

FULL COVERAGE: 2015 SUMMER NAMM

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

SEPTEMBER 2015
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**CAUTION:
EXPANSION
AHEAD**

How Springfield Music doubled in size, then held on for dear life!

By Donovan Bankhead

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Yorkville Sound's Steve Long on managing both retailing & supply

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LONG LIVE THE LOOP

Breaking down the latest pedal trend

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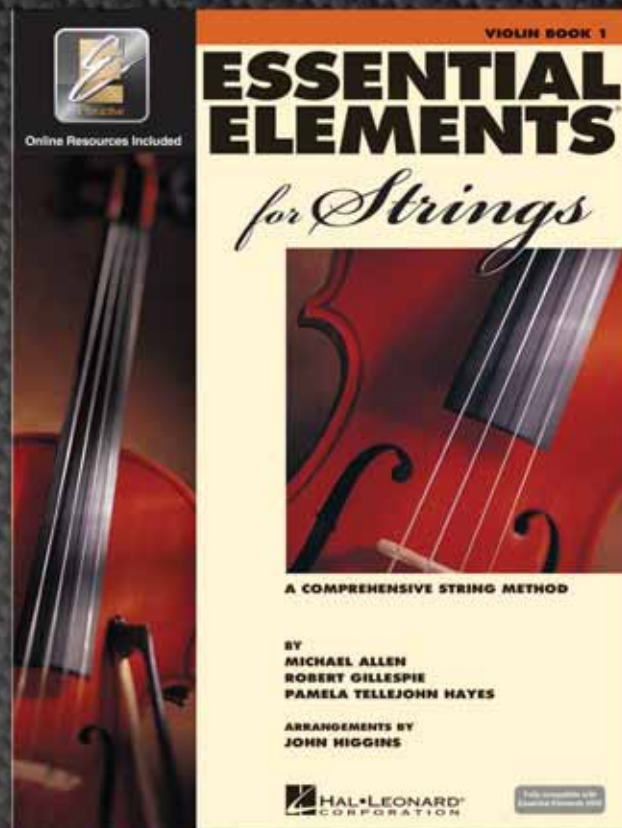
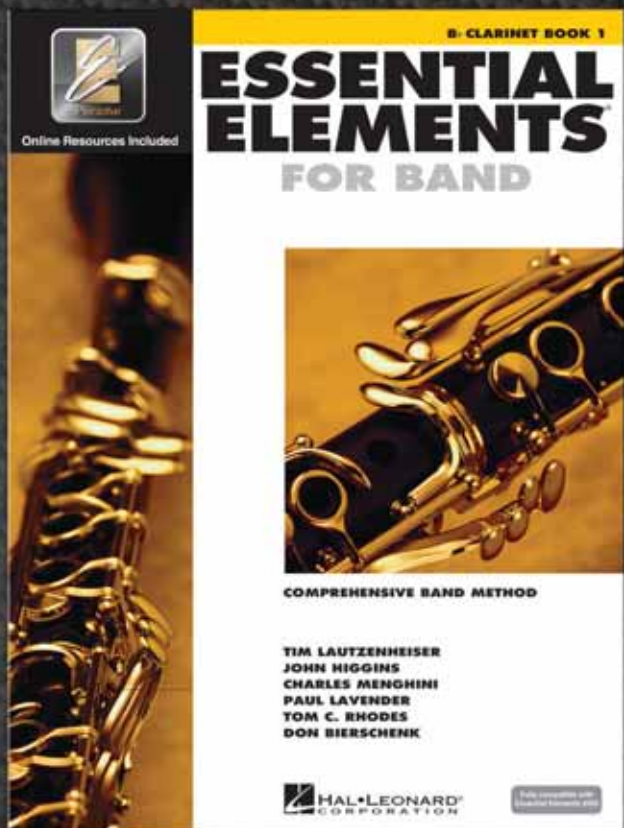
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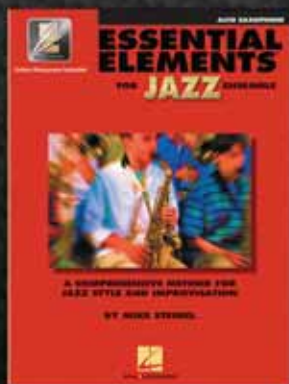
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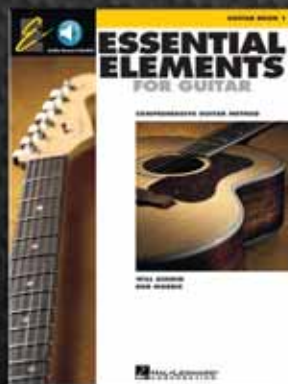
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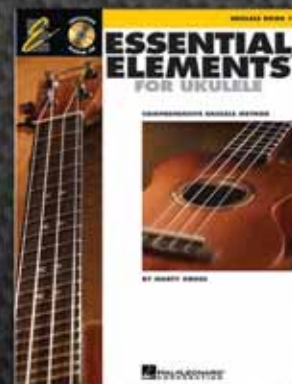
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SKB Expands on the 32-Channel Mixer Cases.



**1RMTF5-DHW Mixer case
for the Yamaha TF5**



**1RMM32-DHW Mixer case
for the Midas M32**

Expanding on the 32-channel Mixer cases introduced at Winter NAMM 2015, SKB announces two new models for the Midas M32 mixer (1RMM32-DHW) and the Yamaha TF5 mixer (1RMTF5-DHW). These cases are the same Military Grade, Roto-molded design like the 1RMX32-DHW, for the Behringer X32 mixer, and the 1RMQU32-DHW for the Allen & Heath QU32 mixer.

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PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

YELP CAN HELP

Remember a few years back when a disgruntled guitarist took to YouTube to vent about the damage his \$3,500 Taylor guitar suffered at the hands United Airlines? He was a YouTube hit, but a PR nightmare for United. The old adage, “a satisfied customer will tell three people, an unsatisfied customer will tell 10,” no longer applies. Unsatisfied customers can hop on Yelp, Twitter, Facebook and countless other sites where they can blast their bad experiences to thousands of potential clients. Just a simple Google search of a store’s name will bring up the store’s website first, and, oftentimes its Yelp page second.

While I might not review on Yelp myself, I definitely read other reviews before trying someplace new, and I’m not in the minority. Recently, while I was searching for a hotel to stay at on a weekend getaway, I noticed a hotel manager responding to all Yelp reviews his establishment received, both good and bad. If someone enjoyed their stay, the manager thanked them and said the staff looked forward to the next time they stopped by. If someone had a bad experience, such as a noise complaint or a gripe with service, the manager responded in a non-argumentative way. He apologized, adding that the next time they stayed he hoped that he and his team could do better.



Not only is there the possibility that an upset customer would feel a little validation from getting a response, but it also looks great to a potential customer to see that the upper management is taking the time to respond

and care about a customer’s experience.

While discussing customer complaints during the Thursday morning Breakfast Session “NAMM Retail Summit — Strategies of Top 100 Dealers” at this past July’s Summer NAMM, Sam Ash COO Sammy Ash explained how he personally deals with all complaints himself.

“You want to congratulate us? Send me an email. Want to complain? Here’s my phone number,” he said.

This approach is crucial. A wronged customer needs to feel that someone is listening before they ever even contemplate returning. When the owner reaches out, they know their message is being heard. Small businesses don’t get nearly the amount of reviews as big box stores, so make sure you take time to respond to what is being said about your business online — both good and bad. You can impact the minds of both your former customers and your future ones.

Also, if someone writes a bad review, make sure it isn’t the only review on your store’s page. Encourage customers at the checkout counter to review your business online for some free strings or 5 percent off next time they come in. In this day and age, Yelp has ability to make or break your business. Make it work for you! **MI**

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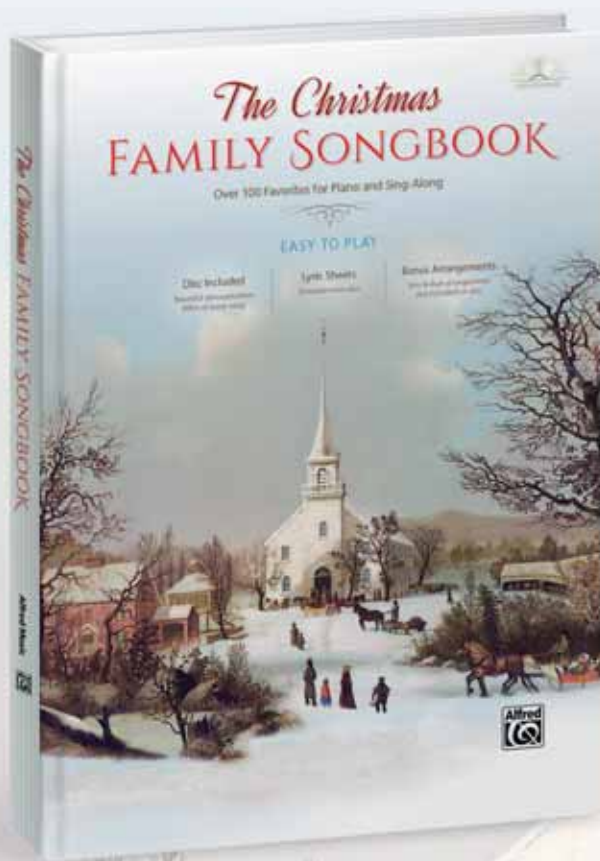
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LETTERS

Thank you, NAMM!

For years I have wanted to become more involved with NAMM. As members since 1999, we [at Magic Fluke Co.] have focused mostly on The NAMM Show. We measure the years through NAMM shows and Wednesday's set-up. Each year we set out to connect more with fellow NAMM members at NAMM U and breakfasts, networking and learning more about our NAMM membership.

I had heard about the annual NAMM Music and Arts Advocacy Fly-in and wanted to know more. It occurred to me that this would be a wonderful opportunity to get more involved and to make a difference, helping to represent our children and industry on Capitol Hill.

We live and work in the Berkshires of Massachusetts, a vibrant music, arts and theater community. The kids do it all and for many the opportunities have changed their lives, set them on paths to positive and productive goals, and they can't imagine school without music and arts.

Having submitted my reservation for the Fly-in this year, I attended our annual town meeting with a new perspective. The school budget was on shaky ground. Fortunately the community voice was loud and clear and voted overwhelmingly in favor of the budget. But we left with a strong feeling that this was a warning, next year will be more difficult. We can't take our music and arts programs for granted. I went to Washington, D.C. with more urgency.

The Fly-In proved to be an amazing week, getting to know my fellow NAMM members and NAMM leaders and realizing our shared passion for what we do in our businesses and what our industry does to make our world



a better place.

Our NAMM leaders provided an outstanding opportunity for each of us to learn about our mission to promote quality music and arts programs as a right for every single student. They worked with us on the process of bringing our message and voices to Capitol Hill. With 74 of us, and over 130 meetings with our states' leaders, we made an impact! We worked as teams by state, connecting with our state leaders in advance to set up appointments and meeting in individual offices.

Not only was our team from Massachusetts welcomed, we felt that our state leaders, and their interns and aides really listened, understood our request and supported our message. It was obvious that by making the

effort to be there, face to face, our message had more meaning.

I enjoyed the time I shared with everyone. We learned so much and really made a difference. Rather than working individually for our businesses, everyone brought a shared passion to work together toward the same goal. Our badges were all one color, in solidarity, taking our membership to a whole new level and feeling proud! Next year's Fly-in is already on my calendar! Thank you, NAMM!

Phyllis Webb
Owner
Magic Fluke Co
Sheffield, Massachusetts

From Employees to Owners

I want to thank Ed Enright and *Music Inc.* for taking the time to chronicle the journey my

partners and I have taken in our transition from music store employees to owners [in the July 2015 cover story "Revamped Growth"]. It has been a truly exciting period of learning and growth for us as individuals in a rapidly changing industry. It is my hope that other music store employees and owners will be able to take away some pointers from our success that will allow them to grow their business.

If you as an owner or employee of a shop are reading this and would like to discuss our experience of going through the purchase process or have questions about how to make it a reality for yourself please don't hesitate to drop me a line at brian@cream-citymusic.com. Best of success to all of you in 2015 and beyond!

Brian Douglas
Co-owner
Cream City Music
Brookfield, Wisconsin

A Faithful Portrayal

Thanks so much for including Denver Folklore Center in [*Music Inc.*'s June 2015 issue]. We do work hard to be responsive to our customers, and I am blessed with a wonderful staff. Dick Weissman wrote very faithfully about the shop — my thanks to him for that. It has been a revelation to watch and be a part of the dynamic changes in the field of music over the years, and you have been a fine representative for us.

