

# music inc



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# VALUE PROPHETS

A focus on value ensures  
Keyboard Concepts' success

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# Steve Gadd, Zoomed In

Creative insights from one of the world's  
most influential drummers.



## PERFECTION IS OVERRATED

"I don't know anybody who's perfect. You go out there and do your best. And if you don't nail it, then you go out the next day and you try to get it right. That's really all you can do."

## NO SHOWING OFF

"Instead of driving the music with this need to show off, I've learned to let the music dictate what I need to do. You have to really listen in order to do that."

## SEEK INSPIRATION

"Originally you're inspired by hearing someone else doing something, and then taking it home and trying to learn how to do it. When I was growing up I would get records of Philly Joe, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and guys like that, and slow the records down and work out what they were playing, and then work on it and put my own feel to it. That's how we all learn."

## BUT BE ORIGINAL

"You can't be a copy of somebody else, no matter how hard you try. It's impossible. I've seen people try to copy licks and get them exact, and I can tell they're not playing in a way that's natural or comfortable. That's not what music is all about. You have to develop your own bag of tricks. The worst thing in the world you can do is let your enthusiasm for somebody else's work stifle your own creativity."

## GET IN THE GROOVE

"I've seen so many drummers who have chops and technique that would make your jaw drop to the floor. People are doing some really incredible things. To me, though, I find it just as inspiring on a whole different level when I see somebody who can play a groove and get inside it and make me tap my toes. If you can get people tapping their toes, that's it – you're playing music."





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# PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

## DON'T PLAY THE MARTYR

Last Sunday I dined at an upscale brunch spot with a few friends near my home in Chicago. The ambiance was great, the banana french toast was even better, but the service was a little lacking — and slow. Very slow.

When we were finally able to flag down a staff member to alert them that a server hadn't come by our table (and we'd been seated for nearly 20 minutes), the server apologized graciously, but then said, "We're just so busy." Ugh. The apology was great. After all, we weren't overly angry, just wanting to remind the staff that we were sitting without any service to make sure we weren't an oversight. But when the "busy excuse" came into play, moods at the table began to change.

I fully understand that Sunday is *the* day for brunch, especially in one of the hippest neighborhoods in the city. I felt for our server as she ran around like a chicken without a head. There could be a myriad of reasons she was overworked that morning. Maybe someone called in sick, or there was an underscheduling error, or she was given too many tables.

But anytime the I'm-too-busy-to-assist-you-right-now excuse is passed, it usually doesn't lead to customer compassion. Instead, customers feel as if they aren't as important as the current customers that are getting service.

This same principle applies in retail. If a slew of customers come through your door

all at once and you don't have the staff to back it up, assure each customer that they will be assisted shortly as they look around the store, then take them one by one. Don't make excuses. Nobody, especially a paying customer, wants to hear an excuse. A polite, "I'm sorry, we'll be with you in a moment" will do. If our server had just stopped by the table to acknowledge that we were sitting there and that she would be with us in a few minutes, we would have felt assured knowing that she was aware that we were there waiting.

The "busy excuse" is never needed when talking to customers. And complaining about how busy you are can be even worse. Everyone is busy. Probably half the customers that come into your store swing by while running other errands. They don't need to be reminded that you are busy, too. They want to feel important. They want to feel catered to. They want to feel like they are a priority — especially if they are about to drop some serious cash on a new guitar for their child's birthday, or a new set of drum cases, or a new keyboard stand.

The lesson I took away from this whole experience was an apology to an unattended customer is great, but don't use the "busy excuse." Because after all, who isn't. **MI**



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# MEYER MUSIC REDEFINES THE 'CARE' IN CARE KITS



Marcus Barchers assembling Meyer Music's famous care kits

## TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT MEYER MUSIC.

Meyer Music opened its doors in March of 1966 with one small location in Blue Springs, Missouri. Founded by Ted and Betty Meyer, who were both music educators in Kansas City schools, they based their business on attention to detail, customer service, and superior quality products such as Vandoren. The business has grown and flourished tremendously over the decades, adding two additional locations in Overland Park and Kansas City North plus many new Meyer family members. All of the

Meyer children began music studies at a very young age and started helping with the family business as soon as they could see over the front counter.

## HOW WAS THE DECISION MADE TO INCLUDE VANDOREN REEDS IN YOUR CARE KITS?

Our band directors have preferred Vandoren reeds for many years. We could certainly put a lower quality reed in both the instrument case and care kits, but we want to put out the highest quality beginning band outfits in our area. That's why we choose Vandoren.

## WHICH VANDOREN PRODUCTS DO YOU USE?

We primarily use Traditional (Blue Box) reeds which we are able to buy in bulk for both our care kits and the single reed we put in each case. Some of our school districts want the students to start with a box of reeds. In those care kits we include a box of Traditional reeds. Additionally, to raise the bar on our woodwinds from a quality standpoint, we have chosen to include a professional Vandoren clarinet mouthpiece in every clarinet we rent, which we buy in bulk from Vandoren.

## DO YOU SEE THE CUSTOMERS COMING BACK TO THE STORE TO BUY REEDS?

Because they start on Vandoren and recognize the packaging and the brand, when they return for more reeds, the customers choose Vandoren. Vandoren is the number one reed in all three stores.



**“We want to put out the highest quality beginning band outfits in our area. That’s why we choose Vandoren.”**

## TYPICALLY WHEN DO YOU START PREPARING THE CARE KITS FOR BACK TO SCHOOL?

We place our master order at the NAMM Show in January, and start preparing our care kits for our Spring Rentals in early March. The balance of our care kits are made with seasonal, summer help from June until August.

## WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHER DEALERS NOT UTILIZING THE VANDOREN BULK REED/ MOUTHPIECE PROGRAM?

For Meyer Music, the savings when purchasing large quantities in bulk gives us the opportunity to use a high quality reed and mouthpiece in all of our beginning rental set ups.

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For more on Meyer Music, visit [www.meyermusic.com](http://www.meyermusic.com)

# LETTERS

## Here's to the Next 25

Congratulations on *Music Inc.*'s 25th anniversary celebration issue. It was great to relive some of the best years of my industry life through the many happy memories it brought back to mind ... As all retail and manufacturing has changed so much over the recent years, it is good to remember just how lucky we have been to be blessed with careers in an industry we love so much. It would take a whole edition to list those individuals that have been there for me both as business partners and, most importantly, as my best friends over the years. If I had the opportunity to do it all over again, I wouldn't do anything different, except to enjoy those great friendships more. All of my friends at *Music Inc.* over the years have helped make this journey a pleasurable one. Thank you for all you do to support the industry's growth and success. Here's to your next 25 ... We need and appreciate what you do more than ever.

*Skip Maggiora*  
Owner  
Skip's Music  
Sacramento, California

## A Must-Read Issue

Congratulations to everyone at [*Music Inc.*] celebrating your 25th anniversary serving the music industry. *Music Inc.* is a "must-read" at our company each month and has been for decades! We are particularly proud to have been recognized as 'Retailer of the Year' by *Music Inc.* this year and included in the 25th anniversary issue, too! Keep up the good work!

*George Quinlan, Jr.*  
Owner  
Quinlan & Fabish  
Burr Ridge, Illinois

## Great Big 'Thank You'

Thank you for the fantastic article honoring Sound of



Music as we celebrate 50 years in business. We appreciate the interview that John Janowiak conducted with Dean and his accurate portrayal of the history of our store. Thanks to Associate Editor David Ball for keeping us informed and facilitating the process so very well.

The thrill of reading the words and seeing the photos has been spread among friends, family and colleagues, and we have enjoyed all the positive comments we continue to receive. Among the many benefits we have received over our involvement in the music industry for this many years is the knowledge that we have facilitated countless folks in their pursuit of playing music, thus enhancing their lives immeasurably.

We have a Grand Opening

advertisement from June 25, 1965 that reads "\$50 gift certificate given to every customer Friday night." In recognition of our heritage, Kathryn has organized a duplicate one for each decade to give the first five customers on June 25, 2015! We recently discovered that not a single customer came to the opening of Sound of Music but are certain there will be lots of activity celebrating our 50th anniversary.

One of the most important lessons we have taken to heart in the past 50 years is to be known for the different and unique ways in which we find to say "thank you" to our team, customers and industry partners. So, once again, a great big "thank you" to all the folks at *Music Inc.* for making this

celebration even more special.

*Dean, Eloise and Kathryn Irving*  
Owners  
Sound of Music  
Abbotsford, British Columbia

## International Drum Month Follow-Up

It was great to read the promotions from the various shops for International Drum Month. What sticks out to me is how different each territory is, and how diverse the promotions and their relative effectiveness are. It's reading posts like these that make me proud to be an owner of an independent music store; a truly colorful crop in an otherwise bland, corporate retail landscape.

*Shane Kinney*  
Owner  
Drum Center of Portsmouth  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

## Praise for Harding

I just wanted to send you a note in praise of James Harding's [January 2015] column "The Facebook Ad Advantage." I saw a number of things in the article that I thought would be good to implement, and I contacted Harding at Gist Piano. He took the time to speak with me on the phone and share some of his insights with me that I'm going to be switching into operation forthwith.

I just wanted to let you know that his article was timely, well written and offered a valuable chunk of information.

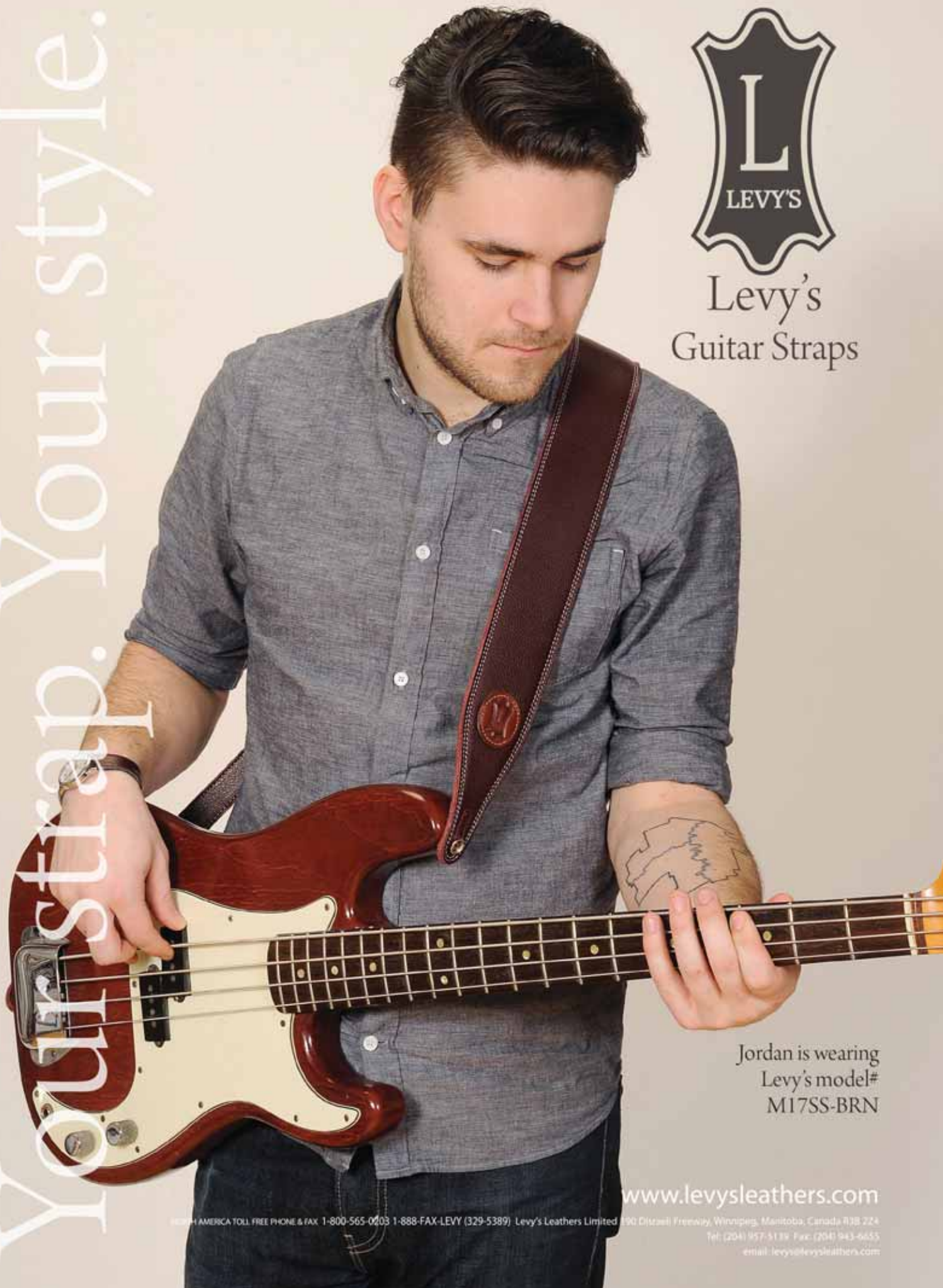
*Stephen A. Johnson*  
Internet Sales Manager  
Michelle's Piano Company  
Portland, Oregon

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# RETAIL

DENVER FOLKLORE CENTER | BY DICK WEISSMAN

## WISDOM FROM AN MI VETERAN

When Harry Tuft opened the Denver Folklore Center in 1962, it became only the fourth shop in the United States primarily devoted to acoustic instruments. Today, the store is the only one of the original four still operating under the same ownership.

The Denver Folklore Center specializes in new, used and vintage acoustic guitars, mandolins, banjos, ukes and dulcimers, with a teaching and repair facility located a few doors down.

After 53 years as owner, Tuft attributes a few key moves to his store's success.

### SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Tuft works with a small business support group that includes a paid advisor. The group meets monthly, and each of the half dozen participants also meet separately with the advisor.

"The communication between the various participants has been greatly beneficial to the planning process and expansion of the store," Tuft said. "This included bringing in additional instrument lines, and exercising better and more consistent business judgments."



## Harry Tuft shares what he's learned while being a music store owner for 53 years

### CASHING IN ON UKES

When ukuleles started gaining a stronghold in the industry, Tuft made sure his shop was prepared. Denver Folklore Center currently offers customers a wide variety of brands, including Kala, Kamaka, Kanile'a, Magic Fluke,

Martin, Eastman and Cordoba. "Sales of ukes exceeded the sales of all other instruments during the Christmas season," Tuft said.

### ATTRACTING A NEW GENERATION

While Tuft and long-time manager Jeff Jaros continue to serve the store's many

loyal, regular customers, Tuft hired two younger employees whose expertise expanded the store's website from occasional entries to a regular presence.

They also started an email newsletter and expanded the store's profile on Facebook. While the older employees were cognizant of the Web's importance, Harry said, "We were not really comfortable dealing with the website on a daily basis.

"Seeing younger employees at the counter clearly has been a plus in servicing new customers, and seems to have attracted a younger demographic to the store."

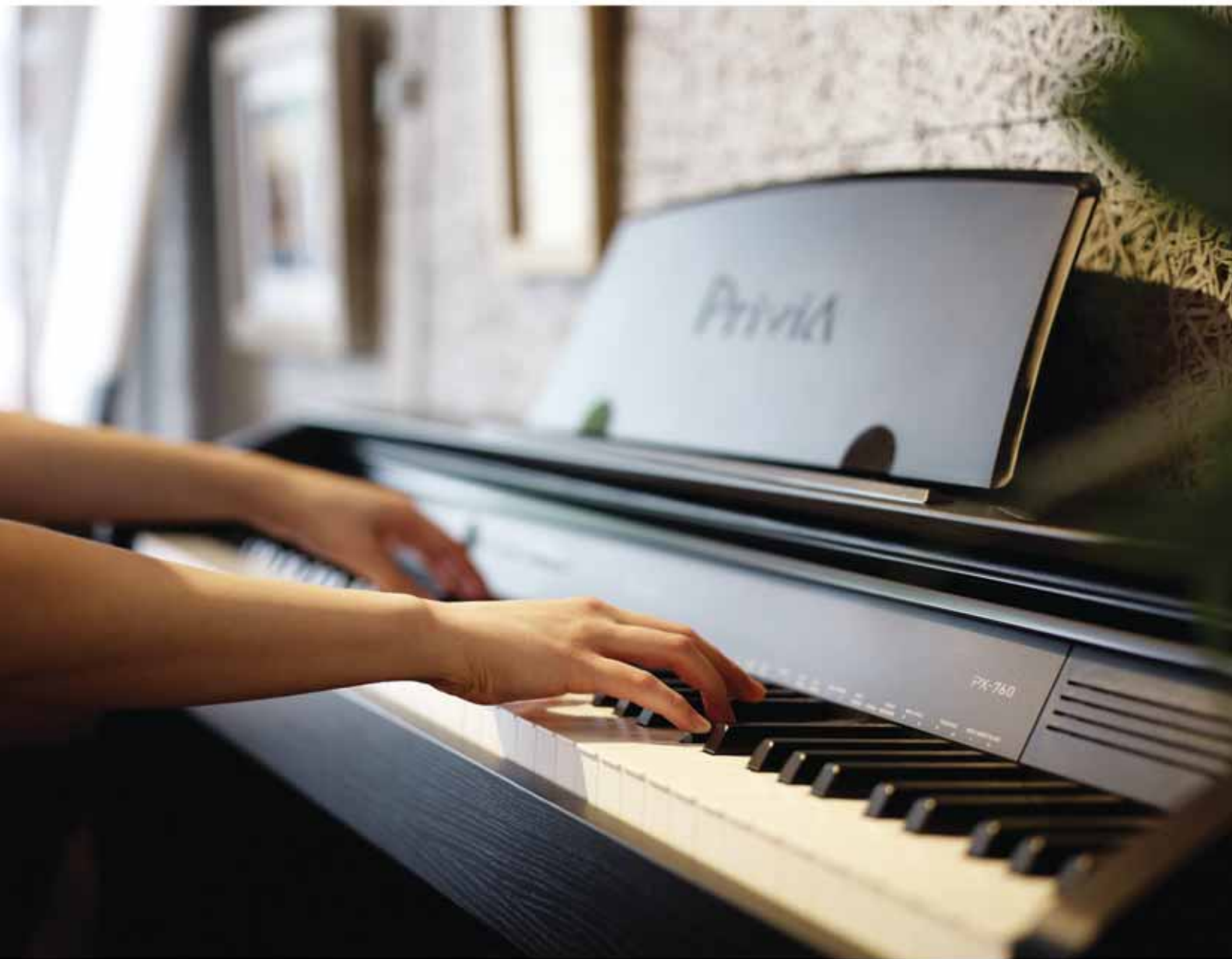
### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The store has also benefited greatly from its relationship with the Swallow Hill Music Association, a nonprofit community in Denver that brings musicians and music lovers together through its school, outreach programming and concerts.

