, as did Korg's revival of the classic ARP Odyssey duo-phonics synthesizer.

Dave Smith Instruments has reacquired the rights to the Sequential brand name from Yamaha and released the Prophet-6 polyphonic analog synthesizer.

"For the first time in 30 years, there's a new Sequential product at NAMM," said proprietor Dave Smith. "It's the sound of the Prophet-5, but it's been updated to be what people are expecting of a keyboard now. We have digital effects on it. Even simple things like aftertouch and velocity sensitivity on the keyboard weren't available before. It has arpeggiators and sequencers and so forth, but at the same time it's very streamlined and simple. It's not like most keyboards now that have big displays and all kinds of menu-diving."

Smith and others stressed that the appeal of analog synth technology lies in their simplicity and the fun factor for the user. The sense of sheer enjoyment that's associated with analog synth technology is finding its way back to the manufacturers and is becoming manifest in new product designs.

"All the kids are moving back to analog — it's cool and it's



Akai Professional's Daniel Gill



Korg's Rich Formidoni introduces the new Kronos workstation.



Lowrey's Seijiro Imamura and Jim Wieda

trendy,” said Roland Product and Marketing Specialist Ed Diaz while showing the JD-Xi analog/digital crossover synth, which marks the company’s return to analog after nearly 30 years. “We’re going to embrace both technologies and show you how to utilize them together. For us, it’s all about having a good time.”

Akai Professional added to its growing analog line with two new models: the Timbre Wolf, a four-voice analog polyphonic synthesizer; and the Tom Cat, an analog drum machine that complements the company’s existing Rhythm Wolf model.

“Analog is back with a vengeance,” said Daniel Gill, MPC product manager for Akai Professional. “It’s great to see what’s old is new again, and it’s cool to see a piece that you can just turn on and have fun with. We’re excited because this is something we’ve always had a passion for. The Rhythm Wolf was a great success for us, and it’s nice to be able to continue the line and build a family.”

Piano manufacturers, meanwhile, continue to embrace digital technology in ways that enhance the acoustic piano playing experience. Kawai, Yamaha and PianoDisc, to name a few, all showed hybrid-type instruments that give pianists the ability to play “silently,” access large digital sound libraries or have the instrument’s soundboard act as a speaker.

“I’m seeing a tremendous amount of growth and interest, not only in the dealer network but also among end users,” said Tom Lagomarsino, executive vice president of PianoDisc. “You can use all the features and benefits of an electronic piano and join that technology with the acoustic piano action.” **MI**



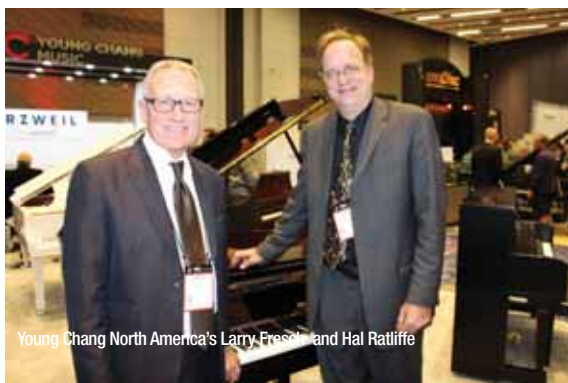
Kawai America's Tom Love



Tommy Shaver demonstrates Roland's JD line of analog-digital crossover synthesizers.



Keyboardist Gabriel Aldort demos Yamaha's P-115 Digital Piano.



Young Chang North America's Larry Fresco and Hal Ratliffe



Dave Smith Instruments' Dave Smith



Ultimate Support's Jeff Brooks



Keyboardist Kristian Terzi (left) with Casio's Mike Martin

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS

**ALFRED MUSIC
SITTING IN SERIES**

Alfred Music's *Sitting In: Jazz Piano* and *Sitting In: Blues Piano* method book and DVD-ROM packages allow piano players and keyboardists to virtually sit in with top-notch professional bands. The series offers high-quality studio play-along recordings. {alfred.com}



**LOWREY
EY400 INSPIRE
VIRTUAL
ORCHESTRA**

Inspired design makes Lowrey's EY400 Inspire Virtual Orchestra perform well for all manner of recreational music making. A global collection of presets gives the EY400 touch-and-play ease of operation. {lowrey.com}



**KORG
NEW KRONOS**

The new Kronos from Korg is the most powerful version of the company's flagship workstation to date. It features the nine-engine structure from previous versions, with improvements to sound capability and overall functionality. {korg.com}

**AKAI PROFESSIONAL
ADVANCE KEYBOARD**

Akai Professional's Advance Keyboard series — available in 25-, 49- and 61-key sizes — provides advanced manipulation of any virtual instrument. Designed to fuse the power of software instruments with the live playability of a keyboard workstation, the Advance Keyboard series transforms computer-based plug-ins into a hands-on playing experience. {akaipro.com}