Harry M. Tuft
Owner
Denver Folklore Center
Denver

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RETAIL

PACIFIC WINDS | BY DICK WEISSMAN

WINDS OF CHANGE

When the ukulele craze hit the MI industry a few years back, many dealers jumped on board, trying to capitalize on the trend. But few took it to the level that Pacific Winds did. While the retailer specializes in wind instruments and repairs, adding ukuleles to its product mix saw sales grow through the roof.

“Not a day goes by that we don’t sell ukuleles,” said Willie Knaus, co-owner of the Eugene, Oregon-based shop. “It’s a social instrument that people enjoy playing. It now represents 15 percent of our business.”

Pacific Winds’ odyssey into the uke market started around 2004, when a music teacher urged the store to put one or two ukuleles on the wall. Soon Pacific Winds saw schools beginning to buy and lease sets of ukuleles for classes. Community ukulele groups were founded, spearheaded by a small Hawaiian population and Brook Adams, a skilled uke player who taught at the store. When Adams moved, uke instructor Neal Chin took over.

“Neal is a highly skilled player, and he instructs advanced players,” said Pat Knaus, who co-owns the business with her husband. “People who hear him



While Pacific Winds specializes in wind instruments, it’s the store’s ukulele sales that have been experiencing strong growth

play just want to take lessons.” Chin also puts together a section on the store’s WordPress blog every Monday called “Uke Prints,” which features a playlist of essential ukulele tracks. This section has drawn a younger audience into the store, resulting in positive reviews and residual sales.

THE UKE EFFECT

Pacific Winds’ showroom is festooned with uke posters depicting performances, workshops and summer camps,

and the store carries an array of brands, including Amahi, Breedlove, Cordoba, Electric Rock, Kama, Kamaka, Kamao, Kanile’a, Lo Prinzi, Magic Fluke and Takumi. Willie has reported a growing interest in high-end ukuleles, with some price points going as high as \$1,200.

As part of the store’s commitment to music education, Pacific Winds maintains a classroom set of 15 ukuleles for school and community use, free of charge. The dealer offers private lessons, as well as a one-hour group class

which is followed by a mini concert. The dealer also sees groups of people in the community getting together on a regular basis just to play the uke, in large part thanks to the instrument’s portability, affordability and ease. As a result, the Knaus’ find the ukulele to be a social facilitator and have added many workshops around the instrument.

“Most of our uke workshops are worked out directly between the store and traveling uke players,” Pat said. “They are not company-sponsored workshops, like the ones offered by guitar manufacturers.”

Ukes aside, the store got its start in 1987 when Willie left his wind instrument repair work to open his own shop. Over the years, Pacific Winds’ business model has changed to sell fewer new horns. Today, in addition to strong uke sales, Pacific Winds boasts a strong rental program and does repairs for public school music programs as well as the University of Oregon’s marching band.

Willie said the future of ukuleles in his store looks bright.

“We expect sales to remain steady,” he stated. “Artists of various genres use ukuleles that attract a wide audience. We see all ages in our store purchasing and wanting to take lessons.” **MI**



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The CGP-700 is loaded with impressive features, but it's also incredibly easy to use. The centerpiece of the CGP-700 is a beautiful 5.3" color touchscreen. This high-resolution display is bright and clear, and makes full use of a huge color palette to keep you informed and in control. Navigating through the 550 tones and 200 rhythms is a breeze.

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SWEETWATER | EVENT

Sweetwater's GearFest 2015 Draws Record Crowd

Sweetwater has announced that GearFest 2015, held June 12-13, was the company's most successful to date. Attendance was record-breaking, with more than 10,100 participants, up 27 percent over 2014, and with sales up by more than 35 percent over last year.

Launched in 2002, Sweetwater's free GearFest is the nation's largest customer-focused music and pro-audio festival, featuring exhibits from more than 400 manufacturers, workshops, clinics, seminars, live demos, special performances and a musician's flea market.

This year's two-day event, which took place at Sweetwater's corporate headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana, provided opportunities for musicians, engineers and producers to participate in the festivities,

with customers traveling from all over the world to attend.

Featured guests included Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, founding member of Steely Dan, and session guitarist for the Doobie Brothers, Eric Clapton, and Sheryl Crow; Deep Purple vocalist and bassist Glenn Hughes; Shawn Pelton, drummer for Sheryl Crow, Bob Dylan, Rod Stewart, and Van Morrison; bassist Nathan East, who has worked with Barry White, George Harrison, Sting, and Stevie Wonder; and guitarist Mike Stern, who has performed with such jazz greats as Billy Cobham, Miles Davis, and Jaco Pastorius. Other musicians included guitarists Mark Colcomb and Javier Reyes, as well as keyboardist Steve Weingart.

Sweetwater's Mitch Gallagher hosted a panel discussion with three pioneers of

synthesis and electronic instruments: Roger Linn, Tom Oberheim and Dave Smith.

Housed in 19 tents, GearFest included more than 200 workshops and seminars on guitar, recording, live sound, music creation with computers, acoustics, songwriting and how to use electronic instruments.

"This year's GearFest was one of the most exciting and humbling experiences of my career," said Chuck Surack, Sweetwater founder and president. "I personally greeted thousands of our customers at the front door as they arrived and was astounded by the enthusiasm everyone seemed to have for Sweetwater, GearFest, and, in particular, for their interactions with our incredible employees. That, along with its continued growth, has made GearFest a truly unique event in the music retail business."



GUITAR CENTER | OPENING

Guitar Center Opens Store in Redmond, Washington

Guitar Center has opened its 269th store. Its new location in Redmond, Washington, covers more than 15,000 square feet. The grand opening took place on June 25.

The new location will feature Guitar Center Lessons, GC Repairs and GC rentals. Redmond customers will also be able to attend free classes every Wednesday and Saturday through Guitar Center Workshops. These classes include introductory instruction on a variety of instruments and Recording Made Easy classes are also available.

Redmond residents will now be able to participate in programs, including Guitar Center Singer-Songwriter, Guitar Center's Drum-Off, Guitar Center's Your Next Record and Get Out of the Garage.

ALLANS BILLY HYDE | OPENING

BILLY HYDE RETURNS TO BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

After a two-and-a-half year absence, Australian music retail store Allans Billy Hyde has returned to Brisbane.

The store is now the largest musical instrument store in Brisbane, covering nearly 14,000 square feet, and offering a wide range of instruments and equipment.

Brian Kelly, Allans Billy Hyde's national director of retail, told *TheMusic*, "This is Billy Hyde returning to Brisbane, [and] we're very excited about it."

Prior to the Brisbane store's reopening, only one other Billy Hyde store existed in region of Queensland, Australia.

"We were keen in getting a full-range music store back in Brisbane, and we're keen to re-establish the brand in the Brisbane marketplace."

Kelly went on to reveal that they are currently rebranding two other stores in Queensland, with the current Gallin's Musician's Pro Shops in Underwood and Mermaid Beach to be rebranded under Billy Hyde.

"Mermaid Beach, Southport, Underwood and Windsor will be the flagship stores for Queensland, so we're making a big investment back into the Queensland marketplace."



YANDAS | OPENING

Yandas Music Opens Second Location

Yandas Music & Pro Audio has opened a new store in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Owner Shawn King said Yandas, which has another location in Kearney, will be more convenient for customers in the region who had been traveling to get to the original location.

"We had a lot of customers coming over from Grand Island who needed our service," King told *Music Inc.* "So, we just felt like if we're going to be in the game, we really need to have a place for them to go to get their instruments serviced to take care of our existing customers who are coming from 45 miles away."

Formerly Gaston's Music, the Kearney location was bought by King in 1998 and renamed in honor of the Gaston's Music's former owner, Clark Yanda. (Yandas Music moved to its current Kearney location in 2005.)

Yandas offers a full-line of MI products, and King specializes in the audio, video and lighting end of the business. "We don't just do guitars," King continued. "We do AV rental, installation of sound and video systems, lighting, and [other music stores in the area] don't do some of the things we're offering now."

At its Grand Island store, Yandas provides rooms for people to take lessons on a wide variety of instruments from trained instructors. Yandas also carries a large selection of musical accessories, such as sheet music, picks, strings for guitars and other string instruments.

"We just want to be here to be part of the community," King told *The Grand Island Independent*. "As we get to know the community, we will get more involved. We don't want to be an outsider coming in. Most of our employees here are from Grand Island."

COLUMBIA RIVER MUSIC | CLOSING

Columbia River Music Closes Shop

After 30 years of serving musicians throughout the region, Columbia River Music in The Dalles, Oregon, has closed its doors.

"I've been in music retail for 40 years, and it's just time." Greg Weast, owner of Columbia River Music, told *Music Inc.* "It's still a profitable business, but the stress is getting to my wife and myself, and we decided to move on to another chapter in our life while we still have our health."

In preparation for closing, the store shut its doors the morning of July 3 and reopened that afternoon with "retirement sale" pricing as Weast attempted to liquidate his stock of instruments and musical paraphernalia.

Retail sales ended July 25, but Weast will continue to service instruments he has out on rental by appointment. Future rentals will be handled by Beacock Music out of Vancouver, Washington, which has agreed to provide instrument services to area schools. "I didn't want to leave the band directors out here totally in the lurch," Weast said. "I've worked pretty hard to keep those kids going and help them function for a lot of years."

Weast said he will miss the community musicians he has come to know over the past 30 years. "It's a very, very small industry. I've met and consider as friends some of the big names in the industry."



Photo Credit: Mark B. Gibson/The Dalles Chronicle



Owner Greg Weast



Note From Causby

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NAMM Rocks!

I have spent my career helping members from many industries including independent car dealers, big-box retailers, insurance professionals and even rural water utility companies. I can certainly say that NAMM members know firsthand the value that NAMM membership provides in supporting their company and strengthening the music products industry. I can also say that my diverse association experience has taught me that NAMM members ROCK! That is why the staff at NAMM works hard to identify and deliver on what NAMM members want and need.

Belonging to NAMM gives you access to a world of benefits, both tangible and intangible. And while these benefits are tough to calculate, we use the term NAMM ROCKS to sum up the value of your membership: **Resources–Opportunities–Connections–Knowledge–Savings!**

Throughout the year, the membership team speaks to members from around the world, helping them understand these benefits, answering their questions and getting a better idea of what belonging to NAMM means to them. The trade shows are an ideal opportunity to talk in person about NAMM and member benefits—and of course, the shows are what many members point to as a reason for belonging—but there's so much more to it.

Do you know all the benefits of belonging? Let's walk through exactly how NAMM ROCKS!

Resources

The online member directory helps you connect with other members throughout the year. Our members would not be where they are today without the generations before them that shaped this industry's history, and NAMM's Oral History Program hosts the largest collection of industry interviews from around the world. Members also have access to the annual Global Report with statistical records on retail music product sales from more than 20 countries.

Opportunities

Member programs like the SupportMusic Coalition provide free marketing tools to help increase store traffic, broaden and strengthen your customer base, and encourage community involvement. You also have access to government relations committees like the Import/Export Task Force and NAMM strategic advocacy initiatives happening in Washington D.C., including the annual Fly-In. In addition, your company can be recognized through special events like the Top 100 Dealer Awards and the TEC Awards.

Connections

The NAMM Show and Summer NAMM bring together industry professionals from around the world to see the latest musical products, network with peers, gain business-building insights and ideas, and connect with each other in smaller groups like the NAMM Young Professionals.

"Being associated with NAMM has opened doors and opportunities that I may never have had. I have partnered with industry leaders and learned so many things. "

— Arturo Lavalle, The Guitar Dude

Knowledge

Education at the trade shows consists of NAMM U Breakfast and Idea Center Sessions on topics like technology, merchandising, finance, sales, marketing, lesson programs, as well as TEC Tracks sessions designed for pro audio and sound professionals. Plus, you can tap into this specialized information year-round through NAMM U Online, a full and varied library of videos, articles and interviews.

NAMM® ROCKS

RESOURCES • OPPORTUNITIES • CONNECTIONS • KNOWLEDGE • SAVINGS

"NAMM is a great organization that supports its members and helps us make the most of great NAMM trade shows, business discounts and learning opportunities."

— Sharon Duncle, Mike's Music

Savings

This past year NAMM members saved nearly \$2 million through NAMM Business Services. NAMM works with business providers to provide discounted costs for services and products like credit card processing, shipping, in-store financing, international payment services and business insurance.