The Folklore Center rents out guitars, banjos, mandolins and ukuleles to Swallow Hill's nearly 5,000 members, and also offers them discounts. Because Tuft is well known in the Denver music scene, and a player himself, it is natural that Tuft "takes pride in [the store's] relationship with the Denver music community." **MI**

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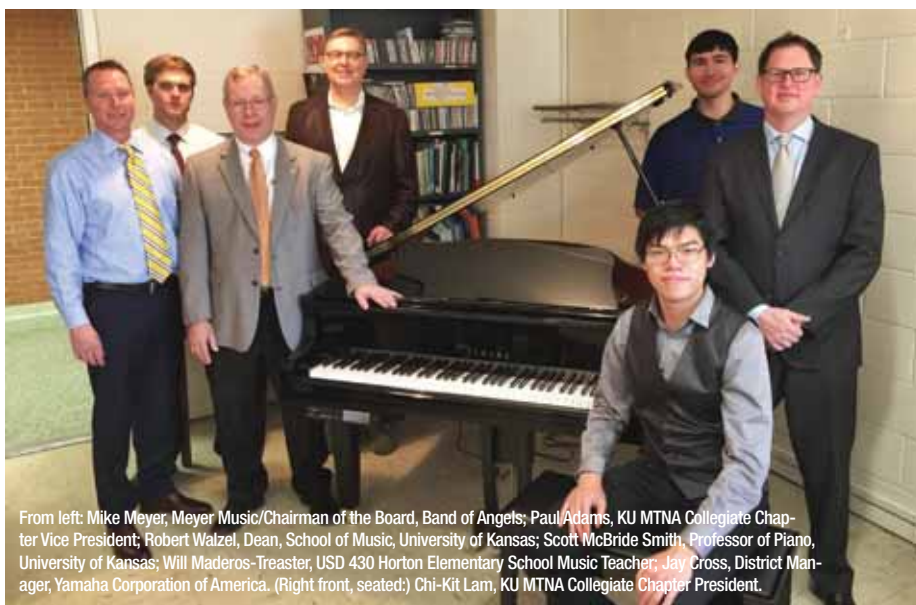
The University of Kansas School of Music took delivery this week of a new Yamaha Disklavier reproducing piano, which will be transported to a local elementary school, enabling students in need at a rural, low-income district to take part in remote music lessons.

The university, Yamaha Corp. of America and Band of Angels (whose chairman is Mike Meyer, manager of Meyer Music), a Kansas City-based nonprofit organization that provides musical opportunities for youngsters in need, partnered to purchase the new Disklavier.

The instrument will be placed in Horton Elementary School, part of the South Brown County, Kansas, school district, which serves low-income families, with 70 percent of the students under the poverty line.

Disklavier pianos are infused with networking capability that enables two or more instruments to be connected over the Internet, letting a pianist perform live in one location, while their exact keystrokes and pedal movements are transmitted in real time to the other instrument located anywhere else in the world.

“We wanted to give an opportunity to students who have not had the chance to take piano lessons to do so,” explained Dr. Smith,



From left: Mike Meyer, Meyer Music/Chairman of the Board, Band of Angels; Paul Adams, KU MTNA Collegiate Chapter Vice President; Robert Walzel, Dean, School of Music, University of Kansas; Scott McBride Smith, Professor of Piano, University of Kansas; Will Maderos-Treaster, USD 430 Horton Elementary School Music Teacher; Jay Cross, District Manager, Yamaha Corporation of America. (Right front, seated) Chi-Kit Lam, KU MTNA Collegiate Chapter President.

the Cordelia Brown Murphy Professor of Piano Pedagogy at KU’s School of Music. “With the remarkable technology of the Disklavier, members of our KU Music Teachers National Association Student Chapter will be able to remotely conduct piano lessons for young students without actually having to commute

several hours back and forth to their schools.

“It’s a win-win, since young people who likely wouldn’t get the opportunity to learn the piano for various reasons will be getting lessons, and it enables MTNA student-members in our program to hone their teaching skills as well as to connect musically with the community.”

BUDDY ROGER’S MUSIC | EXPANSION

# Buddy Roger’s Music Plans to Expand School Music Business

Buddy Roger’s Music announced on March 30 that it is expanding services to the music students and band directors of greater Cincinnati by implementing a business model focused solely on the school music market.

“We took a close look at the future of school music, and we feel it’s very bright,” said Bill Harvey, co-owner and vice president of Buddy Roger’s Music. “We’ve been the leading retailer to schools in the area for nearly 60 years, but there is much more that we can do. By refocusing our efforts

with a laser-like dedication to the school music community, we can offer students, their parents and our music directors the best products and services in the world.”

In order to dedicate the resources necessary for the expansion, Buddy Roger’s Music will be exiting the combo market, which means it will no longer sell guitars, amplifiers, sound systems, electronic keyboards and related products. On June 30, the company plans to close two locations heavily dedicated to those products — the Montgomery store and

the Beechmont store.

“The only downside to our new direction is that we won’t be able to serve the combo market any longer,” Harvey said. “Our business, like all business, has become so much more sophisticated in the last decade. Looking forward, we believe the only way to properly serve customers is to become a highly focused, specialty retailer. And our specialty is serving the school music market. It’s that simple.”

The transition to the new model is expected to be completed by June 30.





From left: Elise Kohagura, AVMS PTSA Vice President; Mary Palacio-Hum, AVMS PTSA President; Dr. Joan Ashcraft, TUSD Director of Fine and Performing Arts; Theresa Leal-Holmes, AVMS Principal; Diana L. West Acuna, AVMS Director of Bands; Leslie Faltin, owner, Instrumental Music Center; Mike Faltin, owner, Instrumental Music Center; and Craig Denny, Vice President, Band and Orchestra Division of St. Louis Music.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CENTER | PHILANTHROPY

## Instrumental Music Center Hosts ‘Brass-a-Palooza’ Giveaway Contest

Instrumental Music Center of Tucson, Arizona, partnered with its suppliers to host “Brass-a-Palooza” — a month-long Facebook poll, in which residents voted for one eligible public middle school in the region to receive a first-prize package valued at over \$13,000.

The first-prize package included: a tuba donated by Eastman Music, a Zonda double f-horn and baritone, an intermediate trombone donated by Yamaha, a Jupiter silver-plated trumpet and a trombone from Antigua Winds. Additionally, the band director of the winning school received an all-expenses paid trip to the Conn-Selmer Institute in Indiana to attend an educational seminar.

The poll closed on April 1. Altogether, 6,687 people voted, and the first-place

winner, Alice Vail Middle School (Tucson), received 1,719 votes. The award was presented to Theresa Leal-Holmes, AVMS Principal, and Diana L. West Acuna, AVMS Director of Bands, on April 7, with an in-school performance by the Alice Vail Middle School Jazz Band.

Originally, second- and third-place winners were to receive \$300 and \$100 IMC gift certificates, respectively. But due to “an overwhelming outpouring of support” for Coatimundi Middle School in Rio Rico, Arizona — which received 1,674 votes — IMC created a second-place prize worth \$10,000, consisting of a trombone, double f-horn, euphonium and tuba, plus a trip to Conn-Selmer for Coatimundi’s band director, as well.

STONE TAILORS | OPENING

## STONE TAILORS BOUTIQUE GUITAR SHOP OPENS IN LANCASTER, PA

Stone Tailors — a guitar shop specializing in boutique guitars, amps and accessories — opened its doors in downtown Lancaster, Pennsylvania, on March 26.

Owners John LeClair and Jon Paul Painton came up with the idea to open the 1,700-square-foot store at 213 W. King St., “so that customers could get the gear that they actually want to get,” as Painton put it.

The idea came about six months ago, after LeClair and Painton had spent time working at a chain guitar store in which the only equipment available was big name brands.

In order to offer local musicians other

options, Stone Tailors stocks boutique guitar lines like Reverend, G&L and Eastman, amps such as Supro and Divided By 13, and unique pedal lines, including Mojo Hand, SolidGoldFX and J. Rockett.

“We’re trying to spotlight a few local companies too, like DiPinto and Love Tree amps,” Painton told *Music Inc.* “We’re just trying to get a little bit more of the quality gear that you don’t get to see that often.”

“Basically, the whole mantra of the store is just outfitting our customers with the right gear, and ‘tailoring the tone’ to how they play.”

Outside of equipment sales, Stone Tailors has also begun a repair business as well, with gig setups and amp repairs.

QUINLAN & FABISH | OPENING

## Quinlan & Fabish Opens Location in Arlington Heights, Illinois

Quinlan & Fabish held a ribbon cutting ceremony on April 12 in its newest store, located at 59 W. Seegers Rd. in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

The Arlington Heights store is a relocation of the company’s former northwest suburban location in Mount Prospect, and comes as part of the company’s long-term plan to acquire the real estate in which the business operates.

“We wanted to own our own building,” George Quinlan, Jr., president and CEO, told *Music Inc.* “[The move] was about finding the right building that could house what we needed to do, which was a repair shop and a dedicated string shop.”

The new store, located along major local and interstate roads, features expanded repair facilities, lesson studios and a larger product offering of B&O instruments and supplies.

“We’ll probably stock a little deeper,” Quinlan continued. “It’s not much larger than the old location, it’s just better laid out.”

“This new Arlington Heights location continues our proud tradition of providing excellent customer service, quality products and unparalleled support to local school music programs. There is a strong arts community in [Arlington Heights] with truly great school music programs.”



Arlington Heights Mayor Thomas W. Hayes (left) and George Quinlan, Jr. (right).

VIC'S DRUM SHOP | AWARD

# VIC'S DRUM SHOP WINS 2014 OUTSTANDING RETAILER AWARD FROM VIC FIRTH COMPANY



Vic's Drum Shop in Chicago has been selected to receive the 2014 Outstanding Retailer Award from the Vic Firth Company. The award was presented to drum shops across America that achieved double digit sales growth last year with more than \$25,000 in annual sell-through of Vic Firth products.

"What Vic's Drum Shop offers the international drumming community is amazing," said Mark Dyke, director of global sales for the Vic Firth Company. "The variety of percussion products in stock, the merchandising of each product group, and the knowledge, feedback and guidance that Victor Salazar and his team shares with us is truly an inspiration. The store is a great drummers' hang regardless of a players' ability level, and I'm thrilled that our products are so well received by their

online and in-store customers."

Vic Firth Company's offerings have been stocked by Vic's Drum Shop since its opening in 2011. Since then, the store has become a shopping destination for drummers of all skills levels and backgrounds from around the world, as well as the world's most elite drumming and percussion professionals.

"The retail music industry is based on relationships, and we're extremely fortunate that Vic's Drum Shop has developed such close ties with the entire staff at Vic Firth — from their inside sales reps and artist relations managers to product development managers and Mr. Vic Firth himself," said Victor Salazar, owner of Vic's Drum Shop. "We proudly stock the company's entire catalog, and thanks to the consistent service and support that we receive, we're always able to fulfill our customers' exact product needs."

GUITAR CENTER | PARTNERSHIP

# Synchrony Financial & Guitar Center to Introduce New Consumer Financing Program

Synchrony Financial — formerly GE Capital Retail Finance — has announced a new, multi-year agreement with Guitar Center to provide a private label credit program for GC customers.

Synchrony Financial will work with Guitar Center, Musician's Friend and Woodwind & Brasswind to offer special financing options to customers for the purchase of musical instruments, accessories and equipment through more than 260 stores across the United States, catalogs and their online stores.

The program is expected to launch in third quarter 2015. Synchrony Bank will also acquire the existing card program assets. Financial terms were not disclosed.

"We are excited to work with the professionals at Guitar Center to provide options for their customers to purchase musical instruments and equipment to fuel their passion," said Glenn Marino, executive vice president & CEO of Synchrony Financial's Payment Solutions platform. "The availability of financing

plays an important role in the purchasing of musical instruments and accessories, and we look forward to bringing programs to shoppers of these brands that meet their needs and wants."

According to Synchrony Financial's third annual Major Purchase Consumer Study, 72 percent of music shoppers "always seek promotional financing," and 77 percent of respondents said that the availability of financing is "very important" when choosing a retailer. Musical instruments and gear also lead online purchases across the 12 categories included in the study.

"A large and growing number of our customers' purchases involve financing, and having an integrated credit card program we can offer is important for us," said Susan Starnes, senior vice president of services for Guitar Center. "We look forward to working with Synchrony Financial's team to use their insights, tools and resources to help us enhance customer loyalty and the shopping experience."

In other Guitar Center news, GC has opened two new stores — one at 253 Park Terrace

Dr. in Columbia, South Carolina, and the other at 195 Yale Street in Houston.



GC's Columbia, South Carolina, storefront



GC's Houston storefront

# BEST OF THE CLASSICS



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6SL7 • 6SL7 G Gold Pins • 6SN7GTB  
6V6GT • 6550 • 7027A • 7581 • 7591A  
EL34B • EF806s Gold Pins • EL84/6BQ5  
KT66 • KT120 • KT150

## Genelex Gold Lion KT88

After extensive research and engineering the famed Genelex Gold Lion KT88 is available once again. Recreated down to the finest detail, featuring gold plated grid wire, carbonized screen grids, and a tri-alloy clad plate structure for exceptional performance and sound quality.

ALSO AVAILABLE:

12AT7 • 12AU7 • 12AX7  
6V6GT • 6922 • KT66 • KT77  
N709/EL84 • PX300B • U77/GZ34

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EL84 • GZ34 • KT88

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### *Note From Joe*

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## We're Looking Forward to Seeing You at Summer NAMM

As we put together the final plans for Summer NAMM, I've been thinking about the reasons our members, especially the independent community music store owners who continue to be the backbone of our industry, have attended and how those reasons are evolving as the show expands into new areas. While there are still the aspects our folks have grown to love—the intimate setting, friendly pace and unique you-had-to-be-there moments—there's no doubt that, with a growing show floor and special features, there really is “more in store” at Summer NAMM. If you haven't been in a few years or are debating making the trip to Nashville, I encourage you to take a closer look at all our mid-year gathering has to offer.

### **Retail Boot Camp**

Wednesday's Retail Boot Camp, “the best intensive one-day training for your music retail business,” is free for members—your entire team is invited—and Bob Negen's new program on getting results from promotions and special events, and creating a service culture that sells, comes just in time for holiday sales.

### **Insight**

Opening night has become a new tradition as our dear friend Vince Gill takes the stage with Tom Bedell for an evening of storytelling and music, Nashville style. The wit and wisdom of this event has become legendary after just two years and with free food and drinks, you won't want to miss what the guys come up with this year.

### **NAMM U Breakfast Sessions**

I can't think of a better way to start each day than the NAMM U Breakfast Sessions. Save time and money, catch some live music and sit in on an informative hour-long session, including the NAMM Retail Summit's discussion about the latest industry

trends and opportunities, and Best in Show's spotlight on the newest products that you'll want to be stocking for Christmas.

### **A Diverse Show Floor**

Did you know that the product segments at Summer NAMM now mirror those at The NAMM Show? The mix of exhibitors includes those that haven't missed a Summer NAMM in years, some brand-new to the show and others returning after a hiatus like Dean Guitars, Marshall Amps, Tama, Ibanez, US Music, Peavey, Zildjian and many more. Look at the show map and you'll see this trend continue, including a boost in pro audio and technology brands, and international companies. You'll be able to see all the products and vendors that will make your fall and holiday selling season a success.

### **NAMM Idea Center**

Stop by the NAMM Idea Center for short, focused sessions led by industry peers presenting their most successful ideas in every facet of business—sales, social media, staff training and more. Our line that “one great idea can pay for your whole trip” is based on feedback from countless retailers who made it happen!



## Summer NAMM at a Glance

**103**  
NEW  
EXHIBITORS

New companies are on the rise with 103 new-to-Summer NAMM exhibitors in 2014.

**112**  
RETURNING  
EXHIBITORS

112 companies returned to the show floor in 2014 after a hiatus.

**23%**  
PRO AUDIO  
EXHIBITORS

The pro audio segment of the show is growing with technology-driven exhibitors growing 23 percent in 2014.