**YAMAHA
P-115 DIGITAL
PIANO**

Yamaha's P-115 Digital Piano, which replaces the P-105, delivers the company's distinct piano touch and tone in a compact design. Its Pure CF Sound Engine reproduces the sound of Yamaha's CFIII 9-foot concert grand piano. The aux outputs and USB port enhance the P-115's versatility and connectivity. {usa.yamaha.com}



EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



**ROLAND
JD-XI SYNTHESIZER**

Roland's JD-Xi interactive analog/digital crossover synthesizer features a true analog synth engine along with a wide selection of Roland's SuperNATURAL digital sounds. Equipped with 37 mini keys, the JD-Xi comes packed with built-in drum kits, a four-track pattern sequencer, vocoder and auto-pitch effects. [rolandus.com]



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VERTICAL INTEGRATION

B&O suppliers offer top-tier features on student-level instruments

By Brian Zimmerman

For the band and orchestra industry, this year's NAMM show was less about product and more about attitude. Optimism was the prevailing outlook for retailers and manufacturers, and much of it was related to the brightening economy.

Numerous manufacturers affirmed that the nation's gradual digging-out of the recession has led to an increase in spending among schools, colleges and after-school programs. With more money at their disposal, many of these institutions are now seeking to replenish their stock of battle-worn instruments with sleeker, more durable models.

In an effort to meet this surge in demand, instrument manufacturers have begun offering high-quality student- and intermediate-level instruments with features from their top-tier products.

Troy Wollwage, marketing manager for Yamaha's B&O Percussion Division, said this "vertical integration" approach was critical to the company's 2015 product line.

"We took the best qualities from our top-of-the-line instruments and integrated them into our intermediate and beginner models," he said. "Schools need to replace those instruments that have been out there for 10 to 15 years, and that's what we're doing."

Case in point: Yamaha's new TP 3300 series timpani. An upgrade of the manufacturer's popular 3100 series, the new timpani line features aluminum bowls with the same shape as Yamaha's top-line models and



Paul Ranieri, Mark Wood and Jordan Rudess perform at the Wood Violins booth.



From left: Rebekah Gibbs and Terry Gibbs with Yamaha's John Wittmann



St. Louis Music's Craig Denny

even comes equipped with the same Remo Renaissance heads. Unlike the high-end series, however, the TP 3300 is fully portable. The drums' lightweight aluminum bowls and retractable pedals and legs make the entire system compact and mobile, perfect for marching bands, percussion ensembles or wind symphonies that require frequent travel.

In the brass and woodwind sector, big strides are being made to improve the durability and comfort of the intermediate-level instrument. At Jupiter, ergonomics are central to the design of the JCL100S B-flat clarinet. The model features a left hand E-flat 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. The clarinet is available in a natural finish with premium Grenadilla wood and silver-plated keys, and comes with a raised C/G tone hole for a natural left hand third finger position.

Thomas Rinaldi, northeast district manager for KHS America, said that the combination of high-end features with top-quality materials make the JCL100S series a standout from other student-model clarinets.

"The mid-range register on some intermediate clarinets is stuffy," Rinaldi said. "But, this particular one is remarkably open. It sounds very good. We also left the ring off the bell to give it a richer, warmer sound."

Billed as a semi-professional model, Schilke's new i32 B-flat trumpet features the same modern design aspects as its popular B and X series instruments, but is geared toward the college student or amateur musician looking to take their playing to the next level. With its classic reverse leadpipe design, .460 medium-large bore and #2i taper Yellow Brass Bell, the i32 is versatile enough to work in any style or genre.

"This model has the same look and feel of professional-level horns but at a price point that is suited for the serious college player or weekend warrior," said Andrew Naumann, president and owner of Schilke.

Accessory manufacturers are also striving to improve products for schools and colleges. For example, the Manhasset Specialty Company, makers of Manhasset Stands, introduced the 32000 iPad Mount to help institutions transition from print sheet music to digital.

Compatible with iPad versions 2, 3 and 4, the Manhasset 3200 iPad Mount transforms traditional Manhasset music stands into digital music e-readers. The Mount's spring-loaded arms grip the iPad firmly and securely, and the 360-degree rotation feature lets users switch quickly between landscape and portrait modes. A built-in tilt mechanism permits one-handed adjustment of the iPad's viewing angle. With the Manhasset shaft/base combination, the iPad can be positioned anywhere from 32 to 55 inches high. **MI**



Yamaha's CSV Team



From left: Trevor James' Sandro Masulo, David Farley and Tom Gould



Backun's Jeremy Backun



Manhasset Specialty Products' Jason Carter and Daniel Roberts



Theo Wanne's Theo Wanne and Matt Ambrose

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



**P. MAURIAT
MASTER 97**

This professional alto saxophone model employs a new body design and ergonomic upgrades. Its sleek profile is complemented by a complex sound palette and fluid action. [\[pmauriatmusic.com\]](http://pmauriatmusic.com)