Being a NAMM member means more than all the benefits. It means you belong to a community who shares your passion for this industry. Saving time, saving money and gaining support from fellow members—this is NAMM membership. It is a legacy that was built for you, by you and only succeeds with your continued support and involvement.

Take advantage of these benefits of membership—the more you do, the more you'll see how NAMM ROCKS when it comes to serving your business! Visit www.namm.org/membership/benefits to learn more.

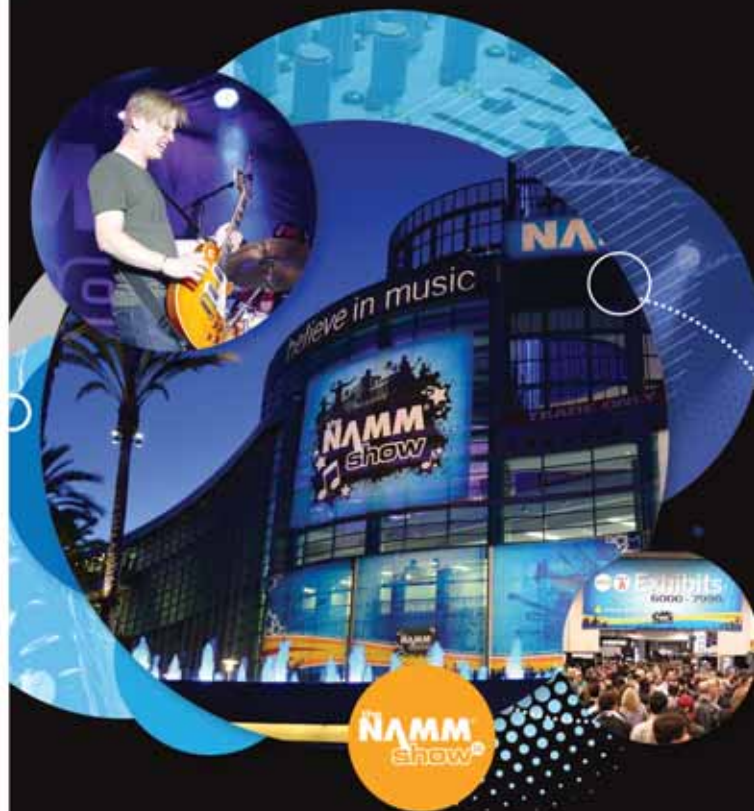
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NAMM Director, Membership



Member Incentive Program

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SUPPLY

EARTHQUAKER DEVICES | BY KATIE KAILUS

SHAKIN' UP THE MARKET

Funky names, rad drawings and some sick sound options are just three characteristics that set EarthQuaker Devices' pedals apart from the pack. With names like Fuzz Master General, Sea Machine and Black Eye, EarthQuaker's pedals have played a large role in the boutique pedal market boom.

Founder Jamie Stillman launched the company in 2006 after making a few pedals for friends and selling a few on eBay.

"I had a broken pedal, looked up the schematics and got obsessed from there," he said. "The whole company started from an obsessive hobby."

When Stillman started noticing a demand for his products on eBay, he approached a few retailers. Today, EarthQuaker's dealer base spans into the hundreds. Just last month, EarthQuaker moved into a new 15,000-square-foot manufacturing facility to accommodate all 31 employees. Not a bad trajectory for a nine-year-old company.

"We have really exploded with dealers," Stillman said. "A lot of them — about 98 percent — have found us asking to sell our product, which is super awesome."

TWISTED TAKE

EarthQuaker has a distinctive approach when it comes to help-



Jamie Stillman, sixth from left, with the EarthQuaker crew

EarthQuaker offers its own distinct approach to the boutique pedal market

ing guitarists achieve their sound.

"For me, I like to think I have a unique take on what makes a guitar sound good," Stillman said. "There's all kinds of pedals companies out there, and a lot of them rely on recreating old sounds. I kind of fall for something in the middle, something a little bit archaic, something 1960s, using new technology to make new sounds."

And Stillman and his team do just that while providing their own twist. A former freelance graphic designer, Stillman did all of the drawings on the front of the pedals himself until 2014. Now the company has an illustrator on staff who's also a comic book artist.

When it comes to naming the

pedals, Stillman said a lot of the names are a team effort.

"We have brainstorming sessions, and we'll throw some ideas around the shop," he said.

As the boutique pedal market continues to expand, Stillman believes EarthQuaker will continue to stand out to dealers. "We take [our business] really seriously, are affordably priced and offer end users interesting sounds," he said.

As of this past July, those interesting sounds now span into the amp market. EarthQuaker soft launched the The Sound Projector 25 — a 25-watt, class A amp — by posting about it online. After about an hour, the company saw a flood of dealers asking to order it. "It

was a great impromptu gauge of our reach," Stillman said.

While the company may continue to grow, Stillman and his team have no plans of changing the way they do things. They still build everything by hand in Akron, Ohio.

"I think a lot of people that get to the point we're at have that sort of thing done at a factory," he said. "For me, it's not to be snobby. It's just everyone who works here cares about the product." **MI**





{ Godzilla - 1954 }

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Musiquip's Erik Lind and John Kelley

MUSIQUIP | DISTRIBUTION

COLE CLARK SELECTS MUSIQUIP

Musiquip has been appointed the new exclusive U.S. distributor of Cole Clark Guitars.

Founded in 2001, Australian manufacturer Cole Clark combines classical construction with innovative design and manufacturing techniques to produce a lighter and stronger guitar with a natural amplified sound.

"I am looking forward to a long and exciting relationship with Musiquip," said Miles Jackson, CEO of Cole Clark. "Our guitars are optimally suited for the everyday working musician, and Musiquip understands this. They will utilize their impressive network of retailers to ensure that as many North American musicians as possible discover our products, and have the opportunity to get their hands on one of our guitars for the complete Cole Clark experience."

"We are thrilled to be Cole Clark's new distribution partner for North America," said John Kelley, Musiquip's GM. "Their approach to guitar design is fresh and innovative, and their world-class instruments are a natural fit alongside our other premium guitar-oriented brands. We're looking forward to driving Cole Clark's continued development in the United States."

{musiquip.com; coleclarkguitars.com}

NASMD | EVENT

NASMD Board Meets to Plan 2016 Convention

The board of directors for the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD) recently concluded a three-day planning meeting for the group's 2016 convention, which will be held March 30–April 2 at the Grande Lakes Orlando Hotel in Orlando, Florida.

The NASMD board includes President Rosi Johnson of Mississippi Music, Vice President Mike Meyer of Meyer Music, Secretary/Treasurer Whitney Grisaffi of Ted Brown Music, Beth Houlihan of Kidder Music, Greg Lyon of Royal Music, Jim Provost of Gerry's Music, Mike Guntren of Ray's Midbell Music and Cris Behrens of Summerhays Music Center.

The convention will include many social media sessions, roundtables and panel discussions led by NASMD members as well as some top professional speakers relevant to operating a successful business.

{nasmd.com}



IN MEMORIAM

VIC FIRTH PASSES AWAY AT 85

Vic Firth, legendary Boston Symphony Orchestra timpanist and founder of Vic Firth Company, passed away on July 26 in Boston. He was 85.

Firth was the son of a trumpet and cornet player who started Firth on the cornet when he was four. At 21, Firth became the youngest member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He performed with many legendary conductors and musicians, including Leonard Bernstein, Serge Koussevitzky, Leopold Stokowski and Seiji Ozawa.

Firth's obsession with sound is what guided his playing, teaching and led him to start the Vic Firth Company in 1963.

Firth is credited with inventing or standardizing many of the key manufacturing processes used today in drumstick making.

"Vic was a visionary in the music industry who was revered by all of us," said Craigie Zildjian, CEO of the Avedis Zildjian Company. "Never one to accept the status quo, Vic blazed trails throughout the drum world." {vicfirth.com}





Participants in the 28th annual KMC Music Golf Tournament.

KMC | EVENT

KMC MUSIC DEALERS TEE-OFF FOR GOOD CAUSE

Manufacturers, dealers and MI industry guests joined KMC Music executives on June 8 at the Blue Fox Run Golf Course in Avon, Connecticut, for the 28th Annual KMC Music Golf Tournament ben-

efitting the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, a non-profit summer camp dedicated to providing “a different kind of healing” to seriously ill children and their families. The annual golf event began in 1987 in

memory of Matt Porter, the son of Everett Porter of Ovation Guitar. The all-day outing included a shotgun round of golf, lunch, and a post-event dinner and entertainment.

kmcmusiccorp.com

APPOINTMENTS

KHS ADDS THREE TO ITS TEAM



Tim Henry

KHS America has announced the addition of three to its team. Tim Henry has been named children’s music product manager. Henry

has joined KHS with the acquisition of Hohner, Inc., where he managed the

growth of SONOR Orff, Hohner Kids and Green Tones children’s instruments for 25 years. In his new role, Henry will be responsible for strategic and tactical marketing initiatives, product development, and brand management for SONOR Orff, Hohner Kids, Green Tones and Rockwood products.

Angelica Lattimore has been named to the role of product manager for accessories and promotional products. In this role, she will be responsible for strategic

planning and product line management for Hercules Stands, NOMAD Stands and Jupiter accessories.

Gizzy O’Toole has been appointed artist relations and marketing coordinator for the Hohner, Lanikai, H. Jimenez and Hercules brands in the United States. In addition to his artist relations responsibilities, O’Toole will continue to lead the Hohner Harmonica Roadshow activities and help grow KHS America’s grassroots initiatives. jupitermusic.com

Conn-Selmer has added Markus Theinert as vice president of marketing, reporting to company president John Stoner. In this role, Theinert will work with the leadership team and category managers in developing and imple-

menting strategic product and marketing initiatives.

“We are thrilled to have someone with Markus’ skill sets join the Conn-Selmer team, and we welcome Markus and his family to Elkhart,” Stoner said.

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IDEAS

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLIOM

PUTTING PRICE TO BED

Despite your very best efforts in a sales presentation, do you often find that the “make it or break it” of that sale turns out to be the price negotiation that happens at the end? For decades, I trained my staff that the way to eliminate making price the ultimate pressure point is to create a friendly relationship with the client. This strategy works well, but relationships take time to develop. The question is how to diminish the importance of price in your very first encounter with a new customer.

Clearly, you should start working on that relationship right from the start. But I’ve always theorized that talk of price is often the result of a failure to establish the unequivocal suitability of the product you’re selling. Recently, I had a shopping experience where this was done better than I’ve ever seen ... and I want to share that lesson learned with you.

THE SLEEP COMPUTER

My wife and I were shopping for a new mattress. From past experience, I knew that nothing is worse than the mattress shopping experience. You



Put the price question to bed by getting to know your customer’s needs

go from store to store, spending a minute or two at a time on mattresses that are impossible to truly test in store, especially with the overly aggressive salespeople that lurk over you, spewing sales babble, while you’re trying to find a little Zen on each block of foam and springs. They put phony, inflated prices and big discounts and incentives for “today only” on the same mat-

tresses as their competitors, but with deceiving private labeled names. In essence, they’re inviting you to be a jerk when it comes time to negotiate! And when it’s all done, you may have won the price battle, but you really have no idea if you bought the right product.

But then we visited Art Van furniture and everything changed. The congenial sales associate approached after we had already started testing some of our options. He was comfortable developing rapport, and then brought out his secret weapon, a computerized analysis which determined the best fit for us. While laying on a mattress, automated rollers and probes measured our bodies, all while the video screen told us the story about what they were doing. The key message was that it’s virtually impossible to know what bed “fits” you by just laying on it for a few minutes. The outcome was that their “Pure Sleep” system was able to recommend all the mattresses in the store that would, over the long haul, give us the best night’s rest.

Those were the magic words! In reality, we weren’t out shopping for the best price. We didn’t care that we could pay for it in 72

payments with no interest. We were there because we wanted a great night’s sleep, and that is what Art Van promised us. By focusing on my actual needs, everything else — including price — became secondary. Moreover, since this was the only place I visited where I felt certain that my goal (a good night’s sleep) would be met, this place had a huge leg up on earning my business.

What can you do in your business to create the same outcome as Art Van’s Pure Sleep computer? It starts with a genuine concern for understanding your customers’ needs. You find out by asking probing questions and seriously getting to know what matters to the buyer. Your customer will want to jump right in to shopping, because that’s what they’re trained to do. But if you take a different approach and really get to know them, they’ll appreciate what you’ve done, and may actually learn that what they thought they wanted isn’t even right for them. Get to that point, and everything your competitors may have discussed gets taken out of consideration. **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.