### Top 100 Dealer Awards

In its fifth year, this evening gala gives us the chance to recognize the industry's best, brightest and most proactive music retailers. Come and learn what these dealers are doing to earn the recognition of their peers. All Summer NAMM attendees are welcome.

### TEC Tracks

For the first time, Summer NAMM features pro audio education at TEC Tracks: master classes, live interviews and panel discussions tailored to recording and live sound professionals and retailers. As an added bonus, on Saturday, A3E (Advanced Audio + Applications Exchange) will present a program on the future of audio.

Summer NAMM is the show that allows for quality time for our community music store members of all sizes to meet with veteran exhibitors and new up-and-coming companies. And with the best dealer education available anywhere, you will make the most of your trade show investment. Visit [namm.org/summer](http://namm.org/summer) and see for yourself. I hope you'll make the trip to Nashville!

Joe Lamond  
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO

> **Michael Kelly Guitars**  
Acquired by founder  
PAGE 24

> **Yamaha**  
Forms professional audio division  
PAGE 25

> **Roland U.S.**  
Adds three to team  
PAGE 26

# SUPPLY

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY: PIANO PRINT MUSIC | BY DAVID BALL

## MORE PRINT, MORE PIANOS?

Since 2008, September's National Piano Month has been a bit-tersweet promotional period for instrument retailers. Immediately following the start of the Great Recession, new acoustic piano sales plummeted to an all-time low. Today, six years later, reports continue to surface of piano specialty shops closing their doors due to lack of sales.

As the country continues to crawl out of the economic downturn, acoustic piano sales have risen only slightly since 2009. But while acoustic piano *instrument* sales may not be as high as they had been in the early 2000s, rising piano print music sales may offer a renewed sense of optimism for potential instrument purchases in the not-so-distant future.

"I think that print music sales may be one of the best bellwethers to look at with regards to [the piano market], because print music sales directly correlate to how many people are making music," said Antonio Ferranti, VP of sales at Alfred, publisher of one of the top-selling adult piano methods, *Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course*. "For us, and some of our partners, as well as our competitors and colleagues, the collective state of the print music industry has



**Continued increases in piano print music sales could point to a growing consumer base of potential piano buyers**

been extremely strong. Certainly over the last couple of years we have noticed an upward trend."

Larry Morton, president of Hal Leonard — which distributes three out of the five top-selling piano methods: Faber's *Piano Adventures*, the Willis Music catalog and Hal Leonard's *Student Piano Library* — also points out

an uptick in piano music sales. "We looked at our figures over roughly the last seven years ... from the global recession in '08 forward, and we've been seeing year-to-year increases, anywhere from 3 to 10 percent."

Even publishers that focus on specialty piano books have noticed a spike. "Our piano [print

music] sales are actually up a little this year," said William Bay, owner of Mel Bay. "The increase started in the last six months."

Despite the slow instrument sales, Morton noted, "There's this underlying strain of people who want to learn to play piano that doesn't seem to be reflected in the instrument sales of acoustic pianos themselves."

Yet.

"The demand is there, but maybe they're just fulfilling the instrument side with other means, like digitals, portable keyboards and synthesizers," Morton said.

Although digital pianos can be more affordable and more portable than their acoustic counterparts — and with the technological developments of the last few decades, more successful at emulating the feel and sound of acoustic pianos than ever before — students who have mastered the craft on a digital instrument may still be seeking the real-deal sound of mechanical hammers hitting strings, with the action and dynamic control that accompanies such mechanisms. In this way, there's a growing market to which acoustic pianos might be sold as a step-up instrument — or at least another tonal option — for an advancing player. **MI**

# After 25+ Innovative Years and 13 “Product of the Year” Awards, the Disklavier Difference is Clear.

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MICHAEL KELLY | ACQUISITION

# MICHAEL KELLY GUITARS ACQUIRED BY FOUNDER

The original founder of Michael Kelly Guitars has acquired the brand from Hanser Music Group. The Florida-based group that is taking over Michael Kelly Guitars is led by the company's original founder, Tracy Hoeft. Hanser Music Group purchased Michael Kelly in 2004 and has grown the brand as one of its many exclusive brands.

Michael Kelly Guitars was founded in 1999 with a focus on creating instruments that were unique in appearance and sonic performance. The brand gained a strong market share in specialty areas, including f-style mandolins and acoustic basses. Under the Hanser Music Group management, the selection increased.

"I am incredibly excited to get my baby back," Hoeft said. "We are acquiring back a stronger brand from Hanser Music Group

than we sold them 11 years ago. That is not the norm in any industry, and it's really exciting. We are thankful to Hanser for being great stewards of this brand and for allowing it to return to its founders."

This transaction is part of Hanser Music Group's continued evolution. As their business grows in new areas, they continue their migration toward a tighter business focus. That new focus drove the decision to sell the Michael Kelly brand.

"This is a great arrangement for all involved," said Gary Hanser, Hanser president. "We have had a long and positive relationship with the Hoeft family and sincerely care about the Michael Kelly brand. This outcome is the true win-win that we were hoping for."

Hoeft promises some big changes are coming to Michael Kelly Guitars. "Times

have changed and opportunities for a specialty brand like Michael Kelly have never been better. We value our long-term relationship with consumers and how they have driven us to be the guitar company that puts boutique within reach. We are very much committed to that position."

All Michael Kelly operations have moved to the new Michael Kelly Guitars entity.

{[michaelkellyguitars.com](http://michaelkellyguitars.com)}



CHAUVET | OPENING

## Chauvet Opens Second European Operation

Chauvet has opened a full-service subsidiary in Ghent, Belgium. The facility follows in the steps of the Chauvet branch in the United Kingdom and acts as the Chauvet distributor in the Benelux area, serving dealers of Chauvet Professional and Chauvet DJ brands in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, while supporting distributors and partners elsewhere in Europe.

"Given the success of our operations in the UK, it made sense to expand to an inland facility so we can better serve customers not only in the Benelux area but also throughout the continent," said Albert Chauvet, Chauvet president. "With high profile products like our Chauvet Professional Nexus and ÉPIX being seen worldwide, and the widespread following of Chauvet DJ in multiple countries, we've established globally recognized brands. This facility will help bring these brands to more markets, even more rapidly."

In addition to serving as a sales, service and distribution center, the Belgium facility

houses a showroom for conducting product demos and training. The new subsidiary is Chauvet's fifth office globally, joining two facilities in the United States and one in Mexico as well as its United Kingdom operation.

"We are eager to see our new Belgium subsidiary build on the success that we have enjoyed elsewhere," said Michael Brooks-

bank, general manager of Chauvet Europe. "Having been involved with the Chauvet UK operation since its inception in 2010, it's been very gratifying to see how the European market has responded so positively to our formula of offering quality-driven value products and supporting them with a passion for service." {[chauvetprofessional.com](http://chauvetprofessional.com)}





YAMAHA | DIVISION

## Yamaha Forms Professional Audio Division

Yamaha Corp. of America recently formed the professional audio division to provide a stronger, more unified presence in the live sound, recording and sound installation markets.

Alan Macpherson, a 27-year Yamaha veteran with a background in marketing a broad range of Yamaha musical instruments, commercial audio, live sound and recording products, will lead a team of professional and commercial audio specialists in the new division. He will report directly to Tom Sumner, senior vice president of Yamaha Corp. of America.

The Yamaha Professional Audio (PA) division will market all Yamaha commercial audio products, including the CL and QL consoles and recently announced flagship PM10 Rivage, which are currently marketed by Yamaha Commercial Audio Systems (YCAS).

The professional audio division will continue to provide the same high level of service to dealers and customers currently provided by YCAS, and has no plans to change the current distribution strategy. The division will also continue to serve commercial audio markets in Canada as well as the United States.

The new division will also represent all Yamaha live sound products, including the best-selling MG mixer line and innovative DXR powered speakers. The new division will continue to represent NEXO speaker products, including the STM system.

"We believe this new structure will empower us to get closer to our customers," said Hitoshi Fukutome, president of Yamaha Corp. of America. "With this focus we can grow our business, grow our dealers' business and delight our customers with innovative, quality products, service and solutions." [yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)



ZIVIX | CAMPAIGN

## ZIVIX LAUNCHES JAMSTIK+ KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN

Zivix, manufacturer of the MIDI guitar controlled jamstik, has launched its new jamstik+ SmartGuitar on Kickstarter.

A follow up to the original jamstik, the jamstik+ builds on its predecessor with its Bluetooth Smart capability and features a new hexaphonic magnetic pickup system. The unit is ideal for those that want to learn and master guitar.

"Most of us grew up idolizing an older sibling, a rock star musician or even a YouTube sensation, and the jamstik+ is here to make those dreams a reality," said Dan Sullivan, president of Zivix. "The jamstik+ represents our commitment to the movement of getting more people involved in music."

The jamstik+ utilizes Bluetooth Smart technology, which is compliant

with Apple's new MIDI standard for seamless connectivity, enabling users to enjoy a streamlined connectivity process, increased reliability and a more robust performance when playing.

One of the many benefits of the new Bluetooth technology is having connectivity without sacrificing the Wi-Fi connection. Users can be connected to any iOS device and still browse the Web, look up YouTube videos of their favorite musicians, and download their favorite MIDI app to use with the jamstik+.

In cooperation with Fishman, Zivix is now able to offer a more authentic and natural picking experience, similar to a traditional guitar. Users can recreate real guitar expression from subtle gestures when playing.

[jamstik.com](http://jamstik.com)

SAMICK | ARTIST APPROVED

## Carley Wolf Chooses Silvertone

Samick has added Carley Wolf to the Silvertone family of artists.

"I'm so excited to become a Silvertone artist," Wolf said. "I've always been a fan of the brand and the remakes are excellent — the same vibe as the vintage gear without the hassles of decades old equipment. I can't wait to test my new 1478 out on

the road."

Wolf has toured for years with a vintage 1478 model as her main guitar.

This year, she'll hit the road with a reissue Silvertone Classic 1478 in black. Wolf's band, The Ghost Wolves, will embark on a European tour in October and November.

[smcmusic.com](http://smcmusic.com)



GRAPH TECH | PRICING

## GRAPH TECH IMPLEMENTS MAP POLICY

Graph Tech has implemented a Minimum Advertised Price (MAP) policy and has partnered with Channel IQ software to assist in the enforcement and management of the MAP program.

“As the digital marketplace continues to expand, an influx of online resellers has emerged, causing a fluctuation in the advertised price of our products to occur,” said Dave Dunwoodie, president and founder of Graph Tech Guitar Labs. “The ability to monitor and enforce the minimum advertised price of our products, across all channels, allows us to ensure we maintain

the integrity and value proposition our brands offer the marketplace. This MAP policy supports our business partners by maintaining the value our products have, both within the minds of consumers and with our business partners.”

Graph Tech is working with Channel IQ software to identify and work with resellers that are advertising Graph Tech products below the minimum advertised price.

“Channel IQ provides the ability for us to track, manage and notify our resellers of policy violations in a central administration system,” said Eric Gillespie, international

marketing manager at Graph Tech. “We pride ourselves in supporting our business partners, across all channels, to ensure the partnership they have with Graph Tech, our brands and our products continues to strengthen their guitar parts business.” [graphtech.com](http://graphtech.com)



## APPOINTMENTS



From left: Daniel Lee, Ruby Biloskirka-Conley and Steve Spak

## ROLAND ADDS THREE

Roland U.S. has announced three new additions that align with the company’s current strategic business plan.

Steve Spak has joined Roland U.S. as district sales manager for the mid-Atlantic district. Spak comes to Roland most recently from KMC Music, where he was a sales team member. In his new role, he will develop and maintain dealer relationships and sales programs, offer dealer resources, strategy and objectives, and provide product training, merchandising and promotions at the retail level.

Daniel Lee comes on board as Roland’s local marketing specialist. Lee will augment Roland’s marketing efforts to effectively partner with the dealer community as part of its local marketing initiative.

Ruby Biloskirka-Conley has been named Roland’s new social media and content specialist.

“Steve, Daniel and Ruby will be great additions to our company,” said Jay Wanamaker, president and CEO of Roland U.S. “Each has a unique skill set that will contribute to the overall growth and expansion of Roland U.S.” [rolandus.com](http://rolandus.com)

CASIO | CHARITY

## Casio Donates 22 Keyboards

Casio America donated 22 CTK-4200 electronic keyboards along with corresponding ARST keyboard stands to Westminster Avenue Elementary School in Venice, California.

“Fostering a love of music among today’s youth can be a key factor in helping students excel in a number of different academic areas,” said Stephen Schmidt, vice president of Casio’s electronic musical instrument division. “The new music programs at the Westminster Avenue Elementary School are an exceptional opportunity to offer full-time modern music education to students, and we are incredibly proud that our Casio keyboards will be included among the tools available to these budding musicians.”

The Westminster Avenue Elementary School strives to develop a self-motivating community of lifelong learners and critical thinkers through a rigorous curriculum that includes technology and appreciation for the arts. The school was recently selected for a five-year commitment by Adopt the Arts, a Los Angeles-based non-profit created by Guns N’ Roses’ former drummer Matt Sorum, along with activist Abby Berman. Through this program, and in partnership with the Carter Lay Charitable Fund, the Westminster Avenue Elementary School will teach students valuable lessons that go beyond traditional music education, including the power of giving back and choosing to make a difference helping others in their community.

“I am thrilled to be bringing music education back to our school in a strong way with the help of such powerful partners in the music industry,” said Barry Cohen, principal of Westminster Avenue Elementary School. “Our beautiful new music room, complete with guitars, a drum set, and Casio’s keyboards will be the perfect place to unearth the wonderful talents among our students.” [casiomusicgear.com](http://casiomusicgear.com)

# Jam Packed

## THE ULTIMATE DRUM MIC PACK, FROM THE INNOVATORS

The Audix DP7 Drum Pack is the standard for capturing the unique sound of your drums in studio and for live sound. The DP7 is jam packed with our popular D6 for kick drum, an i5 mic for snare, two D2s for rack toms, a D4 for the floor tom and two ADX51s for overhead miking. With a sleek, foam-lined aluminum case to keep the mics safe, the DP7 is truly everything a drummer needs in a single package.



# DP7

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*Photo of Anthony Jones, Pink Martini*



# 99

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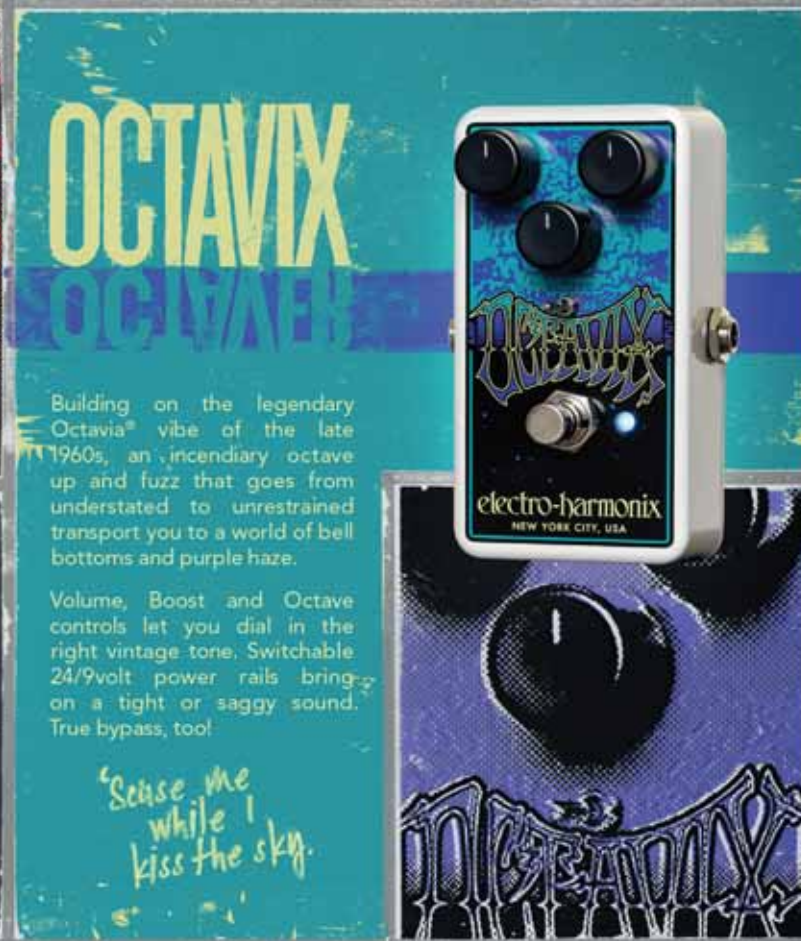
sounds ever. Like the B9, it delivers precise control over percussive click, modulation, attack/sustain, drawbar setting and high frequency content. Transform your instrument or use together with the B9 for dual keyboard possibilities!



With its gain stage and signal path optimized for bassists and guitarists who want more low-end definition, this pedal's clean boost and natural overdrive will really enhance your sound. Adjustable clean blend for maximum versatility plus boosted power rails for more headroom and definition. Active pickups? No problem with the switchable -10dB pad. Selectable true or buffered bypass, too!