**SCHILKE
S42LF JON
FADDIS MODEL**

Built to the specifications of the legendary jazz artist, composer and educator Jon Faddis, this tuning bell instrument includes a custom round tuning slide without waterkeys, adjustable tuning bell soundpost, heavy valve caps and removed "nibs" on the second slide. [\[schilkemusic.com\]](http://schilkemusic.com)

**XO
1632RGL-LT ULTRA
LIGHTWEIGHT
PROFESSIONAL
LEAD TROMBONE**

This trombone's ultra lightweight nickel outer slide and nickel-silver crook with hand lapped chromed-inner slides offer superior response and a more centered tone. [\[xobrass.com\]](http://xobrass.com)

**THEO WANNE
THEO WANNE SHIVA
"DESTROYER"
TENOR SAXOPHONE
MOUTHPIECE**

With its combination roll-over and step baffle, Theo Wanne's SHIVA "Destroyer" tenor sax mouthpiece is designed for players who want a bright edge with a solid harmonic core. [\[thewanne.com\]](http://thewanne.com)

**YAMAHA
YAMAHA CUSTOM
CSV R CLARINET**

Yamaha's newest clarinet combines innovative features like an adjustable thumb rest and an ergonomically designed C#/G# key to provide the beautiful sound and consistent quality necessary to elevate any clarinetists playing. [\[eastmanmusiccompany.com\]](http://eastmanmusiccompany.com)

A Q&A WITH THE MUSIC SHOPPE | DANSR SPONSORED ADVERTORIAL

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TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THE MUSIC SHOPPE, INC.

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Randy Wood
The Music Shoppe

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO GET BAND DIRECTORS TO RECOMMEND JUNO FOR THEIR BEGINNERS?

The first thing we did was to replace the reeds we were putting in our rental instruments with JUNO. Since we started with JUNO in March we didn't want to wait for the directors to see the reeds in the rentals, so we started out by giving samples to the directors. Fortunately DANSR is based in Champaign and we hooked them up with a prominent middle school teacher who happens to be an excellent clarinetist. They met with her and she really liked JUNO, so once her name was associated with the reeds they just took off.

“As soon as we found out it was made by Vandoren it was a no-brainer.”

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE STORES TO PROMOTE JUNO?

We have the fully stocked JUNO slat wall displays in both stores and I have to say the design of the box is really eye catching. Plus our staff has been trained to direct any customer that just asks for a 'box of reeds' to the JUNO display and then we help them select the strength based on how long the student has been playing.

REGARDING THE STRENGTHS, HOW DO YOU FIND THEM IN COMPARISON TO OTHER VANDOREN STYLES?

Well there is no doubt they are a little softer than the Traditional Blue Box, which is what Vandoren shows on their comparison chart. Our teachers find them to be easier to get a good sound because they are more flexible. We typically start our beginners with a #2 or #2.5 and they graduate to a #3 after a few weeks.

WHAT ADVICE OR RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER SCHOOL MUSIC DEALERS WHO HAVE YET TO DISCOVER JUNO?

Get some samples from Vandoren and give them to your beginning band directors. But make sure you tell the directors to let the students try them. We found many of our directors would play them and they would compare them to a professional reed primarily based on the strength difference. It's a Vandoren reed for beginners. Once you have the teachers approve them then it's an easy sell. Plus their reeds for the rental instruments are far more competitively priced than anything else we could buy in other brands – and they perform better. It's a win-win for the dealer and their customers.

Visit junoreeds.com or themusicshoppe.com for more information.

SCRATCH THE PAST

DJ companies capitalize on a market of transitions

By Stephen Hall

Knowing when to innovate and when to pay homage to history is a struggle many DJ suppliers face. The DJ industry is in constant flux, and this year some leading suppliers looked to the past while others acknowledged the streamlined speed needed for the future — and a few newcomers just wanted to be part of the boom.

Pioneer DJ debuted its PLX-1000, which is the company's first analog, direct drive professional turntable. It sports a familiar design to a traditional turntable, but strays away from the use of CDs by taking out the disc drive. It contains a high-torque platter that makes hot starts and scratches incredibly precise.

"A lot of people at the show have come and put their hands on it and instantly fell in love with it," said DJ Flip, national demo DJ for Pioneer DJ. "It's not a digital media player, there's no USB hookup, there's no MIDI; it goes back to the roots of the traditional turntable that DJs from long ago all started out on."

Odyssey has focused on staying on top of the changing marketplace by offering products that are efficient and portable, like its new Nexus 20 8x8 collapsible truss system. "I want my whole system in one case — the easier the better," said Carlos Gonzalez, inside sales associate for Odyssey. "When the gig is done, just collapse it and put it in the back of your van or truck."

GoPro featured its Hero4 Black Music Edition at the show. It features various mounts to attach to DJ rigs or instruments and shoots in cinematic quality 4k resolution at 30fps. It is also Bluetooth enabled, allowing for DJs on the road to seamlessly upload video to a mobile device without having to return to a computer.