FROM THE TRENCHES | BY MYRNA SISLEN

My Recital Secrets

I am standing at the front door of my store Middle C Music holding a tin of homemade cookies. It's June 14, and we have just completed the last of our end-of-the-year recitals. They've been running every Friday, Saturday and Sunday since the end of April. That's 18 recitals involving almost 600 students and 20 teachers. Why am I standing at the door with cookies? That's my exit strategy. Each performer gets a cookie as they leave the store, emphasis on leave.



There are a few things you can do to make your music recitals extra special

If you have lessons in your store (and if you don't, start immediately), recitals are essential. The size of your store doesn't matter: Middle C Music is only 2,750 square feet, and most of that is studio space. We clear everything out of the middle of the store, set up chairs and we're ready. Every student should have the opportunity to perform at least twice a year.

Holding successful recitals that please students, parents, grandparents and friends doesn't have to be hard. Here are a few tips and tricks I use at Middle C Music:

1. FOR OUR RECITALS, THE ROUTINE IS THE SAME.

First, the teachers must turn in their program by the prior day so that we have time to format and print it. We have a template with the Middle C logo that we decorate appropriately. Parents love programs. On recital day, we start to set up about 30 minutes before the performance begins. Recitals begin immediately after the store closes. There are never enough chairs for everyone, so the house rule is that adults get the chairs and kids get to sit on our spectacular floor. I make an announcement to that effect, and it always gets a laugh.

2. GO OVER PERFORMANCE ETIQUETTE.

Remind all performers to announce their names and what they are playing, and most important to be sure they bow and acknowledge the audience when they are finished. Then I turn everything over to the teachers. Normally each student plays one or two pieces, often with the teacher

accompanying, so that even the youngest students can play. If a student has difficulty, the teacher is there to help. Sometimes a young student will cry and not want to perform at all. (This rarely happens with adults.) I never force children to perform. There's always next time.

3. AS FOR ADULTS, REMEMBER THEY'LL BE NERVOUS.

It really helps to explain before they play that they are in a very safe and relaxed environment. I give out little dark chocolate bottles filled with liquor for each player. It makes them laugh and relaxes them.

4. RECORD THE RECITAL.

At Middle C, every recital is recorded and every family gets a free DVD of the performance. (Be sure to include your store logo on your DVDs.) The real reason for the recitals is to involve entire families and friends, and, most importantly, to give back to the parents. I can't tell you how important it is to give away something for free. Giving the DVDs does cost money, but you can't imagine the amount of good you will get in return.

The final tip? As important as the recitals are, when they're over, I am ready for everyone to leave. The cookies work every time. **MI**

Myrna Sislen owns and operates Middle C Music in Washington, D.C.

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MY TURN | BY CAROLYN GRANT

Making History Everyday

Last month we explored ways to preserve your company's history and looked at some tangible ways to share it with your customers and strengthen your brand. Now I'd like to look at this topic from a somewhat different perspective. How can your business take a meaningful place in the lives of your customers and become part of their history?

At the NAMM Museum of Making Music we ask ourselves this question everyday. We realize that when visitors come through our doors, we are automatically taking a place in their life story — in their history. And we take our responsibility seriously to represent this industry and to leave as positive and as meaningful of a mark as possible. As a museum, we want to be remembered as a place where they learned something new, had successful hands-on musical experiences and realized the power of music and music making in their own lives. We do this through the usual museum channels of exhibitions and tours, but also through original and robust programming. Here are a few examples of popular programs at the museum this year.



'We realize that when visitors come through our doors, we are automatically taking a place in their life story — in their history.'

opportunity to make an instrument from a kit before playing it. The Learn To ... Sing was a six-week workshop, two hours every Monday night, that we did in collaboration with our local Barbershop Harmony Society. These workshops are relatively low-cost, and resonate well with adults who want to try something new without having to make a major investment of time or money.

WHAT MUSIC MEANS TO ME

Another successful project has been the "What Music Means To Me" special exhibition, based on Richard Rejino's initiative. This exhibition features testimonials gathered by Rejino in which people of all ages and walks of life share personal stories about the role of music in their lives. After interacting with these stories, visitors have the opportunity to leave their own personal testimonials. They can post handwritten notes or, using an app developed in-house, leave audio or video testimonials. We then upload these testimonials to an interactive iPad station for all visitors to watch. A few of the thoughtful, moving notes are: "Music is what the soul sounds like" and "Music touched my life and changed me forever." This type of interactive experience can be incorporated into any space and can be as simple as Post-it notes on a wall. The content you gather can be shared via social media.

We are creating our own history and that of our customers or visitors every day. What role do you play in the lives of your customers? What will your legacy be? **MI**

Carolyn Grant is the executive director of the NAMM Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad, California. This is her final piece in a series of three installments on the importance of documenting your company's history and creating programs for customers based on that history.

GIVE YOUR BAND DIRECTORS WHAT THEY WANT



Nathan Linn, Manager, Band & Orchestra Department

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT STRAIT MUSIC.

Strait Music is Austin's oldest family owned music store, having opened our doors in 1963 we are currently in our 3rd generation of ownership. We are also Austin's only full-line music store selling, renting and repairing pianos, guitars, B&O, keyboards, PA and recording gear, drums, amps, sheet music and more. Over the last 20 years or so, we have had a big focus on school band and would certainly consider ourselves Central Texas' band and orchestra headquarters. We are heavy into beginner rentals on up to sales of the finest step-up brands and instruments. We have three full time Educational Sales Reps and seven full-time band and orchestra repair techs on staff.

YOU ALWAYS PLACE A VERY LARGE 'BACK TO SCHOOL' ORDER FOR VANDOREN PRODUCTS... WHY IS THAT?

Almost all of the band directors in the area prefer Vandoren products for their students. The idea is that the students who start out on quality materials get a better sound and become stronger players faster. This approach gives the students a chance to gain more success in less time, and students who progress quickly are less likely to become frustrated, more likely to enjoy the program, and therefore more likely to stay in band through school. Some directors are even requiring their beginners to use V12 reeds, which work ideally with the mouthpieces they require for their students. Everything a band director puts on a list is geared towards helping students achieve success in the band program. We keep well stocked displays at both locations so that customers know we have exactly what their band director recommends.

WE'VE NOTICED RECENTLY THAT YOU HAVE ALSO BEEN INCLUDING VANDOREN OPTIMUM SAXOPHONE MOUTHPIECES IN YOUR ORDER. IS THIS A TREND?

I would say so. The Vandoren Optimum mouthpieces are new requirements in terms of school lists. Most band directors make a list, and they'll use the exact same list for years. It takes a strong product to produce a change on a band director's list. Some schools haven't changed their list in years! The first time we saw a request for Optimum AL3s, it was on the list of three schools in South Austin. That was in 2012. The next year it appeared on three lists for schools in North Austin. This year the AL3 appeared on about ten lists. It seems every year another band director wants it. It's an affordable alternative to other step-up mouthpieces, and it seems to offer the sound quality and playability band directors are looking to find.



Vandoren Optimum AL3
For more visit: bit.ly/optimum5

"The AL3 is an affordable alternative to other step-up mouthpieces, and it seems to offer the sound quality and playability band directors are looking to find."

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR OTHER DEALERS WHO DON'T HAVE DIRECTORS REQUIRING VANDOREN PRODUCTS FOR THEIR BEGINNER PROGRAMS?

I'd tell them that if you're selling a product you believe in, you should always be willing to make a recommendation! A lot of our business comes from directors sending in their students, and if you see something that they don't have on their list, it shows that you care when you make a recommendation. They can't keep track of every product on the market. It's our job to make sure they're aware when something beneficial to their students becomes available. Vandoren is great about sending out samples for band directors and letting out the word when they have something new. We have this inside guy at DANSR that makes sure we know the benefits of new products and how they work to change and improve sounds - that sort of thing. They make sure to help keep their dealers informed so that we can keep the directors, students, and parents informed.

For more on Strait Music, visit www.straitmusic.com

A photograph of three men in a rustic, wood-paneled room. The man on the left is bald with a goatee, wearing a blue and white checkered polo shirt and blue jeans, standing with his arms crossed. The man in the middle has a beard and glasses, wearing a black polo shirt and blue jeans, standing behind the others. The man on the right is bald, wearing a black polo shirt and khaki pants, sitting on a red stool. The room has a wooden plank wall, string lights, and a red patterned rug.

MY EXPANSION

(AND HOW WE SURVIVED IT!)



PLAN

By Donovan Bankhead, Photos By Drew Kimble

Springfield Music doubled in size in just four months by acquiring two already existing stores – almost growing itself out of business before getting things under control. Here **Donovan Bankhead** (third from left) shares, in his own words, his experience, what he learned and what he would do differently.



The showroom at Ernie Williamson Music in Joplin, Missouri.



It's a rare person who looks at music retail and decides that they want to jump into those murky waters, but it takes a special kind of crazy to get so deep that you open multiple stores in different markets. Like most retailers, the story of our store, Springfield Music in Springfield, Missouri, began with a single location, operating successfully for several decades. Then one day, we decided it would be great to have another store in the next city, about an hour away. For the next decade, we were pretty happy with this arrangement. Having another location kept things interesting. It provided some challenges in improving systems and operations, but ultimately, it made some money — perfect!

Then the suggestions started coming in from well-meaning vendors and customers: “You guys should expand to the big city — they could use someone like you there!” or “I wish I had a store like this in my city.” To my credit, I did a great job of ignoring this for many years. But after a while — and an apparent blow to the head — I started to think maybe it would be a good idea to add a location in a larger city. After some research looking at population, affluence of potential clientele and market potential, I decided to look for an additional location in Kansas City. KC was only about three hours away, had many growing and affluent areas, not to mention that we felt it was missing a music retailer that could offer what we offer. So, in October 2012, we purchased Funky Munk Music.

The Takeover

Funky Munk had a reputation as a rock ‘n’ roll guitar shop, but was struggling in the post-recession economy. When we came in, we brought a plan for profitability and provided some much-needed stability for the staff. The Munkys were eager for consistent leadership and all were immediately on-board with our new approach of focusing on our 4R’s: Retail, Rentals, Repairs & Ressons. (Three “R’s” and an “L” isn’t as catchy.)

Apparently, purchasing two music stores in a decade (exactly 10 years apart) puts you in expansion mode, so out of the woodwork we

started getting calls from other stores and vendor reps asking if we'd be interested in additional locations. We had our hands full getting the KC store back in the black, so we respectfully declined. But then one day as I was driving to Kansas City, I received a call from a vendor rep saying that Fazio's Frets & Friends in St. Louis was going to be liquidated as the owner, Mike Fazio, was ready to retire and had been unable to find a suitable buyer. Fazio's was known as one of the best guitar shops in our state and, while we weren't really in a position to expand, I thought out of respect to Mike Fazio (and, honestly, a chance to look at their financials to see how we compared), I agreed to at least drive up there and meet him.

After sitting down with Mike and his crew, the possibilities of what we could do with Fazio's had me drunk with optimism. I pulled our management team together to see if they thought we could handle this additional challenge. They thought we could, and so in February of 2013, just four months after purchasing Funky Munky, we purchased Fazio's.

If It Ain't Broke ... Yikes!

Because we are gluttons for punishment, during this time we also decided to relocate our corporate offices, warehouse and band repair shop to a new facility and build an all-new building for our second location, Ernie Williamson Music in Joplin, Missouri.

Now it should be mentioned that both Funky Munky and Fazio's were having financial challenges when we bought them, but the difference was that Fazio's was able to manage the business so well during this time that none of the employees or vendors were aware that there was a problem. That isn't how I work, however. If our business has a problem, then all of the employees will know about it and will be charged with helping to fix it. This approach came as a shock to the folks at Fazio's, and nearly caused all of the employees (including teachers) to quit on our second day of ownership.

This would have been a truly dire situation — as we had no way of staffing the store from our other locations, which were already stretched thin. It would have forced us to liquidate Fazio's and take our lumps. After meeting with the staff, we found out what was bothering them. Essentially, our straight-forward, tell-all approach was too-much-too-soon for the crew, and they felt as if we weren't listening to them and that we weren't looking out for their best interests.

In our effort to save their store and their jobs, we had been blind to their feelings and concerns, thinking instead that we were doing them a favor. In reality, we were asking them to do us a favor and save this local business. That was a watershed moment for me and how I thought of the people around me. I needed them way more than they needed me. I've got a wonderfully smart, dedicated and talented staff — they would be just fine without me. But without them — I'm screwed!