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# IDEAS

Inside **IDEAS** > Lessons Learned Page 30 > The Tech Beat Page 32 > The Retail Doctor Page 34 > The Lesson Room Page 36

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

## THE IGNORE MODE

If you've walked the Las Vegas strip recently, you've experienced a new echelon of "pushy." Vegas continues to rework high stakes tactics of luring potential customers more deeply into the Vegas "experience." In the last couple years, Sin City has eliminated the traffic-throttling of the pedestrian herd of the '90s by investing billions in overpasses and walkways, allowing a steady stream of profit opportunity to meander without barrier to the slew of slot machines, shopping and dining. Barely 50 steps from Las Vegas Boulevard's pathway you can enjoy a gourmet burger by Gordon Ramsay or take an escalator up to Bubba Gump Shrimp, along with a plethora of other fast casual restaurants and trendy boutiques.

The new Vegas speed bump now is human — the "barker." You can hardly walk 30 paces without someone selling you show tickets, helicopter rides, real estate and of course, sex. Initially you don't notice it so much, but after the 25th person in a half hour verbally tackling you with his "opportunity," you stop getting annoyed and settle into



**You don't have to be pushy to get through to customers who are 'just looking'**

"ignore mode." Tourist survival in Sin City's new selling circus requires the mask of indifference. As someone in sales, I go from compassion for these commission-starved saps to resentment in their attempts to exploit my good will.

Is this experience all that different from a typical music store showroom floor? Let's go out on a

limb and say sometimes it doesn't stray far. When it happens, staff should know simple tricks to deal with the "zombie" customer. Understand, it is not just that new customers don't trust us; it's from the moment they step in, they are programmed to ignore us. "Just looking?" Oh no, they aren't!

**Finding commonality.** Folks are in the store because of an interest in music (or purchasing for someone who is). That is immediate fodder for solidarity, but a stranger may completely conceal, or worse, camouflage their interest on purpose, simply because they don't want to show any cards. They might feel they are giving up a competitive sales advantage if they reveal why they are there, especially if in the early shopping stage. Breaking through customer "ignore mode" requires conscious conversational approaches.

**Strip the veneer of distrust.** Think of customer suspicion as a veneer, something that needs to be lightly sanded away (not with an ax). A smile and a carefully crafted question about something other than what they are looking at can be a decoy for a deeper conversation soon after. Talk periphery diversions, the weather, the

instrument they are carrying in, the item on the wall that caught their eye. If they don't think you're going to pounce on them to line your pockets with commission, they will start talking. And you'll listen.

**Oblique stare.** The best conversations I've had with my teenage daughter have been driving to school. The reason? She's captive in the car, but we're both facing the same direction and not directly at each other. Direct eye-to-eye contact can be intimidating, and the physicality of you looking the same direction can communicate you are after the same mutual goal — their solution.

If you are a natural extrovert, this all might seem extreme. It used to be just introverts that retreated into their shell, but today with so much ad bombardment, spam mail and Web banners, consumers play this distance game. Handed a smartphone immediately out of the womb, today's younger salesforce struggles with conversational proficiency. Often they can benefit from these 21st century sales sensibilities. **MI**

Ted Eschliman is a music industry veteran and a co-owner of Dietze Music, based in Lincoln, Nebraska.

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

# Power of the Word 'Yes'

My dad tells a great story from the very early days of our store, and it's a lesson that I fortunately learned early in my career. The store had just recently opened on a shoestring budget. One day, he was meeting with a sales rep and excused himself to help a customer looking for a piccolo trumpet. Considering that we had opened with a meager inventory, that was not part of the mix. When he returned to the rep, the late Joe Friedman, Joe told my dad that he had a really nice piccolo trumpet in his warehouse and would have happily gotten it to him the next day on approval. Nothing gets your attention like losing a potential sale when you're an upstart company. That day my dad learned no matter what the question is, it's imperative to find a way to say "yes." So, how do you put the power of "yes" to work for you? Here are a few examples:



**No matter what the question is, it's imperative to find a way to say 'yes'**

## GET TO KNOW THE CUSTOMER

Many opportunities will revolve around inventory. You have a customer come in looking for a Les Paul, and you dropped Gibson when the financial demands of being a dealer became more than you could handle. If your answer is "no," you've made it awfully easy for the customer to decide to look elsewhere, and you've done nothing to build any sort of relationship. Why not start out by getting to know the person? Start with, "I'll be delighted to help you find your perfect guitar." Learn what he owns, what kind of music he plays and what in particular caused him to ask for that Les Paul. You may discover that Les Paul was the only name he knew. This is your chance to tell him about your amazing selection of PRS guitars.

## FIND NEW WAYS TO SAY 'YES'

What happens when an existing customer calls up to see if you'll give her a loaner for that amp she bought from you a couple of years ago that's now on the fritz? "Sorry, we don't do loaners." She'll not only seek other options, but she's going to

feel like her previous business with you was unappreciated.

Think how much more effective it could be if you said, "Please bring us your amp. We'll find a way to make this right." Then when you're face to face, you explain that you don't do loaners, but you tell her about your premium rush service. Or show her all the new amp technology, and offer her an amazing trade-in on her broken amp.

## FIELD PRICE COMPARISONS

Finally, let's look at the dreaded price comparison question. "Your competitor quoted me at XXX for this keyboard. Can you beat it?" Even if the price is insane, your answer should never be "no." Find out if this is the right product for the customer. If it is, will they need cables, a carrying case, software, a stand? Can you make them a package deal that both eliminates the direct price comparison and better serves their needs?

Pay attention to every time your natural instinct leads you to say "no." Resisting that temptation and working towards positive solutions will lead you to the sweetest words of all, "Yes, I'll buy it!" **MI**

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



EXPERIENCE THE

# MK4

From the soft, subtle intricacies of a finger-picking guitar solo to the powerfully loud vocals on your latest track, the MK4 is the perfect addition to your mic collection – whether you're buying your first mic or your fiftieth.

Designed and manufactured in Germany, the MK4 is a true condenser, cardioid microphone that features a one-inch 24-carat gold-plated diaphragm and a full metal housing. Its internal shock mounted capsule enables this versatile tool to be taken from your studio to the stage, and everywhere in between, to capture your music precisely how you hear it.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MK FAMILY AT [SENNHEISER.COM](http://SENNHEISER.COM)



EXPERIENCE THE

# MK8

The MK8 has dual one-inch diaphragms precisely spattered with 24-carat gold. The shock-mounted capsule is accommodated within a sturdy metal housing.

Designed to bring multiple polar pattern flexibility to home and project studios, the MK8 – Multiple-Pattern Large Diaphragm Condenser Microphone allows for a selection between omnidirectional, wide cardioid, cardioid, supercardioid, and figure-8 polar patterns. A 3-position pad switch lets you select between 0, -10, and -20dB while a second switch controls a multi-stage roll-off at 0, 60 Hz and 100 Hz, allowing the MK8 to be used on a variety of sources.

THE TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

# Secrets of Email Marketing

I still remember the first day I became a believer in email marketing. I was new to Gist Piano Center, and it was my job to build a successful campaign around a university piano sale. In previous years, the company had spent around \$15,000 to secure 30 or so sale appointments. My goal was to achieve the same results with less than half that budget. After several planning meetings, my team and I built our first strategic email marketing campaign. We were amazed to discover that we could achieve the same number of appointments for around \$1,500. I was hooked. Since that first campaign, I have made mistakes, but I've built a philosophy for making my emails successful.



**'It's better to send several short emails to targeted audiences than a huge email to everyone.'**

## 1.) TAKE TIME TO STRATEGIZE.

According to Constant Contact, the average open rate for an email "blast" is not too explosive. It's around 18 percent. The average click rate is even lower — close to 15 percent. The best way for your emails to beat the average is to make them part of a larger strategy. Include topics that are trending on social media, tease upcoming product or program launches, and tie everything into an organized message that recipients will see echoed in social media, on your website and in your store.

## 2.) MAKE IT EASY TO JOIN.

It's important to remember that your recipients can opt out of your emails at any time. Make sure you fill your lists with people who want to consume your message — and make it easy for them to do so. Include "join our list" links in key places around your website and in the descriptions for your YouTube videos. Check with your email marketing company to learn about sign up tools like "text to join" or custom Facebook tabs.

## 3.) DIVIDE AND CONQUER.

Today's mail service companies make it easier than ever to segment your email list — and it's very important that you do so. You should have separate emails for your service customers, students, teachers,

technicians and prospects. It's better to send several short emails to targeted audiences within your list than to send a huge email to everyone. Your readers want to feel that you've customized your message for them.

## 4.) DELIVER ENGAGING CONTENT.

Once you target a group of prospective readers, tailor your message to that group's specific interests. Create compelling subject lines that draw a reader's eye, but keep the text short and punchy. You should include a "read more" link after each story so interested readers can find more details and/or commentary on your website, social media or blog. Your goal should be to entice your readers.

## 5.) THINK MOBILE.

Remember that a huge majority of your readers will be consuming your content on a mobile device. Make sure your emails are designed to work well on smartphones. Mobile readers need larger text and bright, compelling images scattered throughout.

Overall, build the emails you would want to read. And as your emails improve, so will your bottom line. **MI**

James Harding is the president of Gist Piano Center, a freelance Web designer, pianist and blogger. Email him at [jharding@gistpiano.com](mailto:jharding@gistpiano.com).



## DAVE SMITH

Instrument Designer  
Co-Creator of MIDI  
Grammy® Winner

## OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS

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From the flagship 12-voice **Prophet 12** and ultra-powerful 4-voice paraphonic **Pro 2** to the super-portable and affordable **Mopho** series, Dave Smith Instruments has you covered — in the studio and on stage.



*Dave Smith*

INSTRUMENTS

Designed and built in California

THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

# Don't Change the Experience

I'm lucky enough to live in the south, which means I have access to some of the tastiest vinegar-based, whole-hog, pit-cooked barbecue (or just 'cue as we southerners like to call it). Most people in my neck of the woods consider access to a cooked pig covered under their first amendment rights. I grew up in a small town with two legendary barbecue restaurants within a mile of one another. On one end of town is Pete Jones' Skylight Inn that's now in the third generation of family members' hands

while in the middle of town is Bum's Restaurant, owned and operated by Latham "Bum" Dennis and his family. Locals can be very loyal to their 'cue restaurants and vice versa, so there are those that dine only at Pete Jones' or Bum's, but never both.

During a recent staff meeting I brought in some plates of 'cue for my staff to taste while I discussed the finer points of this eastern North Carolina delicacy. I started the meeting by telling them about the fierce loyalty of those in my hometown that swore by either Pete Jones' or Bum's restaurants. Being relative newcomers to our area, many of my employees were curious, perplexed really, as to why so many people have such loyalty over our style of barbecue and why so many people in our area will drive hundreds of miles to eat a chopped pork sandwich. I pointed out that not only do these businesses enjoy amazing customer loyalty, many of these establishments have been in the same family, same buildings, on the same plots of land with the same cooks, servers and customers eating there week after week from the same menus for decades. Little, if anything, has changed at these businesses.

My staff had a hard time understanding how these businesses have survived over the years, but I've always known part of their

success has always been in the stability of the product and the belief in that product from the people serving it to you. They all agreed the food I brought in for them was delicious, and I encouraged them to make the trip, or pilgrimage as some see it, to these establishments so they can get the first-hand experience

for themselves. Yes, the food is good, but you have to see the buildings, smell the food cooking over hardwood hickory and taste it right off the butcher's block to really appreciate why these places are so revered.

## EMPHASIS ON CULTURE

What I wanted my staff to understand was that customers are loyal for many reasons, but overall I believe they come back for your product, your people and the experience you offer them. Your physical buildings can be state-of-the-art, but if your product is not top notch and your staff is not viewed as exceptional, then your million dollar building with millions of dollars in inventory can't save you.

Finally, I wanted my staff to understand that you can always try to update and refine your products and experiences, but sometimes it's best to just leave the core product alone. Once your brand and product is established, take caution in how much you tweak it. Can you imagine the metal band Slayer playing a love song? Or worse, a plate of barbecue served with something other than vinegar-based sauce, cornbread, cole slaw and a Pepsi? **MI**

Billy Cuthrell owns and operates Progressive Music Center. He's a customer service, management and music lessons expert.



**The culture your store offers can mean as much to your customers as the product itself**

# Kawai Congratulates Our 2014 Pinnacle Award Winners



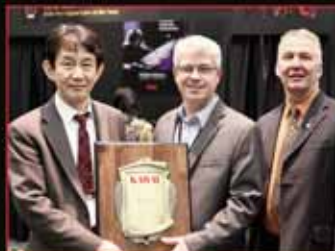
**DEALER OF THE YEAR**  
KAWAI AMERICA & SHIGERU KAWAI PIANO COMPANY  
**Kim's Piano - Garden Grove, CA**  
David Kim, Benjamin Kim



**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 Keslet, Dwayne Hilton, Cathy McReynolds



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

**KAWAI**  
THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO



THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# Selling Adult Lessons

Over the years I've written about the lessons I've learned from attending many different events, such as the Warped Tours, the DCI World Championships, the National Association of School Boards. I learned a lot that really helped me not only as a business owner but also as a music teacher. By attending these events, I saw and experienced things I never would have seen by being in my office. My latest lessons were learned at the AARP Convention this past September.



**Increase your lesson business by catering to the AARP crowd**

Strangely these lessons were about people my own age. I guess at age 62 I more than qualify to be a member of AARP. NAMM was at this event promoting “Play Music” and providing lessons to me that could help both music retailers and music teachers alike.

AARP runs a TV ad that states, “You Don’t Know AARP.” For the MI industry, this rings true — we don’t know the AARP age group, and it turns out, this is a large age group with extra time looking to learn something new. And boy, do they want to have fun. (Been to a Stones concert lately?)

The NAMM Play Music Pavillion was swamped with people strumming ukes, guitars, banging on hand drums, checking out keyboards and watching other AARP-ers play music. This is the generation that changed the world of music — and music stores. They value the local retailer but are also savvy regarding the Internet. And they value the human approach to lessons versus YouTube.

**1.) SELECT TEACHERS THAT WILL BE THE RIGHT FIT FOR THESE STUDENTS.**

These teachers need to be patient and encouraging. They should be music junkies, liking every song under the sun. They need to be social and non-intimidating. These students don’t want to become rock stars. Having a shredder for a teacher

will be discouraging to them.

**2.) CREATE A SPECIAL “ADULT TIME” OF THE DAY FOR THESE LESSONS.**

These students can come in before school is out. Create an 11am–2pm time slot for adult students. Your lesson studios are

probably a ghost town during this time slot anyways. This is also a slow time for music retail. So, it will allow for a less crazy environment for the adult student to shop in, and give them more time to browse books, look at gear and get to know your store and staff.

**3.) PROMOTE YOUR ADULT MUSIC LESSONS.**

Most of your community thinks you only teach kids and teens. Even the grandparents that bring and pay for their grandkids’ lessons. You need to let customers know you offer adult lessons. Place a large poster in your window that reads: “We Teach Adult Music Lessons.” Feature it on your website and social media.

**4.) HAVE ADULT-TARGETED MUSIC BOOKS.**

It might sound silly, but you’re going to need to stock Beatles uke books or Elton John beginner piano books. Make sure you have titles that this generation would be interested in learning to play. Adults don’t want scraps of scribbled TAB to go home and learn from.

Don’t overlook this fantastic opportunity to increase your lesson program and create adult music makers in your community. **MI**

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



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# FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

## DAVE SMITH | DAVE SMITH INSTRUMENTS

### HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

I live in Napa Valley, about an hour and 20 minutes away from our offices in San Francisco, so I generally work out of the house. I get up around 7 a.m. and communicate with everyone via email. We're a tiny company — there are only 10 of us — and we all get together at the office just a couple days a week, so we're all in the same place at the same time.

### HOW DO YOU APPROACH COMPANY STRUCTURE AND COORDINATION?

I've always been a big believer in supporting our products, so almost half of the company is customer and tech support. We don't have a marketing or sales department. Everything is very simple and since we're so small and everybody knows what they're doing, we don't bother with things like daily status reports. I usually email everybody at the start of every week to tell them what's going on, which days I'll be in the office and what needs to get done. During crunch times, like when we were getting our Prophet 6 ready for NAMM this year, we do have more detailed schedules, but we don't use anything like manager software to plan out our products. I've been doing this for so long that I know what has to be done and when.

### HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE AT THE COMPANY?

Actually, I mostly do technical work, since there's not that much management that needs to happen. I develop software, check hardware and design instruments. I've got a great team, so it's not like I need to be monitoring and assigning tasks on a daily basis. It's a collaborative effort. I can spend my time doing the fun stuff!

### GIVEN DSI'S POPULARITY, I'M GUESSING YOU COULD EXPAND SIGNIFICANTLY, IF YOU WANTED TO.

We definitely could. If somebody else had our product line, they would sell five times more than we do. We don't have reps in the field and our sales are mostly passive. Last year, we did a little advertising, which was new for us, and we have our website, but we are not proactive on marketing and getting our instruments placed into stores.

### SO WHY STAY SMALL?

Getting to the point where we could make and sell more

instruments would require us to grow significantly, and I try to minimize infrastructure and the size of the company. It's been a great business model so far. If sales go up or down, our operation is scalable. I don't have to panic about meeting a big payroll or paying rent on a huge office. We've been very successful because of this approach. When it comes to sales, another part of it is that our product lifetimes are long and everybody doesn't know about our products when they first come out.