GoPro's Katie Kilbride



Pioneer DJ's DJ Flip



Odyssey's Carlos Gonzalez



Elation's Anthony Velazquez

"[Musicians] are losing their minds when they see the angles and what it can do," said Katie Kilbride, media relations manager for GoPro. "We're really just trying to change the way music is seen and experienced." **MI**

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UAD-2 Satellite Thunderbolt includes the “Analog Classics Plus” UAD plug-in bundle. Apollo and Apollo 16 include the “Realtime Analog Classics Plus” UAD plug-in bundle. Apollo Twin includes the “Realtime Analog Classics” UAD plug-in bundle. All other plug-ins are sold separately at www.uaudio.com. Thunderbolt cable sold separately. All trademarks are property of their respective owners.

 UNIVERSAL AUDIO

EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS



**NUMARK
NS7 III**

Featuring three 4.3-inch high-resolution screens and an interactive control surface, this controller manages performance and track libraries seamlessly. It lets DJs focus on the crowd and the music, not numbers and waveforms. {numark.com}



**DENON DJ
MC4000**

This two-deck Serato-optimized MIDI controller caters to the professional mobile DJ. A hearty steel chassis, touch activated jog wheels, 100mm pitch faders and an intuitive control layout keeps a DJ focused while balancing complex set elements. {denondj.com}



**CASIO
TRACKFORMER
XW-DJ1**

This controller lets a DJ perform anywhere with no fuss. A single, 7-inch scratch disk feels like an actual vinyl and allows ambidextrous spinning. It is also battery powered and connects easily to mobile devices. {casiomusicgear.com}



**CHAUVET DJ
GIGBAR IRC**

A portable, lightweight all-in-one, this bar contains four popular lighting effects mounted together. Featuring a pair of LED pars, a pair of LED derbies, a red/green laser and four LED strobes, it's everything a DJ needs to light all night. {chauvetdj.com}

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EDITORIAL

Katie Kailus
katiek@musicincmag.com

■ 2015 BEST IN SHOW AWARDS >



BEST IN SHOW rocked the Sunday morning Breakfast Session, highlighting some of the most buzzworthy gear and companies on display at The 2015 NAMM Show. On the following pages, check out the picks from the six

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

■ THE PANELISTS



GAYLE BEACOCK
BEACOCK'S MUSIC
Vancouver, Washington



LEE ANDERTON
ANDERTON'S MUSIC
Guilford, England



JOHN GRABOWSKI
SWEETWATER SOUND
Fort Wayne, Indiana



MYRNA SISLEN
MIDDLE C MUSIC
Washington D.C.



CHRIS TSO
MUSICIAN'S FRIEND
Westlake Village, California



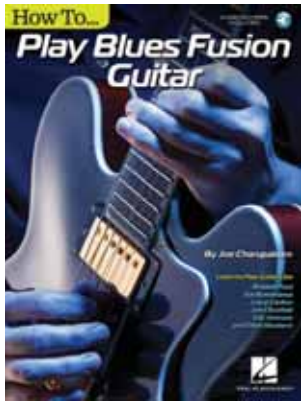
VICTOR SALAZAR
VIC'S DRUM SHOP
Chicago

BEST IN SHOW

MYRNA SISLEN

Hal Leonard's 'How To ...' Series

"Remember the speaker who said you need to go out to Google and search for what the trends are? Well, Hal Leonard did that and they found out the questions are most asked about books and what people want to learn. So, they started the 'How To ...' series with titles like *How To Record on a Budget* and *How to Read Music*."



LEE ANDERTON

Dunlop Cry Baby Mini Wah

"The sales of Cry Babies isn't measured in thousands, or hundreds of thousands. This is a pedal where they measure the sales of pedals in millions. Dunlop has taken that Cry Baby and redesigned it in a miniature pedal configuration. It's going to be perfect for guys putting together the baby pedalboards with Mini Tube Screemers and Hotone pedals."



VICTOR SALAZAR

Sonor Vintage Series Drum Kit

"Sonor is celebrating its 140th anniversary of making drums and decided to bring back the iconic sound and feel and look of one of its teardrop kits from the 1950s and '60s and '70s. I think they've really captured the essence of those kits, but they've also updated the mechanics and the quality."



JOHN GRABOWSKI

Akai Professional Advance Controller

"These are great controllers. The really cool thing about these is the software that makes it work. This software mapped the VST instruments. You can use the one VIP software and, using metadata, it will dial down to presets on all of your VST instruments. And you can load up to eight at a time, and pick between these instruments."



CHRIS TSO

Digitech Trio Guitar Pedal

"This pedal has adaptive learning technology. You play a few chords in it and it learns the key and rhythm that you are playing. You step on it, and immediately, bass and drums accompany you on whatever you're playing. It's not a drum machine; it learns whatever you're playing and plays along with it. You can adjust the style of bass and drums to things like jazz, swing or rock. You can slow it down. And when you slow it down, the bass player adds more fills, like one would normally."