So with sincerity in my heart, and tears in my eyes, I apologized to the crew at Fazio's one by one for not being more considerate. I took the time to explain our situation, how Fazio's had literally been days away from ceasing operations, and that we were trying

to save it. And in order to do so we needed their help and their commitment. To my great relief, one by one they accepted my apology, and agreed to help save Fazio's.

Now I don't want you to get the idea that it's been all flowers and rainbows since that day. Much of the original Fazio's staff has since moved on to other opportunities. Many of them were burnt out when we got there and were ready for a new life, or just couldn't get on board with our vision for a renewed Fazio's Music. We've had to focus Fazio's not just on retail, which they had done so well, but get deeper into the other R's so that we could bring back the profits.

The first six months were exciting; we thought we were going to quickly turn it around, and we were enjoying all of the attention from the trade press and vendors. But when 2013 came to a close and we saw the final result, it had us worried. We hadn't expected the turnarounds to take that long, and we were losing money. By October 2014, things still didn't seem like they were better, so I reached out to a few mentors of mine, namely Chip Averwater of Amro Music and Daniel Jobe of Friedman, Kannerberg & Co. (now our accountants firm) and asked for their input. They reviewed our financials with me, and they both agreed that we had literally just turned the corner, financially.



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MY EXPANSION PLAN

And they were right, since then, things have steadily improved.

It's All in the People

The addition of these two stores doubled the size of our company in a just four months. This created a massive stress on all aspects of our business — our personnel was tested, systems were shown to be lacking, and most importantly, profits were drained. I made the (nearly) fatal error of assuming I could restore profitability to these new stores quickly, projecting a turnaround in less than 12 months. The truth is that it took nearly two years, and almost all of our available resources to save them. Fortunately, I had some wonderful mentors during this time to give me wisdom and tools to navigate these troubled waters — including Averwater, George Hines of George's Music, and Jobe.

Also, we have been blessed to find extremely talented folks for the new locations to help strengthen and build those stores. Funky Munky was in dire need of a quality manager, one who could be there daily to lead the business into a new era. We were lucky to have found Parker Daniels to fill that role. We had met Parker when he was running a local Best Buy's MI

department. When they announced they were closing down the MI department at that location, we worked with Parker on purchasing their inventory and fixtures, and we were impressed with his knowledge and leadership skills.

Fazio's new manager came from within. Dan Kuse had managed a very successful music store in Lebanon, Missouri, for many years, and then moved to St. Louis. He was enjoying life as an excellent salesperson at Fazio's when we came along. Being able to work with customers and not having the stress of managing employees was a welcome change of pace. However, we needed his experience and dedication to lead the crew at Fazio's, and he agreed. He's been an integral part of the turnaround of Fazio's.

But none of the expansion could have happened without the excellent management team already established under Springfield Music. Eli Chambers has done wonders for us at our Joplin location. He's built a culture where the staff really took ownership of this store. Our dual managers at Springfield Music, Austin Handley and Mitch Brashers, gave us the stability to know that we could focus on these new markets. And finally, our assistant general



From left: Austin Handley, store manager at Springfield Music; Parker Daniels, store manager at Funky Munky Music; Misty Kristek, assistant general manager; Eli Chambers, store manager at Ernie Williamson Music; Bankhead, vice president; Mitch Brashers, sales manager; and Dan Kuse, store manager at Fazio's.

manager and lesson administrator Misty Kristek has been my right-hand throughout this journey and has been the stable rock on which we could build a strong foundation.

Of course there are many other employees, both past and present, who have toiled and sacrificed to get us to where we are today. It's because of them and their efforts that we have and will continue to achieve great things.

The Lessons Learned

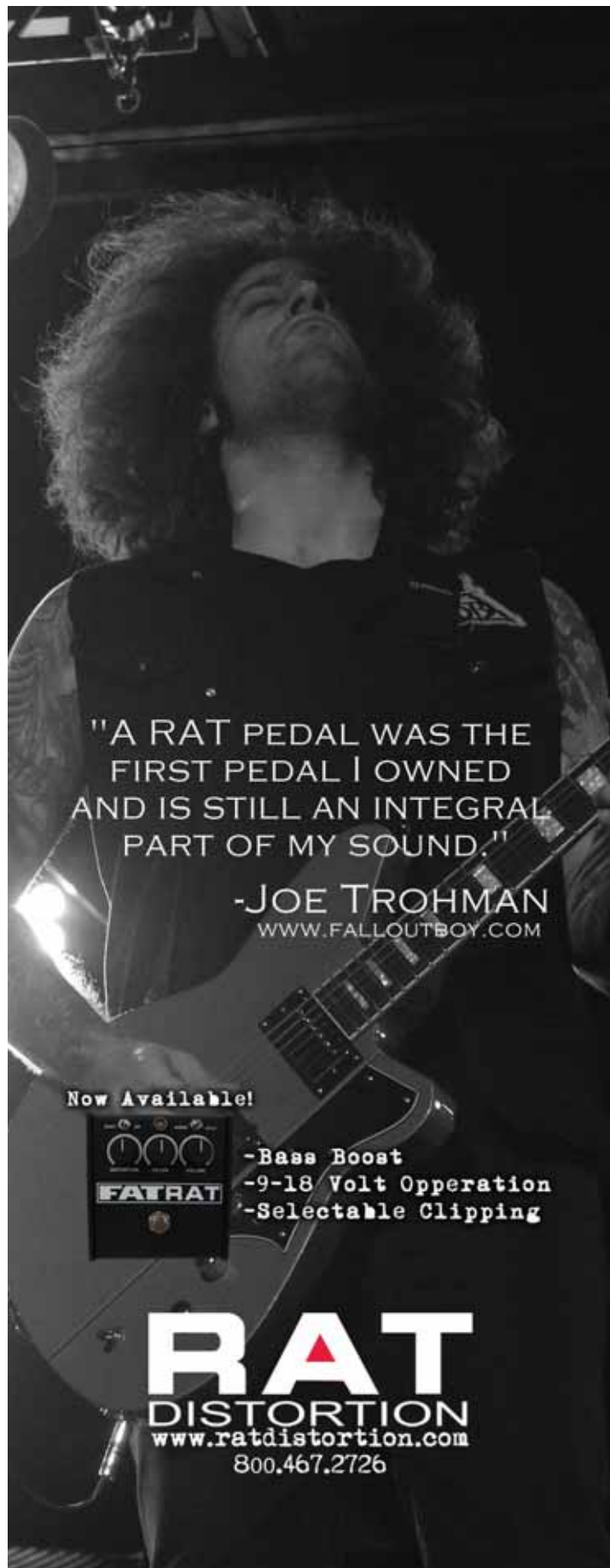
As for me, I have learned to look at everything from the employees perspective — especially new employees. Understanding new employees' fears and concerns is critical. I can't stress this enough. They have to know that you understand them before you can make any changes. Once you know this, communicate your vision for the store. Allow them to add their dreams to this as well, so that you come up with something that is as much theirs as it is yours.

Plan on spending lots of time training new hires on the way you want things done. Acknowledge that some things will be different from the way they did things. Encourage them to speak up when they think an old way is better, but ask them to recognize that unless their old way offers a significant advantage, it may not be worth it to convert the rest of the company to their old way of doing it. Some things are, and it can give you an opportunity to upgrade your operation, but they have to understand the need for a consistent approach, companywide. Also, the more time you spend in advance on training videos, manuals and guides, the better chance you will have of success at the new locations. It also gives the new employees a reference. Keep in mind, they are likely learning hundreds (if not thousands) of new procedures and rules, so they are bound to forget a few. Constantly reinforce the new operations.

Also, I've learned that sharing financials with your staff is important. Present a simple balance sheet and income statement to them, so that they know how well they are doing. Business financials are like a scoreboard in sports — it tells you if you are winning or losing.

Finally, take the time to show your appreciation and recognition of your staff's efforts. This is something that is challenging for me to do, not because I'm not appreciative, but because in the hustle and bustle of growing a business, our mindset is often on to the next challenge. I have to constantly remind myself to thank those around me and express my gratitude. I invite feedback — both in person, via email and even anonymously — from our staff to tell me how we are doing.

But, the number one thing I've learned from all of this is that the people who work in and on your business — those who work in sales, school service, repair, support — are the ones who truly matter. They are the people who make a business great. It took me too long to fully appreciate these folks, but through this journey, I have realized that they are the reason I do what I do. And if I support, encourage, lead and appreciate them, then the sky's the limit as to what we can achieve together. **MI**



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FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

STEVE LONG | YORKVILLE SOUND

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

I usually walk to work. It takes about 20 minutes, and I get in just before 8:30 a.m. Once I'm in the office, I review messages from the previous night and answer questions on sales, customer issues and any other problems that may have come up.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

I love that it really is different every day. Some days, we're training people who work in the stores that we deal with, trying to educate our dealers from a Yorkville point of view, so they know as much about the products as possible. That's true whether it's a Yorkville dealer or a Long & McQuade dealer. I also deal with all of the company's financial matters, things like banking and currency exchanges. Then there's reviewing production schedules and back orders — it's really about whatever needs to get done. I enjoy the variety.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF DIFFERENT RESPONSIBILITIES.

The fortunate thing is that we have a lot of good people, so many things are delegated out to other team members every day. I'm really looking at the overview and deciding what needs special attention.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE AT YORKVILLE?

I started at the bottom — but before that, I was on tour with a band on the east coast of Canada. It was a typical tour where everything went wrong, and I was getting fed up. My father asked if I wanted to help with some things at the company, so I started organizing parts in the warehouse, and then I moved into purchasing and production. Eventually, I took over the whole operation and then moved into the retail side in the early 1990s. I've pretty much done every job, and there's not a lot here that I'm not familiar with. [Laughs.] As president, that helps.

CAN YOU ELABORATE?

When I hear that a company hired a CEO who used to work in some totally unrelated industry, I can never understand it. How can you run a company if you haven't done all of the jobs? When problems come up here, I can fall back

on my personal experience, whether it's retail or manufacturing, and I can also have a better sense of how to react. Especially with manufacturing, sometimes the best solution is to do nothing.

HOW SO?

If you're making 50,000 products in a year, you're going to see some weird stuff happen. Maybe you'll see a logo get printed upside down. That's really strange and it happens once every 10 years or so. The normal reaction to problems like that can be to think, "We have to do something about this!" But it's important to have the perspective to know when disrupting everything to fix a problem that occurs once a decade will do more harm than good. That's one of my biggest challenges in management — knowing when to do something and when not to do something.

WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GIBSON LIKE?

We've been their distributor for many years, and we sell their products all around Canada. We deal with Gibson, Epiphone, Gibson Acoustic, and, just recently, we took on their pro-audio side as well, which is KRK, Stanton and Cerwin Vega.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF DISTRIBUTING GIBSON?

Their customers are very passionate about the brand, so there can be customer-specific issues. That said, one of the most interesting things about our company is that we try to take customer service very seriously. If any customer has a complaint about a Long & McQuade store, and they go to the website and email the company about the issue, that email goes directly to my brother and me.

WHY DO YOU HANDLE THOSE THINGS PERSONALLY?

We don't get many complaints, but when we do get them, we figure that they very often point to systemic problems — if one person is complaining about something, chances are he or she isn't the only one. That's true regardless of whether we're dealing with Gibson, Traynor, Line 6, Yorkville or any other brand. A big part of what we do is to try to make our customers happy, whether they are at the retail or dealer level.



THE DETAILS

STEVE LONG, PRESIDENT

HQ: Pickering, Ontario

Founded: 1963

Employees: 275

Best-selling products: Paraline and Parasource loudspeakers, followed closely by NX loudspeakers.

Fun Fact: Yorkville was founded in the back room of Toronto's Long & McQuade music store just over 50 years ago. Steve Long shares his time overseeing the two companies, both of which are family-owned businesses.

WHAT'S YOUR BROTHER'S ROLE IN THE COMPANY?

His official title is vice president of marketing, but a lot of what we do is interchangeable. When there are major decisions like opening new stores or starting new product lines, we're both involved. If a marketing question comes up, he's going to take it and if a financial question comes up, I'm going to take it. If a customer question comes up, either one of us could handle it.

AS A COMPANY, WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A HAND IN MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTING AND RETAIL, ALL AT THE SAME TIME?

One big benefit is that, very often, a world event can happen that will make certain parts of our business not as successful. Because we have lots of different categories, if one area lags, other areas will carry it on while we take the time we need to adjust.