### HOW DOES THAT WORK TO YOUR ADVANTAGE?

We started shipping the Prophet '08 eight years ago, and today, it's doing just as well now as it was when it came out. People are still discovering it for the first time and, as we come out with new instruments, we aren't replacing the old ones. If you build a standard ROMpler [digital keyboard workstation], you always need to build a new one, with more voices or bits or whatever, not long after to replace the old one. We don't have to do that. Our new instruments get added to our current products instead of replacing them. So by our very nature, we grow every year. The numbers have been awesome and since we're so small, we don't have to answer to anybody. Running the business that way has made things so much easier.

### SO, PRODUCT LONGEVITY IS A CORE VALUE.

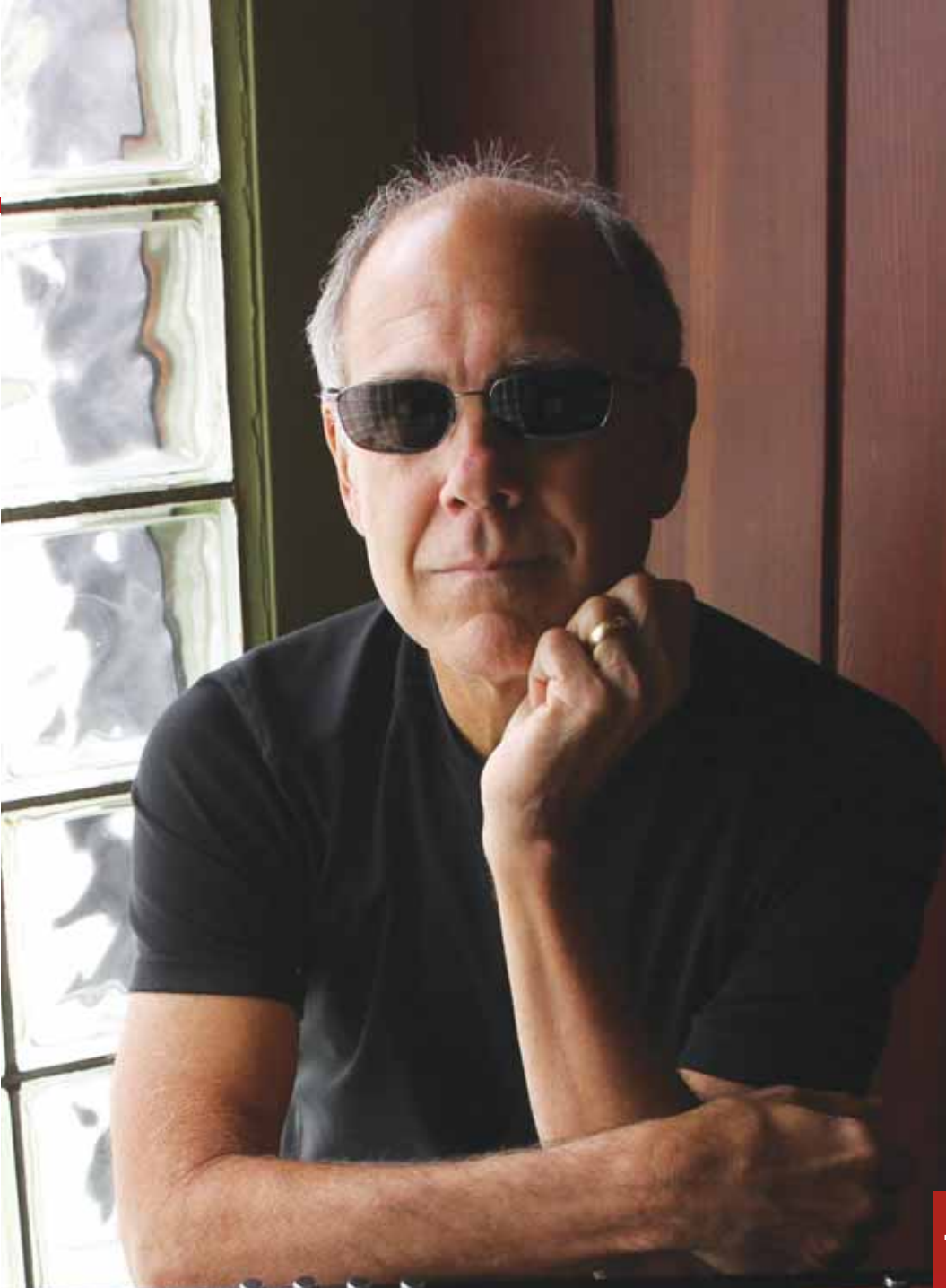
I like to remind people that, every 30 years, it's OK to buy a new Prophet. [Laughs.] If you have a Prophet-5, that's nice, but now you can buy a Prophet 6 and keep it for three decades. It's great to be able to say that with a straight face and have people know that I'm not making it up.

### HOW DO YOU APPROACH QUALITY CONTROL?

Our instruments are made from wood and metal and built in San Francisco. There's nothing plastic, nothing from China. Building our products like that is a no-brainer for us. We're fortunate that our technology is good enough that we can actually hit price points where people go, "Oh, that's reasonable for what they're delivering."

### YOUR INSTRUMENTS ARE NOT INEXPENSIVE, BUT YOU DO SEEM TO HAVE HIT A GOOD PRICE POINT.

That's true, but to a lesser degree, we have no compe-



## THE DETAILS

DAVE SMITH, FOUNDER

**HQ:** San Francisco

**Founded:** 2002

**Employees:** 10

**Best selling product:** Pro 2 and Prophet 12 analog synthesizers and Tempest analog drum machine.

**Fun Fact:** Smith is widely regarded as a living legend of the synthesizer world, having designed such groundbreaking instruments as the Sequential Circuits Prophet-5, the first instrument of its kind, and the first synth built with a micro-processor on board. He also helped pioneer the development and use of MIDI in the early 1980s and is a Grammy Award winner, and Fellow of the Audio Engineering Society, to boot.

tition right now. We've been making polyphonic analog synths for years, and nobody else is. A few things show up here and there, but there's really no direct competition when it comes to building these kinds of instruments. How can you not do well in that sort of situation?

### WITH ANALOG TECHNOLOGY HAVING BEEN AROUND FOR SO LONG, HOW DO YOU STILL FIND PLACES TO INNOVATE?

That technology is old, but basic analog synthesis architecture has passed the test of time. It doesn't matter if it's software, digital implementations, or true analog — everybody who uses these keyboards has a feel for that technology. There are so many things that can still be done within that realm to innovate.

The Prophet 12 is completely different than the Prophet '08, which is completely different from the Prophet 6. We try to give each instrument its own personality and we're not afraid to add new flavors to the mix. To a certain extent, in that regard, we're competing with ourselves. But in the heart of each instrument, it's still the same technology framework that people know and love: an oscillator, filter and amplifier.

### CAN YOU GIVE SOME SPECIFICS WHEN IT COMES TO INNOVATIONS IN NEW PRODUCTS?

A lot of the innovation is in the interface, look and feel of the product. A lot of it also gets into technical buzzword territory — what kind of oscillators are we using, what kind of modulation matrix. Our instruments may look complicated, but you can always go up to one, play it, and hit a button to change a sound. Even if you don't know what you're doing at all, grab a knob and see what happens. If you like the sound, keep it. If not, turn another knob and keep experimenting. We try to design things so you don't have to be an expert to have fun. The interface should just be a good way to lead you into the sounds.

### WHAT'S YOUR MANUFACTURING PROCESS?

We use all surface-mount, automated processes for building our circuit boards and such. That's what allows us to build these instruments at affordable prices. We don't own our factory, but since we're close by, we're always over there keeping an eye on things. They do a great job.

### HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT OWNING YOUR OWN

### FACTORY?

Hiring a company to construct our instruments is part of keeping a low infrastructure and simpler business. If I had to do manufacturing, that'd be a real headache. I'd have to hire 30-times more people and manage a big facility. I still don't want to go to China, have our manufacturing happen far away, and have to worry about what they're doing over there. Building in America just makes much more sense for us.

### WHAT'S YOUR PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING NEW INSTRUMENTS?

It's very unstructured. We're always thinking about what would be fun to make. Usually, when we get close to finishing up a product, we start thinking about the next instrument,

throw around ideas, and then finalize our plans. Then we all jump on it, building front panels and figuring out the concept of the instrument. We don't target what we make — "this is going to be an EDM or a rock 'n' roll machine." It's more about doing something that we think is cool and, at some point, we dive right in and go straight to prototype. People are always amazed at how quickly we

turn out products, in fact.

### THAT SEEMS LIKE A VERY DIFFERENT APPROACH THAN A LARGER COMPANY MIGHT TAKE.

With bigger companies, products often get designed by committee and take a long time to develop. Companies use marketing focus groups, sales teams give their input, artists weigh in from around the world. That's not our style. Everybody who works at this company is a synth head and we all love doing this stuff. Everybody has great ideas. The biggest problem we have is figuring out which features to leave out. I'm a big fan of constraint in design. Every instrument we make doesn't have to do everything. Ultimately, I'm the one who makes final decisions when it comes to instrument design, and there are arguments from time to time, but we almost always come to an agreement where everything makes sense.

### WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

I like to travel and cycle. Last year, I rode my bike across the Canary Islands and took a trip to the French Alps.

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

Something in electronics or technology. I've been doing this for 40 years, though, and I really can't imagine doing anything else.

'WE TRY TO DESIGN THINGS SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT TO HAVE FUN. THE INTERFACE SHOULD BE A GOOD WAY TO LEAD YOU INTO THE SOUNDS.'



# SUPERIOR PROTECTION



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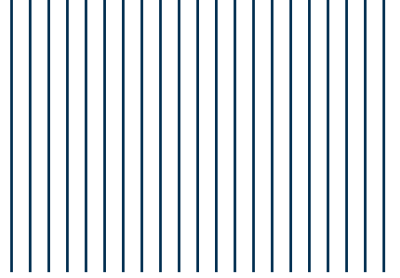
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**i series**



*Jeff Falgien and Dennis Hagerty*



# VALUE PROPHETS

Keyboard Concepts has managed to outlast competition ... and grow by focusing on what its customers want: value

*By Katie Kailus, Photos by Sabrina Hill*

**WHEN THE CUSTOMERS** walking through your store's doors on a normal business day include Julie Andrews and Chevy Chase, it might seem natural to describe your local piano market as "upscale." But Keyboard Concepts' President Dennis Hagerty and Vice President Jeff Falgien haven't relied on their store's prime Southern California locale alone. Since its founding 33 years ago, the Sherman Oaks, California-based piano dealer has managed to expand to five locations, outlast most of its competitors and grow into the largest piano dealer in the area.

While Los Angeles has allowed Keyboard Concepts to supply instruments to some of the most prestigious names, music venues and universities around, including UCLA, the Pantages Theater, Atlantic Records and Paramount Pictures, Hagerty said the key to the company's

success has been making the dealership comfortable for all buyers — straying away from the typical flashy piano showroom, instead opting for a more comfortable vibe.

"The business model has been pretty much the same since day one: have nice-looking, professional stores that are not too expensive looking. Pianos are expensive looking enough. We wanted to create something that looks like the kind of place you can get a deal," Hagerty said.

When selecting a location to open a Keyboard Concepts store, Hagerty and Falgien look for two key components: part of town and part of block.

"First, we look for value locations," Hagerty said. "Not in the bad part of town, not in the overpriced part of town. Just value. The idea is that if someone comes in who's on a budget, they will feel comfort-



**Top left:** Keyboard Concepts' corner location makes it easier for customers to find. **Top right:** The performance piano room is also home to monthly meetings for the local chapter of the piano technicians guild. **Bottom left:** Hagerty opts for a value vibe in his showroom, adding, "Pianos are expensive looking enough." **Bottom right:** Keyboard Concepts' Yamaha Music School has a total attendance of about 80 students.



able. But we also want the guy that pulls up in the Lamborghini to feel comfortable, too."

Over the years, Hagerty said he has found that the majority of clients prefer shopping where they feel they are getting a good deal.

"A factory-owned Steinway showroom recently opened on Wilshire Boulevard and Robertson Boulevard [in Beverly Hills]," he said. "You look at that store and it screams deep pockets, New York, corporate money. Basically, it screams unlimited funds. And to some clients that appeals to them. But 90 percent of clients, I've found, still go, 'I think I'm looking for somewhere with a better value.' So that's what we focus on in our showrooms."

Neighborhood aside, all of Keyboard Concepts' locations are currently housed in corner units — a crucial lesson Hagerty learned from a real estate developer early on.

"The three most important things in business are location, location, location," he said. "My early mentor was a real estate developer and when I decided to go into this business he told me to hold out for a corner location. They are harder to find and you'll spend 25 percent more, but businesses on corners tend to not go out of business. Plus, if your business does start to go south and you need to downgrade, it's much easier to get out of a corner lease."

#### SURVIVING THE RECESSION

Hagerty remembers times in the late 1990s and early 2000s where they could sit back and wait for customers to call or come through the doors. But that all changed in 2006. When the economy tanked, the acoustic piano market arguably took

it hardest. While most piano dealers were sweating it out, Hagerty and Falgien had a plan.

"In some cases our leases had terms that allowed us to renegotiate based on sales performance," Hagerty said. "Renegotiating leases and having such a maneuverability saved our bacon."

Hagerty said some locations, which could have been disasters, were profitable because they had good safety nets built into their leases.

"That was something that we negotiated up front," he recalled. "And as the recession ended some of those deals went away, so we just moved locations. Long-term leases can really kill a small business."

Falgien said the recession also offered Keyboard Concepts an opportunity to get back out into the community and create connections again.

“We strengthened the relationships that maybe went dormant for awhile because everyone was busy selling,” Falgien said. “In the long run, it has been very beneficial. We got out from behind the desk and attended recitals, schools and face-to-face meetings.”

Hagerty said they specifically targeted university and college concerts.

“It’s a little daunting in Southern California because of the number of universities there are, but it is always a nice surprise for the performers when they realize a vendor is there,” Hagerty said. “I can relate. I feel the same way when someone calls me to sell us a service and has actually been to one of our stores. I am way more likely to listen.”

#### 21ST CENTURY PIANO OPERATION

While radio and print marketing

campaigns used to work wonders for Keyboard Concepts in the '90s, today the dealer draws traffic through something their customers have on them at all times — their smartphones.

“All of our email blasts are primar-

ily designed for the phone appearance and the ease of user engagement,” Falgien said. “We have a brand new website and online store that we’ll be introducing shortly and these are being specifically designed for



*Keyboard Concepts' open floor plan boasts track lighting and natural light from windows.*



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## WHAT'S IN A NAME

By Katie Kailus

When Dennis Hagerty decided to open his piano shop in 1983, there was one thing he struggled with — **the name.**

“There were people that said, ‘Oh, you should just call it Dennis Hagerty Fine Pianos,’” he recalled. “And that just sounded so boring to me. This is before Jeff [Falgien] and I originally met. And **the idea was to have a hip, new name.**

Because I could also see digital pianos and digital keyboards being the way of the future. They were just starting to come out.”

So, in an attempt to show customers the store was on the cutting edge, Hagerty decided on the name **Keyboard Concepts.**

“One of the general managers of a large piano manufacturer called one day and said, ‘That’s a terrible name,’” Hagerty said. “Then he called back the next day and said, ‘I think you should do it. I can’t stop thinking about that dumb name.’”

Today, Keyboard Concepts stays on the cutting-edge of technology by offering customers such cutting-edge instruments as Disklavier and PianoDisc, proving that it is all in the name.

the mobile world instead of the desktop or laptop world.”

Keyboard Concepts generally sends out one or two email/text blasts per quarter.

“One is usually regarding an event such as a music concert or offering free tickets to the Los Angeles Ballet or LA Opera, while the other blast will contain special customer sales opportunities,” Falgien added.

One thing that hasn’t changed given the digital age is Keyboard Concepts’ print music selection. The flagship location in Sherman Oaks, which is also home to a Yamaha Music School, does so well with its print music that the books are housed up front near the doors, something Hagerty and Falgien said is convenient for their teaching clientele.

“Music teachers still want to go in to select their materials and browse in the

morning, possibly picking up something for a student they have at two in the afternoon,” Hagerty said. “An awful lot of music teachers are very traditional. They are comfortable with that, and it’s the perfect intro for us to have them here and chat them up. It just completes the picture.”

While the Yamaha Music School follows a curriculum set by Yamaha, the program is staffed by Keyboard Concepts’ teachers and sees about 80 students per week. These students purchase Yamaha publications, but Falgien said the print music departments in all five locations do very well. “Customers and teachers are always shopping for the next *Frozen.*”

Students who attend the music school are also prime candidates for Keyboard Concepts’ rental program.

“Renting is an awesome alternative path,”



Falgien said. “Hopefully everybody else — the teacher, the tuner — does their job, and that family has a great experience and it works. And then there’s another music maker in the world.”

With more than 30 percent of Keyboard Concepts’ rental customers converting to sales within the first year, it’s evident many families are opting to test-drive the instrument in their homes before they buy. However, Hagerty said, more and more 30- to 50-year-olds who recently purchased homes are coming to Keyboard Concepts looking for that perfect accent piece.

“They maybe grew up with a piano, and now they want to start their kids,” Hagerty said, adding that Yamaha Disklaviers are a favorite amongst this crowd as they are open to new technology.

These digital buyers were once upon a time used piano buyers, Falgien said.

“Now the benefits of the technology make it the right move for the family and entry-level buyers,” he added. “But in addition to that, a lot of customers are buying pianos like the Disklavier as a second instrument. They have a piano, and now they need an instrument in the guest room or the cabin.”

#### THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO INDUSTRY

When Keyboard Concepts first opened in its 1,500-square-foot space between a bar and a liquor store in 1983, Hagerty estimated there were about 30 piano stores in the San Fernando Valley alone, which is the dealer’s core market. Today, only two of those stores remain.

“That’s just evolution,” Hagerty said. “There are less people culturally that are taking up piano and are being encouraged to continue with it.”

That said, Falgien believes the grand piano market won’t ever go away.

“People who appreciate it, they need that caliber of instrument,” Falgien said. “There are always going to be beautiful homes and hotel lobbies. You just can’t get away from the elegance that that instrument delivers.”

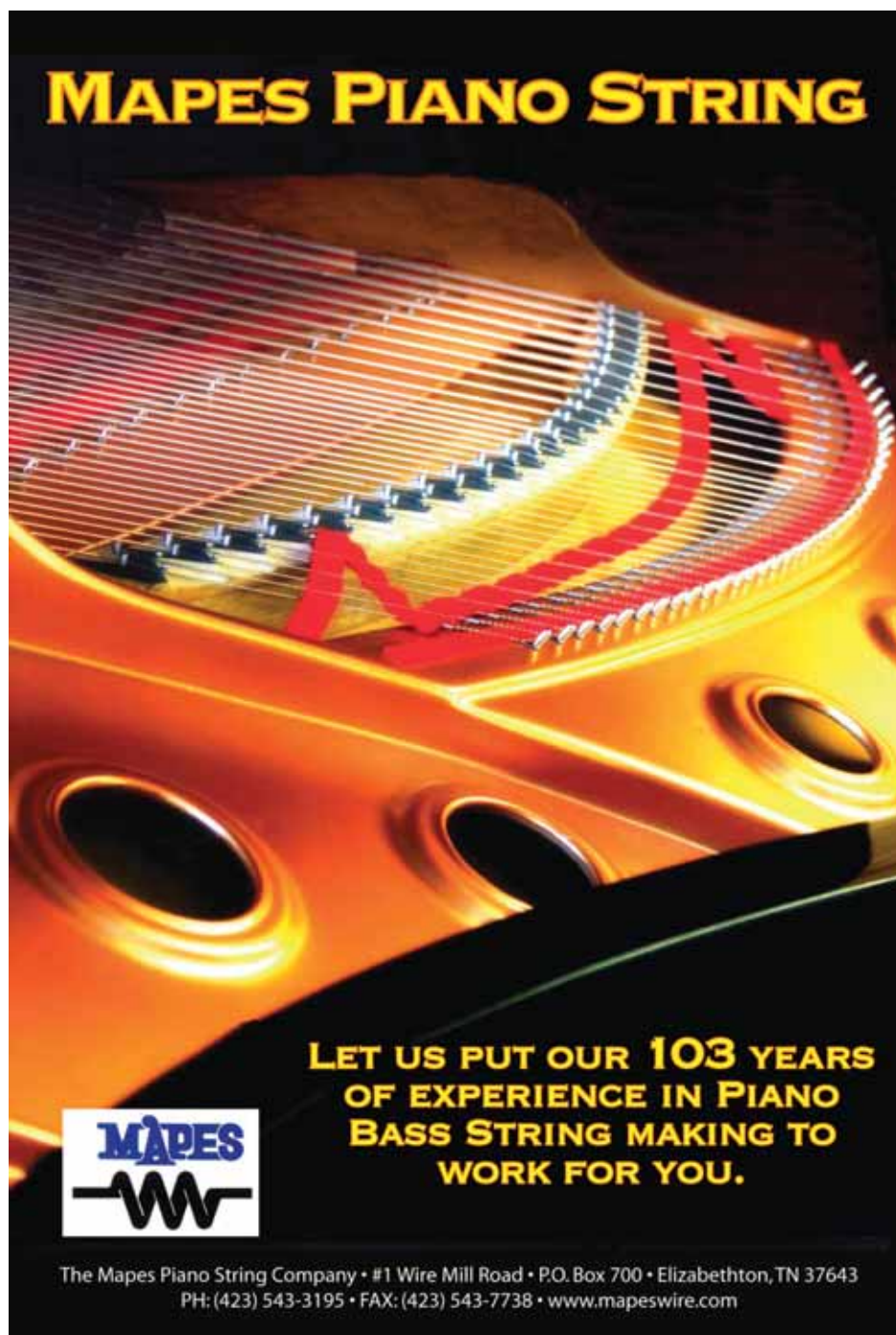
As far as entry-level piano sales, Hagerty believes they will be impacted by the used piano business.

“There was such a large amount of pia-

nos built and sold in the 1980s and ’90s and those will constantly be impacting certainly the low-end price points in new pianos. There will be used Yamahas, Kawais and Samicks that will be even with the low-end price points.”


Falgien added that in order for the industry to grow as a whole, it needs to create more music makers — period.

“I think it’s time that the whole industry wrapped its arms around the future,” he said. “Not just the piano industry — but all musical manufacturers and retailers. Culturally it needs to be addressed that no music in schools has created a lot less people that have the desire and love of making music. As a society, if we deem this important, it needs to be addressed.” **MI**



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By Frank Alkyer

# GREAT TIMES, GREAT EDUCATION, F'SHO NASMD Hits

**T**he National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) has always had a history of work hard, play hard. And both were on full display when the nation's leading school music retailers headed to New Orleans from March 18-21, f'sho (that's "for sure" for those who don't speak the local lingo). From Bill Rancic, winner

of the first season of NBC's *The Apprentice*, discussing his road to success to Branford and Ellis Marsalis discussing why the city they love is so important to music, New Orleans provided the perfect locale to soak up business wisdom, inspiration, good food and better friends at a conference geared to share the best practices in school music retailing.

1. The new NASMD board. From left: Mike Meyer, Meyer Music; Whitney Brown Grisaffi, Ted Brown Music; Mike Guntren, Ray's Midbell Music; Rosi Johnson, Mississippi Music; Greg Lyons, Royal Music; Beth Houlihan, Kidder Music; Cris Behrens, Summerhays Music Center; and Jim Provost, Gerry's Music Shop. 2. From left: Conn-Selmer's John Stoner, Quinlan & Fabish's George Quinlan and Conn-Selmer's Brett Ensor. 3. The winners of NASMD's Faulhaber/Winkler Golf Scramble. From left: Cavanaugh's Todd Quincy, Meyer Music's Mitzi and Pat Phelan and KHS America's Michael Robinson.

4. Yamaha's Joanie Barton and Ed Boyer. 5. Dansr's Bill Gray with Williamson Music's Mark Williamson. 6. Eastman Music's John Fulton and Saul "Evel Knievel" Friedgood with Backun Music's Joel Jaffe. 7. And, not the winners. Kidder Music's Brian Spicklemire and Quinlan & Fabish's Alan Sfranski were the only two members of their golf team to step up and accept the award for ... well, let's just say they didn't win. 8. Hal Leonard's Doug Lady as the head of the dragon. The rest of the dragon, where the view doesn't change, was Hal's Nancy Ubick and David Jahnke. 9. Participants show their "team" spirit for the Road Rep Olympics. 10. From left: Beacock Music's Russ and Heidi Beacock with Playground Music's Althea and Tony Leonard.

11. From left: Musical Innovations' Tracy Leenman and David Allison, Cannonball's Tevis and Cheryl Laukat, and Griggs Music's Vivian Davis. 12. Legere Reeds' Lynda and Tim Elvy. 13. Ward-Brodt Music's Connie Smith and Mick Faulhaber. 14. Buffet Group USA's Magali Trioche and Francois Kloc. 15. Paige's Music's Mark and Sandy Goff. 16. Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers' Peter and Kristin Sides. 17. The Alfred Publishing crew. From left: Morty, Iris and Ron Manus, Antonio Ferranti and Pam Hendricks. (Mick Faulhaber, Ward-Brodt, photo bombs in the background!) 18. From left: Draisen-Edward's Music's Barry Draisen with Zeagler's Music's Grayson, Kristina and Maria Zeagler.





# New Orleans

If you happened to miss New Orleans (and we're sorry you did), it broke the all-time attendance record with 444 dealers, suppliers and representatives from the industry in attendance. Also, Rosi Johnson, president of Mississippi Music, made history by becoming the first woman

to be named president of NASMD.

The next NASMD Convention will be held March 30-April 3, 2016, at the Grande Lakes Hotel & Resort, Orlando, Florida. In the meantime, the following pages bring back a few highlights from this year's educational sessions.





# Managing Family & Business

*The key to sustaining a family business over the course of several generations is conscious planning*

When it comes to succession planning and managing family in the family business, there are few better sources than the family of J. D'Addario & Sons, the world's largest manufacturer of musical instrument accessories with sales of roughly \$175 million annually.

With 1,100 employees and a large family with interest in the business, D'Addario has made a science of how to successfully run a family business.

"It's not easy, but I have to say that the key to sustaining a family business over the course of several generations is conscious planning," said John D'Addario III.

At D'Addario, that planning began years ago as the result of a negative experience.

"My father (John D'Addario Jr.) and my uncle (Jim D'Addario) worked for a period of time together with their father (John D'Addario Sr.) in J. D'Addario & Co. They went through a very difficult time with the transition. It fractured their relationship, although they did come back together again and created unity in the family.

"They didn't want that same experience to happen to the next generation. So, they got very serious about succession planning, and it was a catalyst to actually seeking help."

D'Addario said the process started with small, simple steps with the help of outside family business advisors, but has grown into a very sophisticated plan as the family and the business have grown. In discussing some of the best practices, D'Addario pointed out the need to know when and how family should participate in the business.

"One of the realizations that my father and my uncle came to as the business got more complex was something that's hard for families to come to a conclusion on," D'Addario said, "that the family might not necessarily be able to run the business by itself. We came to that realization and surrounded the family with a very capable team of management.

"Another thing that's very, very important is to define boundaries for participation around the business for the family members. That includes how they can enter the business, and when they do, how they can best represent the family in the business going forward."

One critical element to mitigate the risk of failing from one generation to the next is an annual family assembly.

"We get together on an annual basis as a family for roughly three days," he said. "And it's a combination of meetings and family activities, all designed to get the family together and open up the lines of communication. The objective is to keep the family connected to one and other, as well as the joint holdings that they share. It's an opportunity to inform them about what's going on in the business. And

it's an opportunity to educate them about their future responsibilities, financial stewardship, entrepreneurial thinking as a family. Probably the thing we try to hammer home most as part of this experience is that it's a privilege for our family to be part of a family business, that it's a privilege to be part of such a great industry like this. But one of the things that we always have to recognize is it's a huge responsibility for our family members that they have to the family, but more importantly to the families of the employees."

D'Addario said the family uses the time to educate everyone on issues from corporate structure to new business opportunities. To organize the family assembly and other learning experiences throughout the year, D'Addario has a family council, a small group of family members who manage the activities of the family.

"They're there to maintain family communications through different connections," D'Addario said. "They're there also to develop family policies. The most recent one that we developed was a code of conduct — how our family members should represent themselves, not only in the business, but also outside the business."

"One of the things our family council created with the help of our family advisor is a family constitution. The family constitution is essentially a set of guidelines to sustain the values, mission and vision of the family over the course of time."

*John D'Addario III*



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# How to Motivate Millennials

*CJ Averwater*

*By 2025, 75 percent of the workforce is going to be made up of members of the millennial generation*

**A**h, the Millennials. The next most misunderstood generation in history. For those not in the know, it's time to get in the know. Millennials are the generation born somewhere between the early 1980s and the early 2000s.

What's important to note, according to Amro Music's C.J. Averwater is that the Millennials are the fastest growing segment of our workforce today.

"In 2015, 36 percent of our workforce was made up of millennials," Averwater told NASMD attendees. "By 2020, that number's going to jump to 50 percent. Who wants to take a guess at 2025? Seventy-five percent of our workforce is going to be made up of millennials.

"It's important as owners and managers that we understand this other generation. Not only because they're the key to our organization's success, but these are also going to be our customers."

But despite differences Millennials have with previous generations, Averwater contends that they are extremely hard-working, as long as they are correctly motivated. And to motivate them, Averwater said owners and managers need to work harder to understand them.

## 1. MILLENNIALS ARE JOB CHANGERS.

According to research, 91 percent of Millennials expect to change jobs every 1-3 years.

"If they work 60 years, that's quite a lot of job changes, isn't it?" Averwater asked. "So, it's extremely important to find ways to hang on to these younger generational workers."

## 2. MILLENNIALS ARE INDEPENDENT.

"They want autonomy," Averwater said. "They want us to tell them what the outcome looks like, but then get out of the way and let them call the shots.

"In doing so, though, they want us to set clear goals for them. They want SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely."

## 3. MILLENNIALS EXPECT EXPECTATIONS.

"They want expectations set up front in terms of dress code, pay, promotions and performance, and we have to set those expectations up," Averwater said. "Otherwise, they're going to think that a promotion is just based on time spent in the organization."

## 5. MILLENNIALS WANT FEEDBACK.

"We have to provide constant feedback. The younger generation doesn't want to wait a year to hear [feedback]. They want to know how they're doing, and they want to know every single day because they've had parents who told them every day."

## 6. MILLENNIALS WANT EDUCATION, BUT ...

"This generation views education as our job as owners and managers to get it to them. It's really difficult because the Boomer generation is used to going out and doing it themselves.



"This generation wants to learn, but they need us to push them along. They want us to get them involved and get them plugged in."

## 7. MILLENNIALS WANT TO BE PART OF A MOVEMENT.

"They want to be part of a cause. They want to know that at the end of the day, what they do has an impact on the community. They also want to see how their job relates to the overall company goals."

Averwater said not to simply give Millennials mundane jobs without explaining why it's important. "Instead of saying, 'Here are 400 letters, and I need you to stuff them in envelopes and send them out by the end of the day; try [saying], 'Here are 400 letters going out to music educators for them to share with their parents so that their parents know how vital music education is to their communities.'"

## 8. MILLENNIALS DON'T VIEW PROFIT AS AN APPROPRIATE COMPANY GOAL.

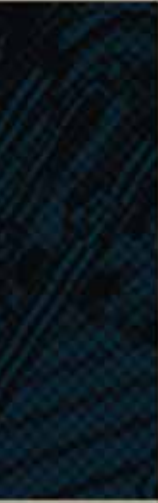
"But you have to think about it, what else happened during this generation's lifetime? We had the financial meltdown. We had companies that were corrupt.

"A survey of outgoing college students found that 90 percent said that a company should be measured by more than just profit alone."

To counter that, Averwater said his company shares numbers annually and discusses the previous year's financial statement with the entire company. "We found when we have these meetings where we talk about this, our margins tend to hold steady. Our sales people don't give away stuff on the front end. It's important to understand the big picture."



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CRAIG ALSTON



# Managing Your Online Reputation

*'Ninety-four percent of smartphone users are actually searching for your location and 50 percent of the people that search on a phone actually visit the store that day. So, you want to make sure that your reputation is as good on the phone as it is on the desktop.'*



*Jason Stern and Mark Brown*

A store's online reputation can't necessarily be bought, but it should be carefully managed, according to Jason Stern, director of search engine marketing for BrownRice Marketing in Metairie, Louisiana.

During an NASMD presentation, Stern said that it's important to take control of your store's online reputation because companies that come up at the top of search engine results and have good online reviews get sales — either online or in your store.

From the standpoint of topping search engine results, Stern said it's important to know that Google is king. "And it's true for a bunch of factors," he said. "The biggest one, though, is that the reviews on Google are going to show up in all phases of someone's research."

Stern said that a review on a Google+ page is more valuable than on another microsite, even Facebook, because when people search on Google, they're more likely to be ready to make a buying decision. As a result, reviews from a Google+ page are most likely going to shape search engine optimization (SEO) and drive customers to your web site or store.

"Having a good reputation translates into good rankings and ultimately doing business online," Stern said. "If you don't have one, the absolute first thing that I would do is go home and set up a page on Google+. This is the most important real estate you can have online. Not just for reviews, but also just to show up when someone's looking for a business. There are a handful that don't even have a review, but they show up on the first page of search, just because they created a page."

Beyond Google, Stern said to look for your industry's most important rating microsites, including Facebook, those where good or bad ratings can influence people to shop with you.

"What microsite would I really focus on if I were a music retailer?" he asked. "If you have a local storefront presence, Yelp is going to be a microsite you're going to want to be on."

"Yelp is one of the largest search engines. People go to Yelp specifically, independent of their research on Google. I might go to Yelp to find the best Chinese restaurants."

"What they're going to do is rank their search results one through 10 based on the

quantity and the quality of reviews. So, the more reviews you can get on Yelp and the better reviews you get on Yelp, the more likely you are to show up No. 1 and get that new piece of business."

Stern said sites like Google+ and Yelp are free to go in, claim your company's page and enrich your profile to let potential customers know about the products and services offered at your store.

"Be careful, though, with all of these microsites, you don't need to go nuts," Stern said. "You don't need to spend hours and hours, but you can't do nothing. You can't ignore it. If you do nothing, one review or two reviews can become your online presence."

If a negative review does show up online, what's a retailer to do?

"The thing we want to do is control the first impression that you give someone," Stern said. "A first impression online is hard to break — good or bad. If you have a super bad review that's just not true and it's malicious, the only way you can currently delete that review from the Internet is to actually seek out that person and ask them to delete it. That's extremely difficult to do."