GAYLE PEACOCK

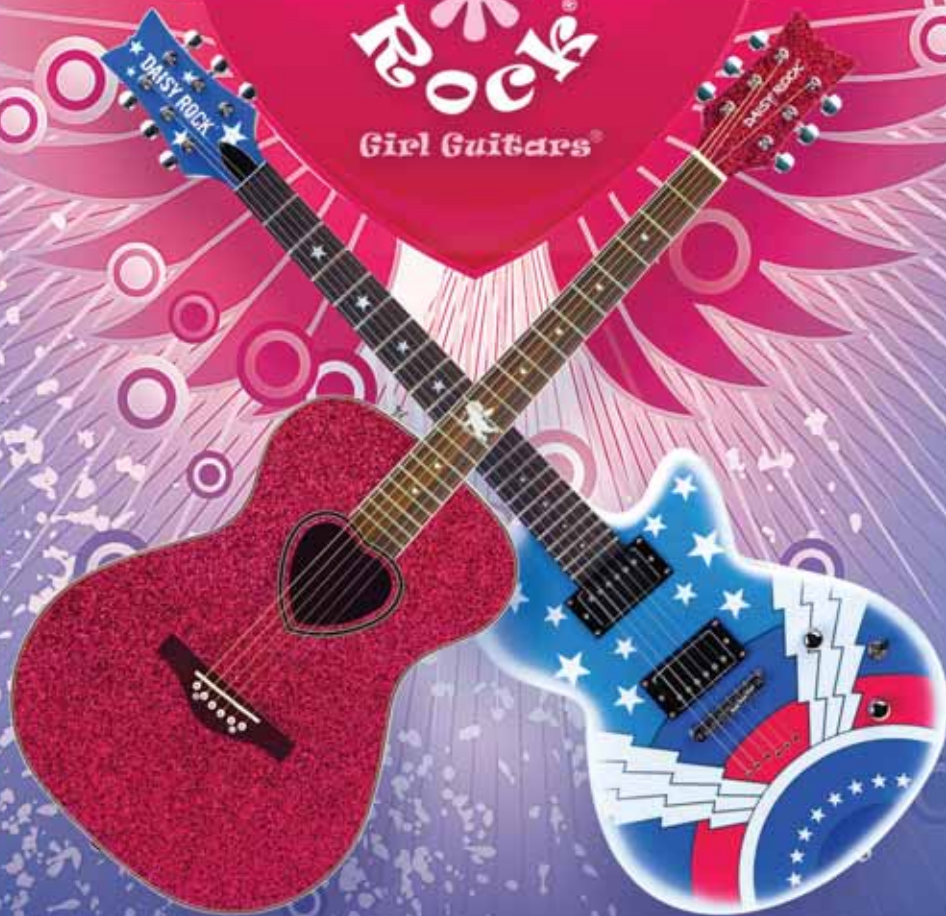
Nuvo Band Instruments

"This is not a plastic instrument made to look really, really pretty. This is an instrument scaled for kids. They are filling the need of a market that doesn't currently exist. If a child is interested in woodwind instruments before they are capable of picking up a clarinet or flute, sometimes we lose them. The idea behind this is these are real instruments, scaled, lightweight and cleanable. And they really play."



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ADD-ON OR ACCESSORY



VICTOR SALAZAR

Vic Firth Universal Practice Tips

"You can mount this to any tip of any concert or drum set stick and practice anywhere — on the floor, concrete, glass, you name it. The surface feels good — feels natural. It has a good rebound. It's quiet. For the cost of \$9.50 for a pack of four tips, that's about a quarter of the price of a practice pad."



CHRIS TSO

Blackstar Fly Guitar Amplifier

"It's a compact, 3-watt guitar amp with technology inside that delivers amazing sound for its size. It has a built-in digital tape delay circuit, so the guitar has that kind of echo that you want when you're soloing, AC or battery and MP3 so you can play along with tracks or for casual listening. I couldn't believe it. And you won't believe it either."



MYRNA SISLEN

Killer-Q Guitar Straps

"This is a family-owned and run company. The straps are made here in America. There are no minimums, and you can put any design you want on these straps. And, for free, they will put your store's logo on the back of the strap. The margins are excellent."



JOHN GRABOWSKI

Singular Sound's BeatBuddy

"It's a drum machine in a pedal form. It's got 10 drum sets in it. These are really great-sounding drum sets with 200 songs built in. It also has a USB, so you can go to their website and download other patterns."



GAYLE BEACOCK

U-Mount Universal Portable Charger

"It will mount to your microphone stand, your boom stand or your music stand; any stand that you want. And what makes this really special is that it has 13 hours of charge."