WHAT'S AN EXAMPLE?

We're a Canadian company, so if the currency exchanges change, it can have a big effect on us. When the U.S. dollar goes up, so do our costs for American-made products. But since we also sell products that we manufacture in the United States, that mitigates it to some extent. While we're paying more for products that we're buying, we also get more for products that we're selling.

ARE THERE OTHER BENEFITS?

Canada is a big, spread-out country, and having sales reps visit each part can be a lot, unless you have a really full catalog. It's a long and expensive trip to send people to Nova Scotia or Prince George, British Columbia, so unless they really have a full catalog to sell, the trip isn't going to pay for itself. Another big advantage has to do with our electronic repair department.

HOW SO?

We have the best one in Canada. Just by doing what we do, we've built up a huge base of technical expertise. We can fix all of the products here — the ones we make, the ones we distribute, and even the ones we don't make or distribute. That's a huge competitive advantage, largely because, these days, lots of suppliers are retailers as well. If you buy something at Best Buy and it breaks, you can't really take it back and expect a guy in the back to fix it, right?

I BELIEVE THAT'S THE CASE.

If you take a broken product back to one of our stores, though, we can usually fix it right there. If not, as part of our network, we have a very strong crew of over 20 people and trucks that travel around to all of our stores, so turnaround time is very quick. Our ability to do that comes from having different categories. When we take on a category line like Gibson Pro Audio and a service problem comes up, we are already set to deal with it. There's no learning curve.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES AS A MANUFACTURER?

We've been doing this for a long time, so while things like quality control and purchasing materials may look difficult on the outside, we're good at all of that. The biggest problem is that it's very hard to change the speed of a factory. Say you have 200 people working on a production line that can spit out a certain number of speaker cabinets and amplifiers each week. Demand can fluctuate depending on product releases, competition, and all sorts of other factors — but your production capacity doesn't. You can end up with an overflowing warehouse full of product, or you get customers who are unhappy with the fact that they're going to have to wait two or three months to get their order. So, managing that dynamic can be a challenge.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR MANUFACTURING IS AUTOMATED?

Anything that can be automated is automated. We're very up on the curve when it comes to automation, probably more than any other factory that does what we do.

WHY HAVE YOU KEPT YOUR PRODUCTION IN CANADA WHEN THE TREND SEEMS TO BE OUTSOURCING?

We make very high-quality products — that's basically what we do. It's kind of like asking a guitarist, "Why do you keep playing the guitar?" [Laughs.] We have a factory here with about 200 people who have been part of the team for many years. We make product, sell it and are very successful at it. Why would we change that?

IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

My main hobbies are hockey and cycling, so probably something to do with one of those — but really, music is the way to go.

'WHEN PROBLEMS
COME UP, I CAN FALL
BACK ON MY PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE, WHETHER
IT'S RETAIL OR
MANUFACTURING.'

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#NeighborLove



Godin's Mario Bifarelli



Mad Professor's Marko Karhu



Drummer Alex Acuna with Sabian's Luis Cardoso

By David Ball and Katie Kailus

NAMM 2015

From the debut of NAMM's TEC Tracks to a significant uptick in tech exhibitors, this year's Summer NAMM was all about technology

Nearly 14,000 visitors braved the sweltering heat of Nashville, Tennessee, to attend the 2015 Summer NAMM Show held July 9–11 — a 13-percent increase over 2014's attendance. Exhibitors reported steady booth traffic and lots of buyers ready to strike deals.

"The show was great — we were very busy this year," said Luis Cardoso, Sabian's marketing manager. "We had lots of traffic at our booth and everyone had a good vibe."

First-time attendee Nash Propst of Nash Pedals said the show was a great opportunity for him to network and get a feel for what dealers and users are looking for.

"I've been able to get some feedback on my products, and then I also have had some people offer demos and things like that," he said. "It's just an opportunity to get my name out on a broader base than social media."

► TECH SAVVY

While social media was the focus point of many Idea Center sessions, it was the debut of the technology-focused



TC's Russell Gray



Griffin Technology's Andrew Biddle



Legator's Allen Steelgrave, Jose Ferro and Adam Romine



IMS Technologies' Josh Eagan and Jeff Millar-Sax



Yorkville's Steve Hendee and Joe Warrick



Taylor Guitars' Andy Powers



Stravari's Robin and Sheila Rockley



Zoom's Eric Battin and Colleen Harwood



Yamaha's Steven Fisher



Martin's Chris Martin, right, and cowboy artist William Matthews with the LE-Cowboy-2015 guitar. Matthews created the design for the guitar.



Alfred's Elisa Palladino



Faith Guitars' Steve Greenfield



The Ideas Center was packed



Reverend's Penny Haas



CruzTools' Dan Parks



Roland's Peter Brown



Hal Leonard's Brad Smith and MXL's Scott Krueckeberg



Teton's Jed Roberston



Fishman's Chris DeMaria

educational sessions TEC Tracks that garnered the attention of the pro-audio and live sound markets.

"In my opinion, Summer NAMM has always been about education and the addition of TEC Tracks addressed one of the fastest growing, yet often misunderstood industry categories," said Joe Lamond, president and CEO of NAMM. "I would encourage everyone, regardless of their current role in the industry to become more aware of how our customers will be learning, making, recording and sharing music in the future."

The tech-savvy vibes extended past TEC Tracks and across the show floor as Summer NAMM saw a 23-percent uptick in music technology companies over last year. Many exhibitors showcased their new tech-savvy wares, including Yamaha which highlighted its DTX400 electronic kit. The drum set comes equipped with 10 professional drum kits spanning from heavy metal to dance and boasts built-in training functions that provide users with feedback on their playing.

But the real selling point is the free app players can download to fine tune their kits.

"One thing that sets this drum set apart from any other set in this category is that you can customize sets and customize sounds," said Steven Fisher, manager of Yamaha acoustic and DTX electronic drum division. "The app is what really brings those features out."

On the DJ side, Roland launched its

System-1 Software Synthesizer for its AIRA System-1 synth, while on the guitar side, BOSS introduced its SY-300 guitar synthesizer, which lets musicians play latency-free polyphonic synth sounds with any guitar, with no special pickup needed.

"Back when I was kid, you'd go to the music store and you'd see the analog keyboard that had all the buttons, bells and whistles on it," said Aaron Marino, product and marketing specialist for BOSS and Roland. "You'd hold one button down, and you'd dial [the sound] in and be like 'Oh, this is really cool!' But, then you're like, 'Well I'm not a keyboard player, so I don't have a synthesis option for me.' But now we have that for [guitar players], and it's the SY-300."

Willcox Guitars debuted its HexFX technology — an optical pickup system that features a separate transducer for each string, with no electrical or mechanical crosstalk between strings. This technology is available on both its Saber bass and Atlantis guitar models.

"It brings each individual string output to a 13-pin connector that follows the GK protocol," said Chris Willcox, president of Willcox Guitars. "Either output is good for modeling. It's like a blank slate. The optical pickup system has a totally flat response, so you can do anything you want with it. You can EQ it to make it sound like an acoustic instrument, a full-blown electric or with distortion or overdrive. It's great for modeling." **MI**



NFUZO Audio's John Emrich



Kluson's Dave Lewis

NAMM | RETAIL SUMMIT

STRATEGIES OF RETAILING STARS

The July 9 Breakfast Session, NAMM Retail Summit — Strategies of Top 100 Dealers, featured 2014 NAMM Top 100 category winners as they shared the secrets to their success in one-on-one interviews with NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond.

“I started to wonder if there is something different about the Top 100 [dealers] and what sets them apart, and what sets their businesses apart, from the rest,” Lamond said. “So, we went back and looked for patterns and, today, I thought we’d share the essential guidelines for having a successful business in 2015.”

Here’s what a few of the retailers had to say on what has made their businesses successful:



Sammy Ash, Sam Ash Music, Hicksville, New York

“One way of hunkering down is taking a hard, cold look at your staff. We have a lot of people. We are only as good as our people. An Ash deals with a customer problem. You want to congratulate us? Send me an email. Want to complain? Here’s my phone number.”



Christie & Walter Carter, Carter Vintage Guitars, Nashville, Tennessee

“We had to do things that were free when we first opened. YouTube and Facebook were free. They presented our store as a fun place to be. We didn’t have good equipment either — just a \$500 camera to do product shots — but it gained its own momentum. And now people come in and say, ‘That’s the yellow couch that [mandolin player] Chris Thile was sitting on.’”



Gayle Beacock, Beacock Music, Vancouver, Washington

“I want our business to feel different and special. Every piece is part of the experience. Every single day is an event. Outside we have displays and water bowls for dogs. Inside we’ve got the coffee going. What makes us different is everything that makes us, us.”



Rand & Cindy Cook, Candyman Strings & Things, Santa Fe, New Mexico

“You’ve got to be able to create new customers. If you start with the kids, they’ll be loyal to you and the parents will be loyal to you.”



From left: Mark Goff, Robin Walenta, Joel Menchey, Chris Martin and Joe Lamond.

NAMM WELCOMES MENCHEY, GOFF APPOINTED CHAIR

The NAMM executive committee enjoyed a seamless succession welcoming Joel Menchey and honoring outgoing Chair, Larry Morton, during Summer NAMM.

During his term, Morton presided over a period of membership growth and record-breaking NAMM shows.

Mark Goff, previously NAMM’s vice chair, will move into the role of chair of NAMM’s Board of Directors. Goff also warmly welcomed Menchey to the executive committee as secretary.

Also stepping into new roles are Robin Walenta, of West Music Co., who will serve as NAMM’s vice chair and Chris Martin, chairman and CEO of C.F. Martin & Co., who will become the treasurer.



Boot Camp Lends Better Business Tips

Retailers arrived at Summer NAMM a day early for Retail Boot Camp, NAMM U’s intensive all-day training session. Bob Negen, retail marketing and sales expert, discussed different types of promotions and how to use them effectively, as well as customer-focused sales.

Alan Friedman and Daniel Jobe of CPA firm Friedman, Kannenberg & Co. spoke for the second half of the day about tools to improve back-office operation and the how to take control of cash flow.



Musical Innovations Wins Dealer of the Year

At this year’s NAMM Top 100 Dealer Awards, Musical Innovations of Greenville, South Carolina, took home the “Dealer of the Year” award. Owner Tracy Leenman graciously shared the credit with her team, “All of the credit for this award goes to my staff; they are truly amazing people.”

CMT’s Cody Alan hosted the event. Musical Innovations also received the award for “Best Customer Service.”



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2015 SUMMER BEST IN SHOW >



BEST IN SHOW, Summer NAMM's Saturday morning breakfast session, spotlighted buzzworthy products, services and companies on display at Summer NAMM 2015. On July 11, *Music Inc.* Publisher Frank Alkyer moderated a panel of six retail-buying experts who combed the show floor to find their top picks.

THE PANELISTS



DONOVAN BANKHEAD
SPRINGFIELD MUSIC
Springfield, Missouri



CINDY & RAND COOK
CANDYMAN STRINGS & THINGS
Santa Fe, New Mexico



MIKE GUILLOT
MISSISSIPPI MUSIC
Hattiesburg, Mississippi



TOM MENRATH
VINTAGE KING
Detroit



GABRIEL O'BRIEN
LARRY'S MUSIC
Wooster, Ohio



TIM SPICER
SPICER'S MUSIC
Auburn, Alabama



BEST IN SHOW

TOM MENRATH

Line 6 Helix

"Helix is a whole other ball game. Line 6 has gone to an extraordinary level of modeling amplifiers and creating effects. I really encourage everyone to go spend some time and check it out."



MIKE GUILLOT

NAMM U sessions at the Idea Center and TEC Tracks

"It is so important that you invest in your people educationally, and NAMM puts together all this great training for us."



DONOVAN BANKHEAD

Taylor 600 Series

"They redid the 600 series this year. It's a guitar that sounds nice and full and neat, without being too full and bright."

RAND & CINDY COOK

Martin GPCRSGT Guitar

"[It has a] solid sitka spruce top and a Fishman system in it so we can record with it. I play this guitar, and it sounds beautiful, and it has an incredible price point."



GABRIEL O'BRIEN

Supro 1622RT Amplifier

"It's all Class A and made in the U.S. I'm super excited about it."

TIM SPICER

GaffGun by GaffTech

"Super cool product. Essentially this is the perfect add-on for churches or schools that are using any Gaff tape. When you think about how long it takes to run Gaff tape and run it neatly, this thing is much more professional."