"So, what we want to do is suppress and bury those reviews ... You want to create a culture in your company of gathering and maintaining positive reviews and a positive reputation so that the one [person] with something awful to say about you is not the only voice that people see."

Stern said another way to get your company's name to the top of a search is to purchase ads through Google AdWords, adding that being listed first as a result of using AdWords is important with the increased usage of smartphones.

"Sixty percent of all search that's done this year is going to go on from cell phones," he said. "Ninety-four percent of smartphone users are actually searching for your location and 50 percent of the people who search on a phone actually visit the store that day. So, you want to make sure that your reputation is as good on the phone as it is on the desktop."

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# Finding Growth in a Down Economy

*Bertrand's Music had its own obstacles to overcome. The first one was complacency*

Anyone who lived through the Great Recession of 2008–2011 knows that it was a wake-up call for most music retailers just to stay in business. Jeff Bertrand, vice president of Bertrand's Music, told NASMD attendees that the recession shook his family business into a restructuring that led to double-digit growth during these down years.

"Bertrand's Music had its own obstacles to overcome," he said. "The first one was complacency. We had been in business a long time, since 1983, and at this point in time, we had two businesses. We had an Internet business where we sold karaoke online, and we had our retail music shop. My older brother, John Jr., and my mom [Barbara] ran the karaoke business, and my dad and my brother Joel and I ran the retail music side."

Bertrand said they were all happy, making money, but due to complacency, more competition came into the market, the karaoke industry changed and the recession served as a cold slap in the face. "We finally hit the end," he said. "The karaoke industry, just a few years ago, went to mostly digital. We sat down and said, this doesn't make sense right now, dollar-and-cents wise. We're going to shut that division down. So, what happened? Now, we had to fire my brother and my mom — but there was no way we were going to fire my mom — or we had to figure out how to work their salaries into our company."

At the same time, his father, John Bertrand Sr., told the sons he was retiring.

"What did all this create?" Bertrand asked. "Chaos. Opportunities. With chaos comes opportunities. You've got to take advantage of the opportunities, right?"

Bertrand said the family had a meeting and discussed what they were going to do, and the overwhelming consensus was to practice the fundamentals that had made the business profitable for many years.

"What are the basic business fundamentals?" he asked. "How do you increase the bottom line? You either increase revenues, make more sales, or decrease expenses. There is no other way to improve your bottom line.

"We knew revenue was going to be important during these tough economic times. So, the first thing we did was identify our core revenue sources. The first one was [school music] rentals. Rentals for everyone in this room is a big part of what keeps their business going. The first thing we needed to do was expand our current market presence. Like I said, we were complacent. We were doing rentals. We were still paying everyone. But we knew that in the current situation, there was no way we were going to be able to keep going without getting more market share.

"Second thing we did was we added value. We have what I think is one of the better rent-to-own programs and contracts going. We never stopped trying to improve it. We created a lessons program because also during this time a lot of schools were, not necessarily cutting programs altogether, but cutting back their programs. If it was three or four days a week, maybe it dropped to one or two days a week."

Bertrand's developed a program called Fast Track, group lessons for beginning music students that basically used the school's curriculum.

It gave the students an extra day of music instruction and added revenue to Bertrand's locations. "We never wanted to undermine the school system and the teacher," Bertrand said. "Obviously, that's our source of revenue. So, we ran this program by the teachers. We explained, we're going to be working on the same curriculum and fundamentals that you're teaching. I actually was fortunate enough at this time to hire an individual who had a teaching credential. So, I had a fully credentialed California teacher teaching the program. It's been very successful."

The family also took a close look at every service and product they sold, making sure that it was properly valued and priced. This examination led to new products for the company like an accessory pack for each student instrument that included everything the student would need to be successful, including items like a music stand, three-ring binder and even a pencil — all branded with the Bertrand's logo.

"We'd set a retail price for each item, and then a discount price for the accessory pack," he said. "What that created was a real easy way to sell the package."

The package was a winner, resulting in a 500-percent increase in music stands alone in the program's first year. A few years later, music-stand sales have increased another 400 percent.

*Jeff Bertrand*







Richard Saucedo

# Band Tech

One of the fastest ways to show band directors that you're up to speed as a road rep and school music dealer is to have a good grasp of what's new in music technology, according to Richard Saucedo, award-winning director of bands at Carmel High School in Carmel, Indiana.

Saucedo offered up a variety of tips for retailers on some of the basics, beginning with knowing notation software like Finale and Sibelius, because directors want to use them.

"You want to make sure they have the most current version because, if they don't have the most current, they can't use the sounds that are available for the playback, and they'll lose some of the great capabilities of these programs," he said. "So, as [these programs] keep getting updated, you need to let your folks know, if nothing else, at least that it's out there. You want them to be able to say, 'Hey, did you realize that Finale

2015 is out now? Do you want to order it?'"

Saucedo said the advantages of these programs let directors write charts for their specific band, listen to parts and fix many problems before having a single rehearsal.

"There's also an ease of printing parts for students," he said. "The playback saves lots of time in rehearsal because you can play the music for them as they are looking at their parts."

Saucedo said there is a learning curve for all technology and suggested that directors be advised to start a year ahead of time to learn the programs before they really start writing for groups.

"I do think this is really important for you to know as educational dealers and representatives," Saucedo said. "So, you can help your directors make good choices about what they're getting. Here's an example, if you're dealing with a small school that has a marching band of about 20 kids, doing something like Finale or Sibelius is even more important for them because they can get the parts in, and they can adjust the parts however they want for the instrumentation that they have. It's so much easier than doing it on paper and having to do all these rewrites."

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# Winning Idea: Partner With Honors Students

The session “Best Ideas for Road Reps,” has become a staple of NASMD. Cris Behrens from Summerhays Music emceeds this fast-paced session where road reps deliver their best ideas — in two minutes or less — for a chance to win prizes. This year’s winner was Kristal Van Dyke from John Keal Music. She won an iPad, courtesy of Gemeinhardt. Here’s her winning idea:

**M**y idea is to partner with local Tri-M Musical Honor Society students. At John Keal Music, we have been doing an increasing number of “instrument petting zoos.” These are in addition to our events connected with school band and orchestra recruitment and are often of a community service nature.

Some of these events are quite large, and we may have events running simultaneously. Providing adequate staffing for these occasions was a challenge. I learned that we have several school districts in our region with Tri-M chapters. The students in these organizations must fulfill a music-related community service requirement. So, we invited them to help us with these instrument petting zoos as a way to meet that obligation. This has turned out to be a wonderful opportunity for us to connect with the best students in school — and with their parents.

The best part of this arrangement is its simplicity. Everyone wins and it’s free. The student volunteers do a great job with the children at the zoos. We give them John Keal Music baseball caps and encourage them to wear their band/orchestra or Tri-M shirts. That way,

their schools get a good plug and the parents of the zoo kids have a chance to speak with older students who are excited about music participation. The Tri-M volunteers have so much fun that they usually sign up for the next event before we are even done packing up the gear. The music teachers are happy that we can provide their students with this opportunity and it highlights our company as an integral part of the school music community.



From left: Cris Behrens, Summerhays Music; Jennifer Baunoch, Gemeinhardt; and Kristal Van Dyke, John Keal Music, the winner of this year’s Best Ideas for Road Reps.



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# Lessons From 'The Apprentice'



Bill Rancic

In 2004, Bill Rancic went from small-business entrepreneur to television star as the winner of the first season of "The Apprentice," a reality show where he was hired live on national television by real estate mogul Donald Trump. At NASMD, Rancic delivered the opening keynote address detailing the business lessons he learned on the show.

"I get to New York and I'm saddled with my first task," he said. "And my first task is something you've probably all done at some point during your life. We had to open up a lemonade stand. And I started thinking, 'I'm selling lemonade that's not fit for human consumption. No one is ever going to take me seriously in the business world.' Then the tasks started to step up, and they got a lot more complicated. And the sleep deprivation started to kick in. You could tell those who had that entrepreneurial mindset versus those who didn't — those who were willing to work through the night. The ones who were willing to do whatever was necessary to succeed versus those who wanted to get a good night's sleep.

"What separated me from the pack with all of these peo-

ple who wanted to win?" he asked. "I think the reason I was able to win was because I was an entrepreneur. And when you're an entrepreneur, you have to have three traits that are truly critical to your success.

"For me, the first one was that I understand a term called practical execution. Ever since I was a little boy, my dad would tell me, 'Actions speak louder than words.' And when you're an entrepreneur, you have to embrace that term, because most people talk a good game, don't they?

"Secondly, I understood the importance of agility because I understood the importance of it as a business owner. On 'The Apprentice,' had I not had that, I don't know if I would have been able to win.

"And lastly, it's about risk. It's about understanding risk, respecting risk, managing risk and converting risk into success."




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# Quotables

## Off-Road Mondays

"I know this is going to shock a lot of you guys, but I gave up Mondays. A full-time road rep schedule for our store is Tuesday through Friday. And every road rep is in our store on Monday. They have their meetings on Monday. They do their prep work on Monday. They coordinate with the shop, the office, the rental department, retail. And that keeps our road reps and our store better connected to our schools. Now I know that's a slightly painful thing because to pay people for a day of being in the store means they're not out there seeing teachers, but it's part of our culture. And I think it really helps us."

— Chris Trombley, school sales representative, John Keal Music



“You communicate a lot and you do it well. It’s sincere and it’s deep. The most important form of communication? Face to face. Next, phone. Next, hand-written card. Next, letter. Next, fax. Next, email and text. Those are really not as potent as sitting down together like this.”

— Dr. Tim Lautzenheizer, composer, clinician and author



## Picture Into Your Business Health

"I'm going to teach you how to read a financial statement. Why is that important? It's the same thing as going to a doctor and asking the doctor to read an X-ray or MRI or CAT scan. It is truly a picture into the health of your business. That presumes that the financial statements have been compiled correctly and that they are producing accurate information. It will tell you everything about your business so you can make decisions on your business going forward."

— Alan Friedman, CPA, Friedman, Kannenberg & Co.



## The Challenge of Skype

"What we find is that people in the room are having an active conversation, and the people that are videoing in are kind of observing. You really have to prompt the people who are outside of the room to participate."

— Ryan West, senior vice president, West Music

## Riding in Cars With Road Reps

“We always thought that was really important, and we still don’t do it enough! It’s nice for the band director who’s 70 miles away to see that somebody else is interested in them besides the road rep. How you get the job done is a challenge. When I was more active in the business, we’d try to do that maybe once a year, ride with each guy on one of their routes just to say, ‘Hi, I’m Jim Kidder. I own the joint, and I like you, too.’ The road rep, if he’s the only person who sees the teacher, he is the store. Sometimes that puts you as the owner in a precarious position. He has more pull with the band director than you do. I think it’s really important to do that. The question is, how do you get the time to do it?”



— *Jim Kidder, founder, Kidder Music*



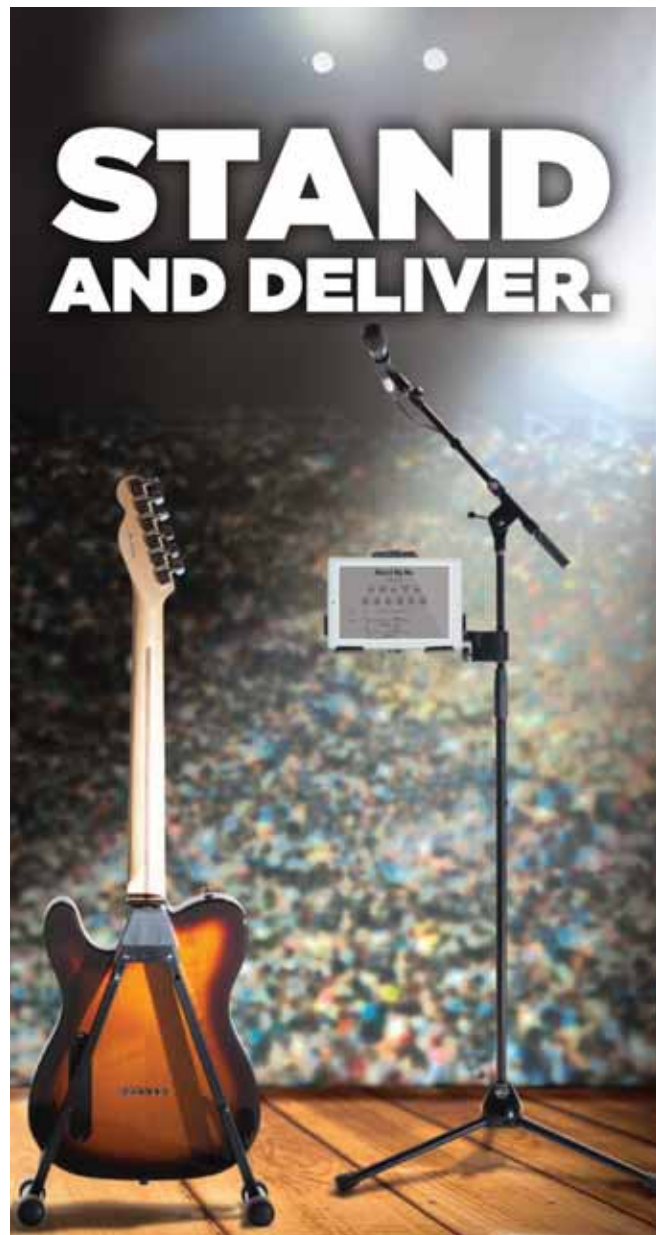
## Music Achievement Council Success

“The most successful thing that [Music Achievement Council has] started is Fundamentally Sound For Life, our state-by-state initiative. That is going into the state educator conferences and making the presentation of our materials directly to the teachers.

“We do three sessions now. We do ‘Recruiting and Retention,’ and that’s based on the original book. That book and almost all of our materials is available either as a download or on a USB Drive. We do ‘Tips for Success.’ And the ‘Tips For Success’ has several parts to it. The ‘Tips for Success’ is talking to the teachers and hearing a great idea and writing that idea down as a successful tip.

“And we do ‘Bridging the Gap.’ It was a direct result from the teachers. We went out to these conferences, and we’re asking for feedback. And the teachers said we need information about getting the kids from junior high to high school or middle school to high school because we’re losing them. We spent five years seeking out who’s doing this well.”

— *Bill Harvey, MAC board member and co-owner, Buddy Roger’s Music*



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# Lessons of Katrina

*'We turn on the television and the whole city is under water. I can't even describe what that felt like.'*

The closing speakers for this year's NASMD were not motivational speakers or business experts. Branford Marsalis and Ellis Marsalis, two members of the first family of New Orleans jazz, spoke to attendees about the city of New Orleans and its resilience in the wake of Hurricane Katrina a decade ago. Here is Branford's story about Katrina, New Orleans and the birth of the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music in the 9th Ward:

"As most of you know, August 29, 2005, is a date that very few people in New Orleans, who were alive then, will ever forget. A storm hadn't hit the city dead-on since the '70s. So, we thought everything was fine. But then the next morning, we turn on the television and the whole city is under water. I can't even describe what that felt like. My parents were in Baton Rouge, so they were OK. We immediately started calling to see if we could get into the city. Six days after the flood, my buddy Harry Connick called me and said, 'Hey man, let's go. We can get into the city, but you have to leave in two hours.'

"When we got there it was like one of those old Twilight Zone episodes. You're in the city and the buildings are all there, but there are no people. It was an eerie, eerie thing. Harry said, 'Hey man, I've got this great idea. Why don't we go to Houston and just play some tunes for the evacuees?' And, I said, 'When did you think of this idea?' And he said, 'Just now.' I hadn't been to sleep for 24 hours. I could go another 24.

"So, we hit the road. On the way to Houston, Harry says, 'Man, we've got to do something. We've got to do something for the city.' And I said, 'So, what do you think?' And he said, 'We should build a music school.' And I said, 'Naw, too much bureaucracy. I'd lose my mind with that. You've got to think of something better.' We're arguing back and forth. He's advocating for the school, and I'm saying a school is ridiculous, it's too complicated. And then he said, 'Well, I have to do this commercial with Jimmy Carter for Habitat for Humanity, so maybe we could figure out something there.' And I said, 'That would be great. Maybe we could build some houses.'

"We went and hung out with the evacuees. We played songs for them. They told us we could only stay until 10 p.m. We stayed and we played and we hung out with them until basically 3 in the morning.

"The Saints were playing that night. So, we watched the Saints on the big screen in the Astrodome. Then, I caught a plane back to North Carolina where I live.

"By the time we landed in Newark, my phone was ringing off the hook. And, it was my manager Ann Marie Wilkins. She said, 'OK, it's going to be called the Musicians Village.' And I said, 'What are you talking about?' [Laughs]. And she said, 'The thing you and Harry were talking about. It's a go.' And I'm like, 'It can't be a go. We just talked about it yesterday.' She said, 'No, it's a go. We talked to Habitat. They're onboard. We've got to build these homes. You guys have got to play concerts.'

"We started doing concerts and interviews and

doing all these things. It was done in a month. I think we got \$5 million. It went from a thing where we were going to build some homes to building 72 homes. And there was money left over. So, we said, 'What can we do?' We built 72 homes and 10 elderly-assisted duplexes. And the money kept coming in.

"So, Harry said, 'Well, maybe I'll take my school now, bro' [laughs]. And that's where the Ellis Marsalis Center came into these meetings.

"The Ellis Marsalis Center is a 17,000-square-foot facility. It's a performance, educational and community venue. There is a state-of-the-art recording studio, which opened just about six months ago. And a 170-seat performing space serving as the recording space.