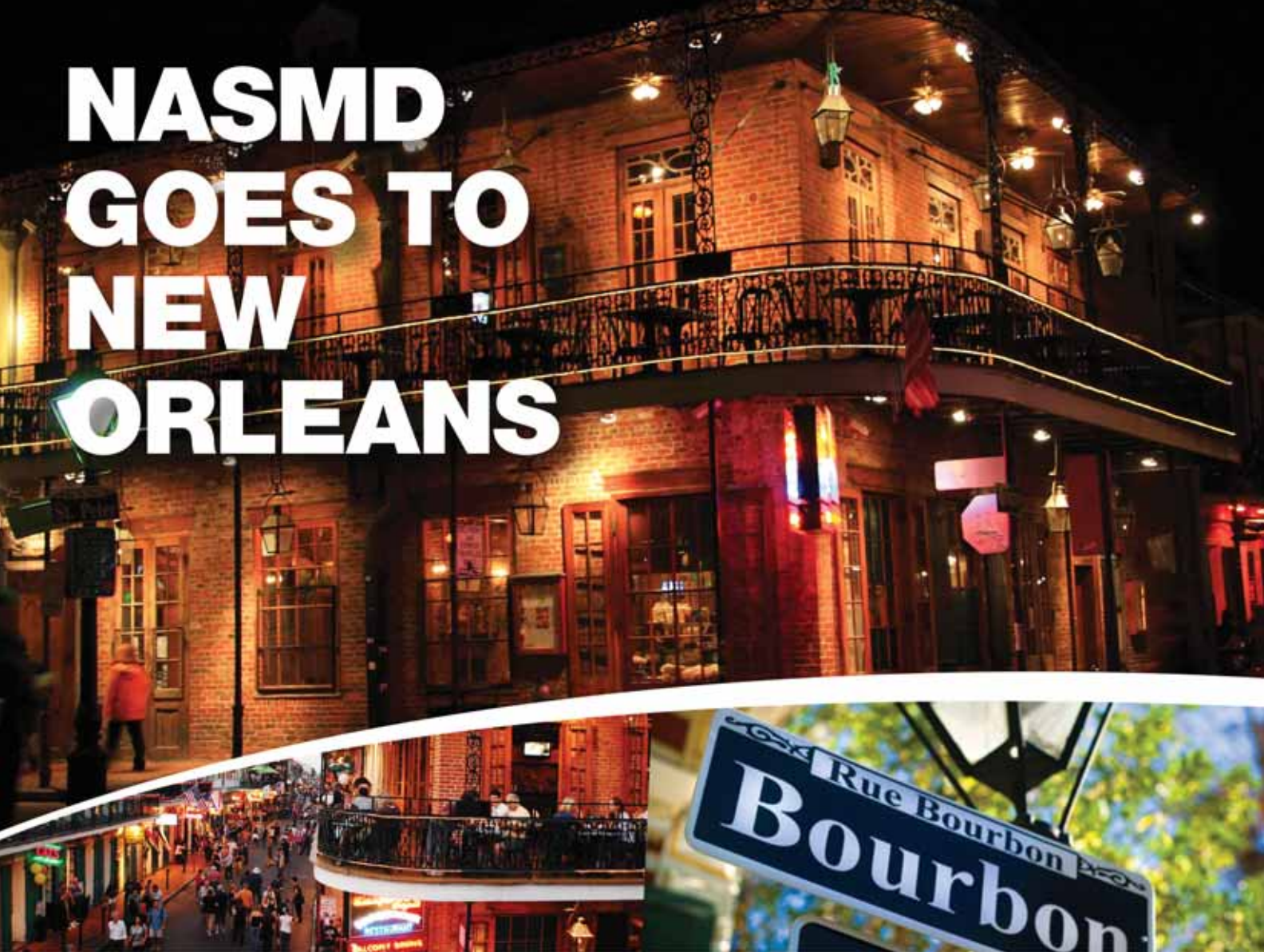
LEE ANDERTON

G7th Performance 2 Capo

"I love products like this because I love when a customer comes into the store looking to spend \$5 or \$10 on a product and the sales guy can take 60 seconds to convince them why they should spend \$25 or \$30 on a product. The customer is happy because they've got a better product. You've put three times as much money in the till, and everybody's winning."



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GAYLE BEACOCK

PreSonus Music Creation Suite

"This is actually everything you need to start digital recording today. One of the things that I love about this product is that if you are a young person and just want to get into this market — you just want to create and write your own songs — everything you need is bundled into this box."



>



MYRNA SISLEN

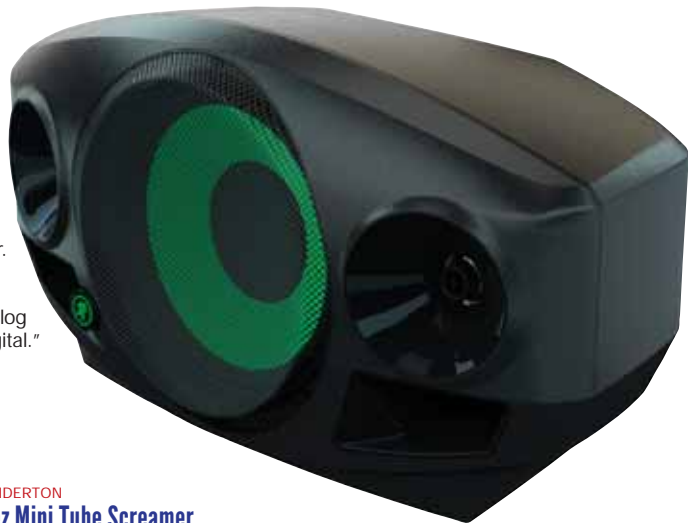
Amahi Ukuleles by Amati

"Amati has been making violins for a very long time, but now they've started making ukuleles. It's the same company and the same quality and the same really good margin. These are really nice ukuleles. They're fun to look at. The kids like them. I put them in the mix of the other ukuleles that I have and they hold up very, very well."