ADD-ON OR ACCESSORY



MIKE GUILLOT
D'Addario PW-TTPW-01 Turbotune Peg Winder
 "The Turbotune is glow-in-the-dark and fits any headstock. You can even put it on a bass."



TIM SPICER
Music Nomad Equipment Care
 "They make great polishes and cleaners, and they smell great, too!"

DONOVAN BANKHEAD
Henry Heller Music
 "Great company, great products."



TOM MENRATH
Pedal-Links Effects Pedal Mounting System
 "This system is something you should stock immediately."

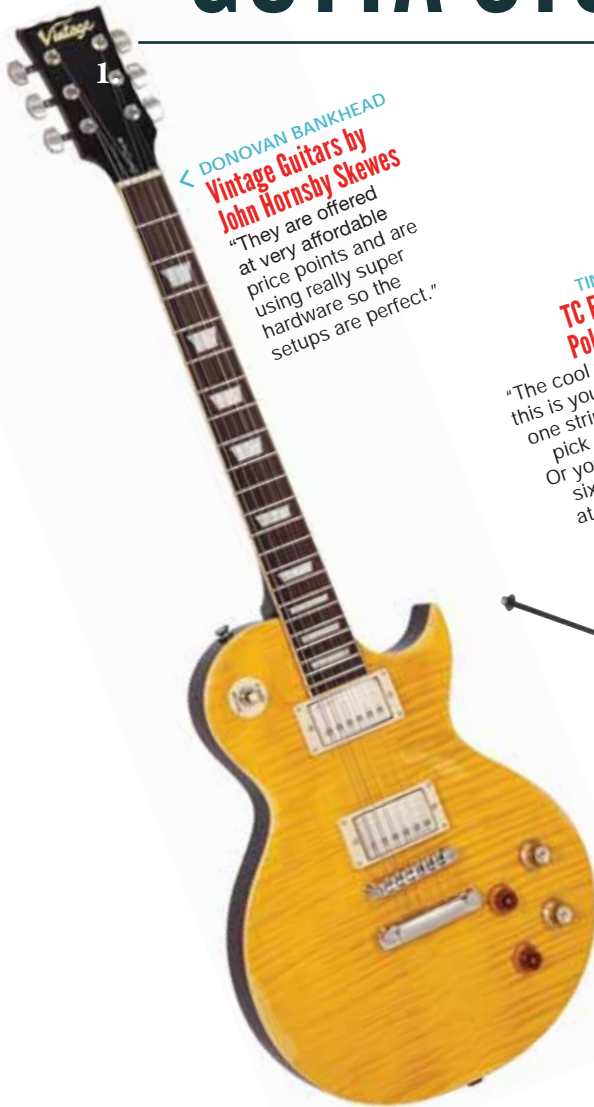


GABRIEL O'BRIEN
CAD Sessions MH510 Headphones
 "These headphones have great isolation and quality."

RAND & CINDY COOK
Neck Illusions Removable Fingerboard Graphics
 "We see how they run their company and their honesty, integrity and drive is second to none. There's quite a buzz going on about that company."



GOTTA STOCK IT



1
 < **DONOVAN BANKHEAD**
Vintage Guitars by John Hornsby Skewes
 "They are offered at very affordable price points and are using really super hardware so the setups are perfect."

TIM SPICER >
TC Electronic PolyTune Clip
 "The cool thing about this is you can hit just one string, and it will pick up one string. Or you can strum all six and tune them at the same time."



< **GABRIEL O'BRIEN**
Recording King RO-T16 guitar
 "The terrified tops on this guitar are broken in so you get a little more vintage flavor, which is fantastic."

RAND & CINDY COOK >
On-Stage 9701TB+ Mic Stand
 "What I love about this is they are completely indestructible. This company has all kinds of cool add-ons for it like drink holders."



< **MIKE GUILLOT**
On-Stage KPK6500 Keyboard Paks
 "Keyboards are back. So who is your customer for this? Everybody. Including the person who bought a used keyboard and didn't get the accessories."



< **TOM MENRATH**
Ace Products Group
 "Ace's accessories are exceptional. They have stands of all kinds, gig bags of all types and cables. I highly recommend them as a one-stop solution."

COMPANIES TO WATCH

EarthQuaker Devices

RAND & CINDY COOK
EarthQuaker Devices

"It's a mom-and-pop company. There is something about the culture in this company that is really appealing to us in the family sense."



TIM SPICER
Greer Amps

"Really cool, very hip company. Pushing the boutique amp and pedal market which are killer sellers in our store."



MIKE GUILLOT
Hal Leonard

"They are some of the most pleasant, professional, progressive people to work with. They are always way ahead of the curve."

Old Master

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▶ COMPANIES TO WATCH >

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"true to the ear"

< TOM MENRATH
Etymotic Research

"Etymotic is very interesting and has been around for a long time. They have been involved in various aspects of hearing and hearing protection."

< GABRIEL O'BRIEN
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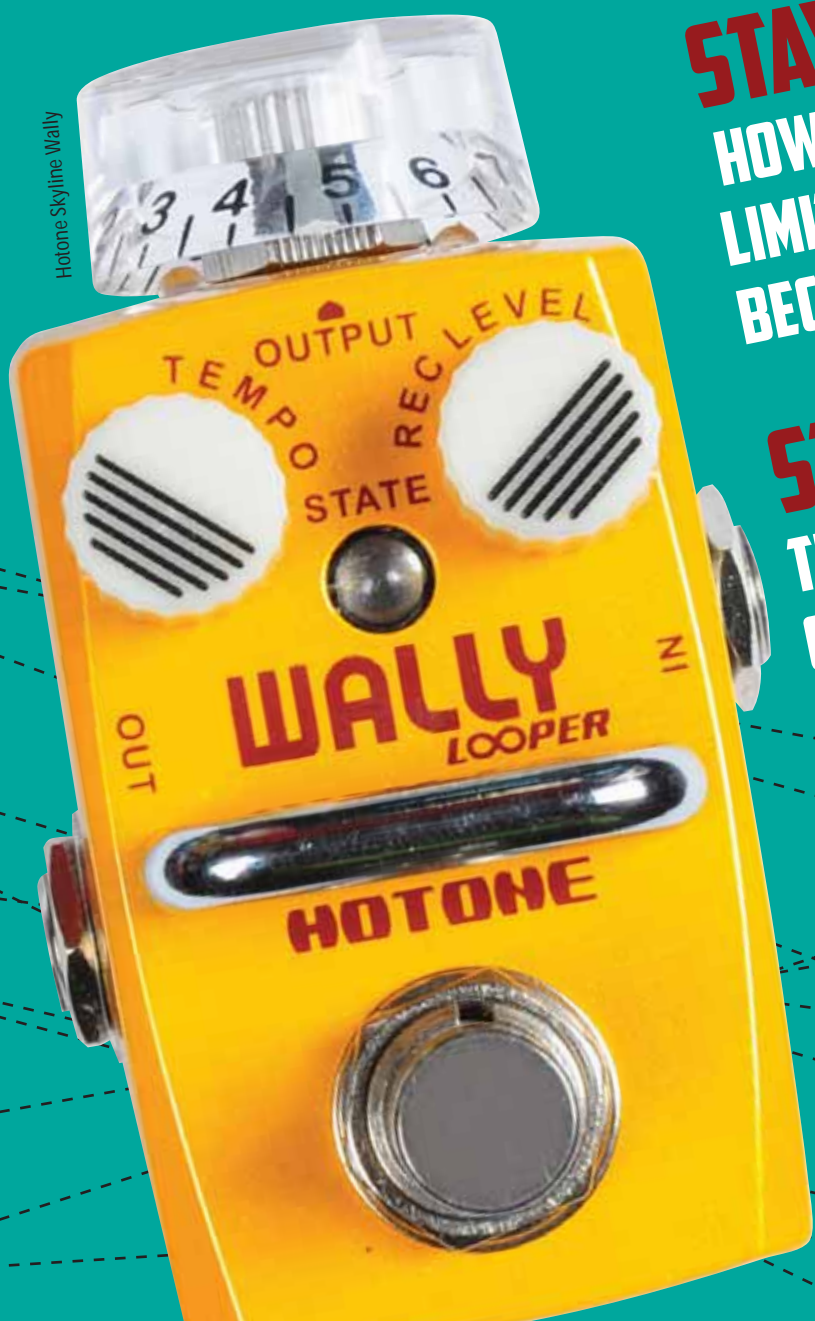
FOCUS:

PEDALBOARD POWER

**A LOOK AT THE ESSENTIAL
ITEMS FOR UPDATING ANY
GUITAR RIG.**

STAYING IN THE LOOP
HOW LOOP PEDALS WITH
LIMITED FUNCTIONALITY HAVE
BECOME THE LATEST CRAZE **152**

STOMPBOX DELIGHTS
THE HOTTEST NEW PEDALS TO
CHECK OUT THIS FALL **158**



Hotone Skyline Wally

STAYING

DigiTech JamMan Vocal XT



Boss RC-1



Tc Electronic Ditto Looper



Electro-Harmonix Nano Looper 360



BY DAVID BALL

IN THE LOOP

WHEN LOOP PEDALS WERE INTRODUCED, IT SEEMED THAT ADDITIONAL FEATURES AND INCREASED FUNCTIONALITY WERE THE NAME OF THE GAME — UNTIL ONE LITTLE PEDAL CAME ALONG AND BROUGHT LOOPING TO A WHOLE NEW RANGE OF MUSICIANS.

Looping has long been a standard technology for musicians looking to layer instrumentation, vocals and other audio without the need for additional personnel. But with the introduction of stripped down loop pedal options in recent years, the simplified versions have inspired an interest among musicians at looping's entry level, broadening the market's consumer base by

introducing the technology to the uninitiated in an easy-to-understand format.

Now, with pedals like TC Group's Ditto Looper, as well as Hotone's Wally, other veteran loop pedal manufacturers, such as BOSS, DigiTech and Electro-Harmonix have introduced their own stripped-down versions for consumers seeking the most basic loop technology, while they continue to innovate higher-end models with increased features and functionality.

Something Simpler

Beginning as digital delay-line rack units in the early '90s, digital loop technology has since been adapted to meet the needs of everyone from live performers on the stage to musicians practicing at home.

"The original JamMan was made by Lexicon, and it was a rack device," said Tom Cram, marketing manager at DigiTech. "Then about seven or eight years ago, DigiTech came out with the JamMan [pedal], and that started us down the path of more pedal-based looping, and we've been building on that ever since. Our focus is phrase-based looping, and that came out of a limitation of delay-based looping. Our customers were asking for a little bit more flexibility. It's just become a lot more like a recording device in a pedal."

Since the early 2000s, digital effects pedal companies like DigiTech and BOSS have been developing loop pedals with more and more recording time, features and increased functionality.



Hotone Skyline Wally

“[BOSS’s first loop pedal, the] RC-20 had five-and-a-half minutes of recording time,” said Gary Lenaire, product and artist relations manager at BOSS. “Today [the] BOSS RC-3, RC-30, RC-300 and RC-505 feature three hours of recording time. External foot switching is now available as well as various input and track effects. Rhythm patterns, USB and MIDI connectivity are included in many BOSS RC loopers. Multiple stereo loop channels and phrase locations are also available.”

But, this year, with the introduction of the RC-1, BOSS scaled back the feature set and recording time on its newest addition, offering its simplest, most straightforward looper to date. Also, within the last few years, DigiTech released its JamMan Express XT, which features a single nob and 10 minutes of recording time without storage; while Electro-Harmonix’s Nano 360 allows only 360 seconds of recording time, with 11 storable loops.

One might ask: Why the sudden change in direction?

“What has changed in the past couple years is, our competition, TC [Group] specifically, came out with the Ditto,” Cram explained, “which was interesting to us, because our customer had been asking for more full-featured loopers.”

Tore Mogensen, business manager at TC-Electronic, broke down the company’s logic behind the development of the Ditto Looper. When TC Group had begun to develop its own loop pedal, “It was really only two companies fighting for that loop market. They kind of cornered themselves into this place where, to make a new version, they had to add more features. So it became kind of feature-bloated at the end, with hours of looping time, 99 presets, drum machines and all that.

“When we [developed] Ditto Looper, one of the first things we did was invite a bunch of guitar players into a studio to just have fun with all the looping pedals that were on the market. That was where we realized that there might be a market for something similar [to the Ditto], because a lot of them struggled with figuring out how the ones that were there at the moment were actually working.”