"Our target population resides within the 9th Ward, where 32 percent of the households are classified as existing below the poverty line, and nearly all the children of the 9th Ward currently enrolled at the Center qualify for the national free and reduced lunch program."



*The legendary New Orleans musicians discuss the aftermath of Katrina, the rise of the Musicians Village and the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music. (Cannonball was instrumental in getting them at the conference.)*



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### WILLIAMS

#### LEGATO DIGITAL PIANO

Williams has debuted its new Legato model, a low-priced full-size digital piano. The Legato features 88 semi-weighted keys and five classic sounds: piano, electric piano, organ, synth and bass. Designed for beginning and intermediate keyboardists, the Legato combines professional features with simple operation and portability. A fully adjustable metronome and integrated music stand are also included. MSRP: \$199.99.

{williams pianos.com}

### PHYSIS

#### V100

The Physis V100 is an upright-piano-style cabinet enclosure for Physis, Viscount's patented physical modeling technology. Unlike "sampling," Physis physical modeling allows unlimited polyphony, unlimited pedaling, organic real-time interaction of physical properties, and lets the musician modify the physical characteristics to create their own unique instruments. The V100 features 88 graded hammer wooden keys with "ivory feel" key tops, a resonant wood-enclosed sound amplification system and a multi-touch control panel embedded in the fall-board key cover.

{physispiano.com}



### HAL LEONARD

#### FIRST 50 SERIES

Hal Leonard has introduced the *First 50* songbook series, tailored to steer new piano players in the right direction with simple, streamlined arrangements of popular tunes. The *First 50* series contain easy to intermediate arrangements for "must-know" pop songs and classical pieces. Titles in *First 50 Popular Songs* include: "Autumn Leaves," "Let It Be" and "Piano Man." *Classical* titles include: "Canon In D," "Fur Elise" and "La Fille Aux Chevaux De Lin."

{halleonard.com}





**HOHNER  
BH-I & WH-II**

Hohner has unveiled the Black Hawk I and White Hawk II accordions, as part of its Anacleto collection. The BH-I and WH-II have a tactile feel and finger-board response, with button action that's unique to the Anacleto collection. Both models feature a grille that allows for much louder projection and diffusion of sound produced by hand-made Binci reeds.

{playhohner.com}

**MONO  
K-49**

The new MONO K-49 hybrid-design case is compact, light and rigid. A dual hinge design allows for either top-loading quick access or traditional horizontal opening. The case features rugged construction with a highly water resistant shell, plus a deep, low profile external pocket that can house pedals, cables and a laptop.

{monocreators.com}





### ROLAND

#### JD-XA

Roland's JD-XA is an analog/digital crossover synthesizer equipped with fully featured analog and digital sound engines that can be used independently or interactively. The analog side features a discrete, four-part engine with true analog filters and a direct dry output, while on the digital side, the JD-XA is equipped with a four-part, 64-voice sound engine powered by Roland's SuperNATURAL synthesizer technology. [roland.com](http://roland.com)

### KORG

#### HAVIAN30

Korg's new Havian30 is designed for musicians seeking a stylish digital piano complete with advanced arranger functionality. Havian30's RX (Real Experience) sound engine contains over 950 expressive sounds, in addition to 420 dynamic styles, offering players a variety of fully orchestrated musical performances to play along with. [korg.com](http://korg.com)



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### LEVY'S DISTRESSED-LEATHER STRAPS

Levy's Leathers' new, ancient-looking M17GRD, M17CXD and M17SRD distressed-leather straps are available in dark brown. The distressing treatment on this line of straps gives the leather the look of a "dry, cracked riverbed." Each strap is lined with soft suede and feature a guitar, cross and star applique, respectively. [levysleathers.com](http://levysleathers.com)

### ALFRED 'COMPLETE ACOUSTIC GUITAR METHOD'

Alfred has released second editions of the *Complete Acoustic Guitar Method*, available for beginning, intermediate and advanced guitarists. These new editions have been revised to include new examples in the styles of acoustic guitar players on the current scene, with brand new videos demonstrating the examples in the books. For those wishing to master their craft, these books provide essential information. [alfred.com](http://alfred.com)

### IBANEZ TMB300

Ibanez's new TMB300 sports a retro look, reflecting a classic Ibanez body style, combined with a passive P/J pickup configuration. The TMB300 features a mahogany body, maple neck, standard bridge, bound rosewood fretboard with block inlays and a tortoiseshell pick guard. Electronics consist of a custom two-band active EQ with an Ibanez DXP neck pickup and a DJ2 double J bridge pickup for extra punch. A split coil switch provides a single coil option in the bridge position for heightened definition. [ibanez.com](http://ibanez.com)





### ROCKTRON VELOCITY 100 LTD

Rocktron's Velocity 100 LTD is a limited edition upgrade to its rack mount guitar power amplifier series. This single-rack-space amplifier provides 55 watts of power per channel into a 4 ohm load, or 40 watts per channel into an 8 ohm load. The resonance control particularly beefs up the lower range, giving the Velocity 100 LTD extra performance at the low end of the sonic spectrum. The presence control opens up the treble and higher end, offering more "voice" for solo playing. [\[rocktron.com\]](http://rocktron.com)

### AGUILAR FUZZISTOR

Aguilar Amplification has released the Fuzzistor bass fuzz pedal. The Fuzzistor provides classic silicone transistor distortion with complete control over the blend of the clean and fuzz sound, amount of fuzz and level-control for gain matching, plus it includes a "Tilt EQ" control that changes the harmonic structure of the fuzz control. [\[aguilaramp.com\]](http://aguilaramp.com)

### H. JIMENEZ LR2CE

H. Jimenez has unveiled the acoustic/electric LR2CE "Voz de trio," featuring deluxe gold tuners and Fishman Classica II pre-amp with tuner. The LR2CE projects a strong volume from its solid North American Cedar top, with 540-mm scale length and a standard H. Jimenez-designed Thunderwing bridge. [\[hjimenezinstruments.com\]](http://hjimenezinstruments.com)

### FENDER

#### HOT ROD DEVILLE ML

Fender's Hot Rod DeVille ML delivers tube tone with features inspired by instrumental solo artist, Michael Landau. Known for creating rich, expressive tones, Landau has used Hot Rod DeVille amps on stage for many years, with a special two-amp setup fed by a variety of stomp boxes. The ML model is based on the Hot Rod DeVille III, with tube circuitry and 60-watt output, two 12-inch speakers, spring reverb and an effects loop.

{[fender.com](http://fender.com)}

### FLOYD ROSE

#### HOLLOW POINT INTONATION SYSTEM

Floyd Rose has begun distribution of the Hollow Point intonation system for double-locking tremolos, which is an aftermarket upgrade developed by Black Cherry USA. The Hollow Point intonation system addresses the issue of difficulty in intonating Floyd Rose saddles, especially when under string tension. The system comes with six "Hollow Points" already installed on six brand new string lock screws, which allow for easy hand adjustments. The Hollow Point is made of solid brass, so they also increase the mass of the bridge and help to develop more sustain.

{[floydrose.com](http://floydrose.com)}

### VOX

#### AC10C1

Vox has debuted the new AC10C1, a 10-watt tube amplifier that joins Vox's flagship lineup of tube amps, the Custom series. Discontinued in 1965, the original AC10 was one of the first amplifiers to bear the Vox name. More portable than the AC15 and more powerful than the AC4, the new AC10C1 provides an array of classic Vox tones and is equipped with studio-quality reverb and a master volume.

{[voxamps.com](http://voxamps.com)}





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**PEAVEY****DARK MATTER SERIES**

Peavey Electronics has unveiled its line of Dark Matter speaker enclosures. Featuring a new advanced DSP-equipped power section, these high-SPL (sound pressure level) enclosures come in four models: the DM 112, 115, 118 subwoofer and 115 subwoofer. The Dark Matter LCD display and associated selector knob let users choose various parameters of operation for the DSP-based EQ. Dark Matter series enclosures are built with steel grills and rugged injection molded cabinets. [\[peavey.com\]](http://peavey.com)

**STEINBERG****CUBASE PRO 8**

Steinberg's newest iteration of its flagship digital audio workstation, Cubase Pro 8, offers more audio tools and instruments than its predecessors, making recording and mixing more productive and more creative for the user. Cubase Pro 8 also offers novel ways of working with chords, updated virtual instruments and amps and FX plug-ins, and blends the latest audio technology with next-generation music tools. MSRP: \$599.99. [\[steinberg.net\]](http://steinberg.net)

**YAMAHA****AG SERIES**

Yamaha has debuted the AG03 and AG06 — a hybrid mixing console and USB audio interface for webcasting, podcasting, gaming and music production. The AG series offers high-resolution audio recording and playback, iOS compatibility and battery operation, plus an intuitive "TO PC" switch that lets users select which inputs get routed back to a desktop or iOS device. The LOOPBACK function in the TO PC section, which is ideal for podcasters, routes all inputs to the stereo USB output, along with the USB input from the computer. [\[yamaha.com\]](http://yamaha.com)





**SKB  
32-CHANNEL MIXER CASES**

SKB's three new roto-molded cases are specifically designed for three popular 32-channel mixers — the Behringer X32 mixer, the Allen & Heath QU32 and the PreSonus StudioLive 32.4.2AI. Each case's exterior is double-walled, while the interior features custom foam blocks and a roto-molded-hinged doghouse for management of all back connectors. MSRP: \$499.99.

{skbcases.com}

**AUDIO-TECHNICA  
ATH-M50xDG**

Audio-Technica has introduced the ATH-M50xDG professional monitor headphones. As part of the remastered M-Series line of headphones, the ATH-M50xDG headphones feature 45-mm large aperture drivers, sound isolating ear cups with professional-grade ear pads and a collapsible design, and provide high SPL capability and natural, accurate sound with impactful bass and high-frequency extension.

{audio-technica.com}

# GEAR >

## DRUMS & PERCUSSION

### YAMAHA SCK-350

Yamaha's SCK-350 student percussion kit includes everything that a student percussionist needs to get started. The kit includes a 13- by 3-inch maple shell snare drum, an aluminum bell marimba set in F57 to C88 range, an 8-inch tunable practice drum pad, a stand with snare basket, a music rack, mallets and drumsticks, all of which fit into a soft backpack/rolling case.

{[yamaha.com](http://yamaha.com)}

### VIC FIRTH STEVE SMITH TALA WAND - SLATS

Vic Firth's new Steve Smith Tala Wand - Slats feature a foam center that is surrounded with four flat bamboo slats wrapped in thin PVC. This construction provides a variety of unique sounds, plus a great rebound and feel. Steve Smith Tala Wand - Slats create softer sounds than sticks but are louder than other Tala Wand or Rute models.

MSRP: \$39.95.

{[vicfirth.com](http://vicfirth.com)}

### ROLAND TD-25KV

Roland has released the TD-25KV, a mid-level kit in the V-Drums lineup. Featuring the new TD-25 sound module and mesh-head pads, these kits offer serious players quality sound and expressive playability that rivals Roland's flagship TD-30 V-Drums. The TD-25KV also boasts extra features, including quick sound customization, onboard Coach function and built-in audio-recording capability.

{[roland.com](http://roland.com)}





**TOCA  
BONGO FLIP-CAJON**

Toca's new Bongo Flip-Cajon is a compact, 14 1/2-inch long instrument that lets percussionists switch between a snare cajon and bongo cajon simply by flipping it. The Bongo Flip-Cajon comes with a lap-strap so that the cajon will remain securely fixed in place. It features fixed internal snares, which gives its snare side the traditional crisp attack of a snare cajon. The bongo side has distinctive sounds from both the macho and hembra drums. MSRP: \$119. [\[tocapercussion.com\]](http://tocapercussion.com)

**LP  
COLLECT-A-BELL SERIES**

LP's Collect-A-Bell series introduces seven cowbells featuring eye-catching graphic designs and colors — from Zombie Green to Zebra Purple and several shades in between. These 5-inch, mountable LP Black Beauty cowbells add a level of individuality to any drum set or percussion rig. MSRP: \$47. [\[lpmusic.com\]](http://lpmusic.com)

**ZILDJIAN  
ORGANIC RIDE**

Zildjian has unveiled the latest member of the K Custom series — the 2015 Organic Ride. Designed in conjunction with drummer and educator Pat Petrillo, the 2015 K Custom Organic Ride features a wire-brushed finish and more of a raw sound, while maintaining crisp articulation. The 2015 Organic Ride also gives drummers added versatility with a medium thin weight to deliver a lush crash sound. [\[zildjian.com\]](http://zildjian.com)





### YAMAHA XENO C TRUMPET

Yamaha has debuted a redesigned lineup of Xeno C trumpets, which include many of the same updates made to the new generation of Xeno B-flat trumpets. The Xeno C trumpets feature a new bell design that provides optimal resistance for a powerful tonal core and more accurate slotting in the upper register. A lighter valve casing and pistons result in an improved response and greater tonal control. MSRP: \$3,578.

{yamaha.com}

### JODYJAZZ JET TENOR

JodyJazz has unveiled the JET tenor, the newest addition to its JET series of mouthpieces. The JET Tenor features a chamber shape that delivers a noticeably more powerful sound than traditional mouthpieces, plus a shorter facing curve that allows for effortless altissimo. The JET Tenor is available in 6, 7, 7\*, 8 and 9 tip openings. MSRP: \$189.

{jodyjazz.com}



### ZONDA ZBH-101

Zonda's ZBH-101 is an affordable baritone with a playability designed to inspire new students.

The ZBH-101 is a three-valve B-flat horn with traditional Zonda styling: a gold brass lead pipe and nickel silver outer sides. It

features a hybrid valve guide within the valve itself to maximize durability and deliver smooth, fluid action, and a bell diameter of 8 3/8 inches, made with yellow brass. MSRP: \$1,295.

{stlouismusic.com}





### GRUNDORF PLASTIC FRONT DJ FAÇADE

Grundorf's Plastic Front DJ Façade is designed to enable DJs to achieve a clean, streamlined appearance for their on-stage setups, concealing equipment while letting LED lighting fixtures glow through the façade's panels.

The Plastic Front DJ Façade features a painted wood-frame construction, plus impact- and scratch-resistant opaque white acrylic panels. The facade measures 48 inches high and 62 inches wide, with a 22-inch depth to enclose equipment setups.

{grundorf.com}



### CHAUVET DJ SLIMBEAM QUAD IRC

Chauvet DJ's SlimBEAM Quad IRC consists of three tilting RGBA LED modules on a compact base, which can be used not only as a color accent for uplighting walls and room surfaces, but also to create unique beam effects for any event. Featuring multi-voltage operation, the SlimBEAM QUAD IRC can be power linked up to 18 units at 120V and 34 units at 230V.

{chauvetlighting.com}



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>>>  
**Rand Cook**

Owner  
Candyman Strings and Things  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

With most stores like mine, there's a bit of a destabilization in the education department because kids go on summer break and student retention can be a little bit difficult.

For us, we just simply convert that student body and move them over into to the two-week camp program. So, that keeps bodies coming in the door all summer long, and it's an additional source of cash flow for the store. With the camp program, we're basically taking these young music makers and giving them the band experience, which includes recording studio experience, radio station experience and concert experience, which kind of seals the deal with these kids on wanting to play music.

>>>  
**James Manganaro**

Owner  
Bridgepoint Music  
Menlo Park, California

In the summer, because we do so much band and orchestra, we're crazy-busy with repairs. The repair department for us is one of the big money-makers. It's number two behind rentals. Basically, when retail slows down, everybody [in the shop] switches over to repairs. And as the repairs are getting finished, then it's all hands on deck for the rental season.

Rentals don't drop off because we've incentivized holding onto your instrument. You're building equity on the instrument for as long as you rent it, but when you return it, all of that gets cancelled out. That helps keep the rental income steady through the summer, as well. We still get a lot of returns, but it's been disincentivized, so it's not as big of an issue for us.



>>>  
**Mike & Miriam Risko**

Owners  
Mike Risko Music School  
Ossining, New York

## How do you plan to drive business during the summer?

**Miriam:** We do two different types of summer programs. We have a half-day arts program, which is a little bit of everything — we're doing a little bit of music, a little bit of drama, a little bit of dance and a little bit of art. But we're also going to teach them skills like how to tune your guitar and how to set up equipment for a band. So, we try to incorporate the store into that program.

**Mike:** Then, we get people excited about equipment, like the singers with microphones, and guitar players with amplifiers, guitars and accessories, so they get more active in the store.

**Miriam:** It's a good way to introduce people to our

business because it's open to so many different kids with different interests.

We also have a full-day rock band program that we've been running for 15 years. That's something we do the last week of summer vacation. It's offered for one week as a full-day program. We call it our Intensive Summer Music Workshop for all instruments and voice. We accept kids ages 6-17 into it, and we put them in bands based on their age range. Each band is run by a band manager, which is one of our instructors, and they essentially get the full band experience.

**Mike:** They write their own music and rehearse

everyday.

**Miriam:** They name their band, they design a poster for their band, they learn how to market their band. And then we have other activities throughout the day that are all focused on the rock bands. Like, we'll do a rockstar art project everyday. We'll do a band t-shirt, or a band poster as part of that. We have guest artists come in and speak to the kids.

**Mike:** We have a showcase every day, right from the first day. So, they have the stage experience. And then at the end of the week we have a big concert on that Friday where people come out, and we put on this big show. **M**

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