CHRIS TSO

Mackie Freeplay Personal PA

"This is a portable stereo P.A. system with three-channel, 300-watt power powering an 8-inch subwoofer and two, 1-inch tweeters. I see this as a gateway product because this has a four-channel digital mixer. When a customer uses this, and they're ready to upgrade, they're not upgrading from analog to digital. They're already in digital."



>

LEE ANDERTON

Ibanez Mini Tube Screamer

"I'm a massive fan of these new miniature pedals that have become popular over the last four or five years. Everybody has to have a Tube Screamer. It's the most iconic drive pedal of all time. It has been copied more times than any other pedal ever. And this is a pedal that I think is going to sell by the truckload over the next few months and forever, really."

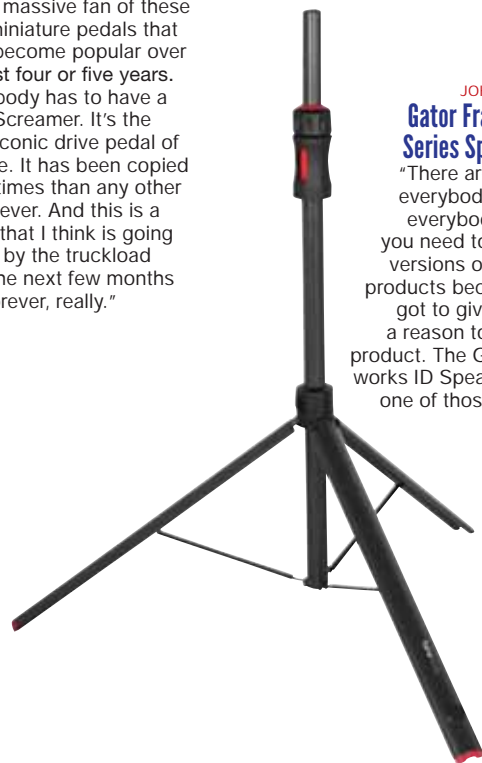


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JOHN GRABOWSKI

Gator Frameworks ID Series Speaker Stand

"There are things that everybody needs and everybody buys. But you need to stock nicer versions of all of those products because you've got to give customers a reason to buy a nicer product. The Gator Frameworks ID Speaker Stand is one of those products."



<

VICTOR SALAZAR

Evans 16-Inch Drum Heads

"They've introduced all the popular models of bass drumheads with this tom-tom collar, and there is a trend toward smaller, compact kits. There are 10 models available."



<

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COMPANIES TO WATCH

inMusic

CHRIS TSO
 < InMusic

"In 1992, Jack O'Donnell founded InMusic and he and his team have built this into 12 powerhouse brands, including Alesis, Akai, M-Audio, Alto, Denon Professional, Denon DJ, Marantz and more. It's not just the brands, but what they do is leverage technology platforms across the brands to create products that are market-right for each brand and customer segment."



JOHN GRABOWSKI
 < XCHANGE Market Platform

"[This] service gives software vendors the ability to leverage the selling power of all the dealers, and it gives dealers access to a growing assortment of software to be able to sell software codes and not the actual box. All it takes is for the dealer to have a Web browser, and this service is available any time day or night, regardless of where that software manufacturer is based."



MYRNA SISLEN
 < St. Louis Music

"I think it's important to focus on smaller companies and family-owned companies. St. Louis Music is very receptive to us. They are there to help us. They are very fast in turnaround. They're prices are very good. They're really a good company."

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COMPANIES TO WATCH

HOTONE HOTONE

^
LEE ANDERTON

Hotone

"These are little micro pedals that have a real big knob on the back that lights up when you turn the pedal on. It's the intuitive knob that you would go for when you adjust things. They have a big range of pedals from simple drive pedals and chorus pedals to some pretty clever pedals like harmony pedals and acoustic emulation pedals. They're about to launch a Bluetooth iOS pedal, where, using your Android or iPhone, you can dial up a zillion different effects on your phone."

Drums DW

Drum workshop

^
VICTOR SALAZAR

Drum Workshop

"Earlier this month, they acquired all the percussion companies that were under the umbrella of KMC Music, owned by Fender Musical Instruments. They include Latin Percussion, Toca Percussion, Gretsch Drums, Gibraltar Hardware, Kat Electronics and CB. It's going to be interesting to see what they're going to do with all of these companies. I've always perceived Drum Workshop to be a highly innovative and forward-thinking company."

Zither

Music Company

zitherusa.com

^
GAYLE BEACOCK

Zither Music

"A buzz here at the show — at some of the seminars that we've attended — is a focus on the ultra market. We have good, better, best and ultra. And we have a lot of customers who we don't realize are willing to spend something. If somebody has a prized guitar, they're going to want a beautiful stand. This product is different, and it's gorgeous, and it works."



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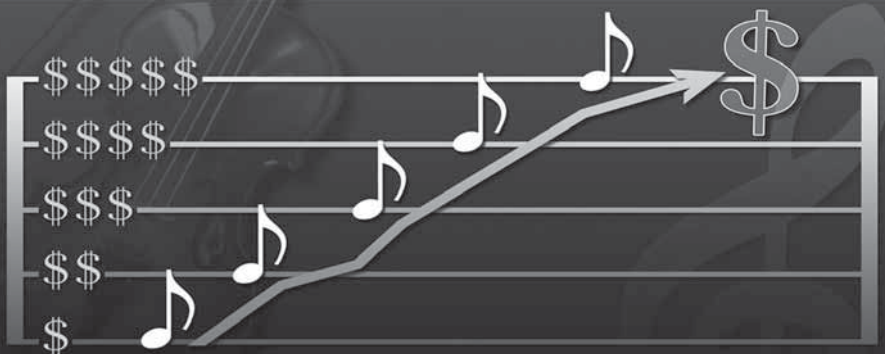
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What's your biggest takeaway from NAMM?



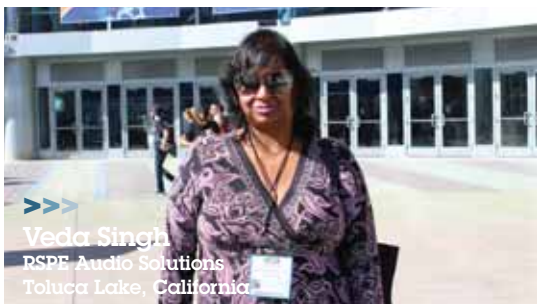
Fabian Diaz
ABE Music
North Miami Beach, Florida

“NAMM does a lot for me. I’m in Miami, which is the Mecca of international business because of where we are at demographically. I see a lot of my customers [at NAMM] that come from South and Central America and the Caribbean. It’s a lot cheaper and better to come to California than go to Brazil or Chile.”



Karen Pike
The Master Musician
Murrieta, California

“I was here to check out pianos. That’s what I’ve been seeking out. The best part of NAMM for me is reconnecting with the suppliers and finding new ones. Just seeing what’s out there, what my customers are looking for and then being able to make that connection between the two.”



Veda Singh
RSPE Audio Solutions
Toluca Lake, California

“This is my first NAMM Show, and my biggest takeaway from the show has been technology. It seems to be that technology is what is driving all the new gear. What’s fascinating to me is that while it gives more options to engineers and those that use it, it also seems to be taking away the option of real music.”



Lynn Nicholson
Rhythm Traders
Portland, Oregon

“The overall big picture is that [The NAMM Show] puts perspective on the industry. You see the faces behind the emails and phones that you deal with every day. You realize they’re real people, and they are a part of this, too. It puts it into perspective. You realize the role you play in the industry. That’s usually what gets me most excited: seeing people coming up with big things and big ideas. Then, of course, finding out about the products right from the source and from the people who can best sell them.”



Bob Wagner
MusicStoreLive.com
South Burlington, Vermont

“All I’ve been doing is working like crazy the past 72 hours, so on Sunday I finally got a chance to hit the show floor as a musician. The best thing about NAMM for me is being able to connect with other people on that level, no matter what you do for a living.”

Kawai Congratulates Our 2014 Pinnacle Award Winners



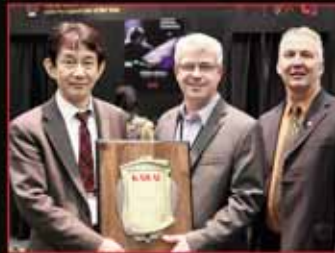
DEALER OF THE YEAR
KAWAI AMERICA & SHIGERU KAWAI PIANO COMPANY
Kim's Piano - Garden Grove, CA
David Kim, Benjamin Kim



DEALER OF THE YEAR
Kawai Canada Music
Merriam Music - Oakville, ON
Alan Merriam



DEALER OF THE YEAR
Digital Pianos
Schmitt Music Company - Minneapolis, MN
Duane Norton, Wayne Reinhardt, Tom Wennblom



DEALER OF THE YEAR
Professional Products
Kraft Music - Franklin, WI
Ben Kraft (center)



TOP ACOUSTIC PIANO MARKET PERFORMANCE
EvoLa Music - Bloomfield Hills, MI
Jim Evola



TOP DIGITAL PIANO MARKET PERFORMANCE
Lacefield Music - St. Louis, MO
Howard Kessler, Dwayne Hilton, Cathy McReynolds



**REGIONAL SALES MANAGER
OF THE YEAR**
Jerry Porter

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