TARGETING GUITAR PLAYERS

Before the release of the Ditto Looper, loop pedals had been geared toward any musicians seeking foot-controlled phrase looping. In the wake of the Ditto’s success, other pedal manufacturers with digital capabilities have also begun releasing simpler versions of loop pedals aimed specifically at guitar and bass players.

“I think simplicity was a big part of what made Ditto successful,” Mogensen continued. “I think the other part was just kind of narrowing it down and saying: This is not for everybody — this is for guitar players. If you can use it, that’s fine, but we’re going after guitar and bass players, and

making sure the feature sets match [their needs], including true-bypass. [Also,] the design of the pedal — something that looks a little bit more like what guitar players like to have on their pedalboards.”

DigiTech’s Tom Cram agreed: “What [the Ditto’s success] told us is there is a whole host of guitar players out there who we hadn’t been seeing, because we’d been paying attention to all these requests for more features. So, to be honest, it was kind of liberating.

“Going with the more stripped down approach, we were able to put out a couple of loopers in that new category, and those have been selling like hotcakes. So, there’s a whole area of looping that we didn’t even realize was there.”

BOSS’s Gary Lenaire also noted, “There is definite growth in the looper category over the past five years, [and] the number of guitar players and bass players using loopers is growing.”

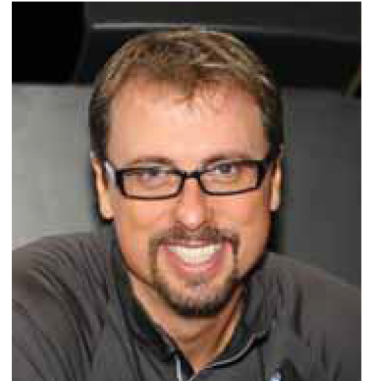
LOOPING SALES

Before the release of simplified loop pedals like the Ditto, the JamMan Express XT or the RC-1, it seems that few guitar and bass players knew where to begin with loop technology. Now, with the release of more straightforward versions, these stripped down pedals can serve as an entry point for those looking to learn the basics of looping, or they can simply be used as a practice tool.

“I think you’re seeing a lot of kids who aren’t in a band, or who are still learning, using [loopers] as a practice tool,” said Gabriel O’Brien, sales manager at Larry’s Music Center in Wooster, Ohio, “or as something to generate their own interest as an exploration tool. It’s not just practice — they’re trying to explore learning how to play lead.”

Compared to loop pedals with higher functionality, basic loop pedals can serve as an affordable gift option for guitar and bass students. Instructors can recommend basic loop pedals to parents as an easy-to-use recording tool, which helps students hear immediate playback, as well as lets students practice single-note lines over their own recorded accompaniment.

Jesse Linton, salesman at Chuck Levin’s Washington Music Center, said, “My big differentiating [factor] when it comes to loopers is whether you can save [loops] or not. A lot of people don’t want to spend the extra money on something that can save. Mostly the students are starting off with that.



BOSS's Gary Lenaire

They want something simple and easy to use.”

For students and players who master the functions of a basic loop pedal, one with higher functionality could then be recommended as a stepup purchase. For those looking for a compact loop pedal with the addition of a signal-in volume knob plus tempo variation, Hotone’s Wally serves as an affordable, compact option. DigiTech JamMan Solo XT allows 35 minutes of storage with 200 internal memories, plus the option of an SDHC card for up to 16 hours of memory. While BOSS’s RC line increases in storage capacity and functionality as model numbers increase.

Regardless of experience level, with the plethora of loop pedal options now available, any player can find one that suits his or her needs and abilities.

“Looping has become as diverse as the musicians using them,” Lenaire concluded. “I see the trends following the musical needs of those artists. Smaller devices are popular with players using compact pedalboards or playing in smaller venues. I think increased functionality is unavoidable and technology will perpetually push that envelope. Features are usually determined by the looping needs of the artist. Guitarists, for example, are commonly interested in single-phrase looping while beatboxers

are attracted to multiple track options. Regardless of the musician’s skill set or the features of the products they use, artists will continue to walk the tight rope of live recording without a safety net in front of interested audiences.” **MI**



Jesse Linton, salesman at Chuck Levin's

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NANO 360 LOOPER



A compact, affordable looper with 360 seconds of recording time and 11 storable loops for maximum control and flexibility. Its user-friendly layout makes recording, overdubbing, undo-redo and erasing quick and easy. High quality audio and unlimited overdubbing with no sound degradation. Equipped with a silent, momentary footswitch. Power supply included.

BADSTONE PHASE SHIFTER

A reincarnation of the highly sought after pedal now in a nano package and faithful to the original circuit design. The Bad Stone was the first phaser to employ variable feedback and features six stages of phase shifting plus a manual mode that lets you freeze the phase. It's full on phaser bliss! 9V battery included.

GOOD VIBES

This hypnotically haunting effect takes you on a trip back to the '60s. Like the original Uni-Vibe®, it uses photocells to create chorus and vibrato with a warm, undulating, liquid groove for a sound and response that's true to the classic design. Boosted power rails provide 21st century definition and headroom, and an expression pedal input puts free-form control for both speed and intensity at your feet. Very groovy! Power supply included.



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FOCUS: PEDALS

EARTHQUAKER DEVICES

TENTACLE

EarthQuaker's Tentacle is a classic analog octave up effect, taken from the Hoof Reaper pedal. Players can now add a swelling octave up to any sound configuration. When paired with a fuzz pedal, the Tentacle releases a classic Jimi Hendrix sound. The Tentacle can also be paired with a second octave up for double the effects, or put into the effects loop of a delay, among other experimental combinations.

{earthquakerdevices.com}



VHT

MELO-VERB

The VHT Melo-Verb is a pedal recreation of the tremolo and reverb effects that were first introduced as built-in amplifier features in the '60s. The two effects sections are completely independent, with separate true-bypass switching. The all-analog tremolo section features classic speed and intensity controls with modern shape and level controls. The reverb section replicates the classic built-in tube-driven spring reverb tone. MSRP: \$199.99.

{vhtamp.com}

BOSS

PW-3

Boss has introduced the PW-3 wah pedal, a space-saving analog pedal with pro wah tones. Featuring a rugged design, practical size and full-bodied sound, the PW-3 is ideal for traveling guitarists and players looking to maximize space on a crowded pedalboard. Plus, the PW-3's "Rich" mode provides a full wah voice that retains the low-end body and definition lost with typical wah circuits.

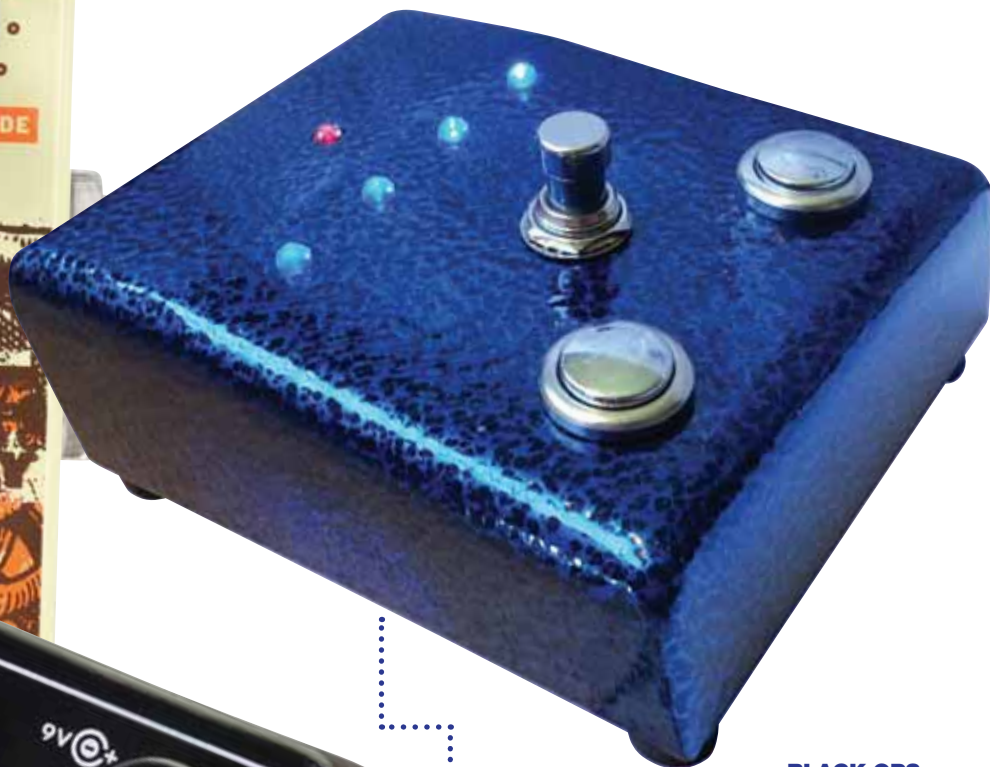
{bossus.com}





**DIGITECH
OBSCURA ALTERED DELAY**

Harman's DigiTech has introduced its Obscura Altered Delay, featuring analog, tape, lo-fi and reverse modes, to re-create the distinctive sonic signatures of early tap-based echo and delay units and all of their aural idiosyncrasies. The Obscura Altered Delay features mono and stereo inputs and outputs, true bypass operation, die-cut hook and loop pad, redesigned Stomplock and a rugged metal chassis. [\[digitech.com\]](http://digitech.com)



**BLACK OPS
PSYCHIC WAH**

The Black Ops Psychic Wah pedal is designed for budding guitarists, intermediate shredders, and professional musicians seeking new way dynamics and the ability to play without pedaling. The Psychic Wah's patented technology produces a wah sound without a rocker pedal, automatically reading the guitarist's playing style and adding the wah where appropriate. The guitarist can also trigger the wah on and off through bending notes. MSRP: \$185. [\[musicmarketup.com\]](http://musicmarketup.com)



**ELECTRO-HARMONIX
THE SILENCER**

EHX has debuted The Silencer, a sophisticated noise gate that responds to the needs of pedalboard users and players whose high gain effects create difficult to control hum and noise. The Silencer's three-control layout provides precise fine-tuning to fit your system, instrument and playing style. MSRP: \$76.80. [\[ehx.com\]](http://ehx.com)



CE DISTRIBUTION

MOD102+

CE Distribution's MOD102+ expands on the original MOD102, with extra "+" features, including a three-position progressive toggle switch for off-standby-power and additional push-pull functionality for each control — pull out the bass control knob for "mid boost," pull out the treble control knob for "bright," pull out the volume control knob for "turbo." [\[modkitsdiy.com\]](http://modkitsdiy.com)

ALFRED

"TEACH YOURSELF TO PLAY BASS"

Alfred's *Teach Yourself to Play Bass* is now available with an accompanying DVD, which features educator Jared Meeker teaching every lesson and performing all of the included songs. Users start by learning all of the basics, from purchasing a bass to reading standard music notation and tablature, then moving on to notes, scales and bass lines. The DVD also features TNT 2 software, letting users slow down tracks, isolate and loop parts, and change tempos and keys. [\[alfred.com\]](http://alfred.com)



DEERING

CLAWGRASS NO. 2

Deering's Clawgrass No. 2 model is fashioned after the signature model created for award-winning banjo player Mark Johnson. The walnut openback Clawgrass No. 2 sports the same inlay pattern and wider neck shape featured in the original, but boasts nickel-plating instead of gold for a more approachable price point. MSRP: \$3,999. [\[deeringbanjos.com\]](http://deeringbanjos.com)





**GUILD
M-140E**

Guild has released the M-140E as part of its Westery Collection, which pays homage to Guild's early history of guitar making. The M-140E features a concert-sized body, solid Sitka spruce top, Indian rosewood fingerboard and bridge and solid African mahogany back and sides. The M-140E also includes a Fishman Sonitone pickup, mother-of-pearl inlays, plus a NuBone nut and saddle. [\[guild.com\]](http://guild.com)

**MARTIN
CS-D41-15**

Martin has released the CS-D41-15, a 14-fret, non-cutaway dreadnought, featuring a Sitka spruce top, East Indian rosewood back and sides, which showcase a unique rib-bon inlay of cocobolo and flamed mahogany. The CS-D41-15 also features flamed mahogany binding and Martin's Vintage Tone System (VTS). MSRP: \$8,999. [\[martinguitar.com\]](http://martinguitar.com)



**SEYMOUR
DUNCAN
ALPHA &
OMEGA PICKUPS**

Seymour Duncan's Alpha and Omega have been created to match the precise and versatile playing styles of Periphery guitarist Mark Holcomb. The Omega bridge pickup provides percussive and growl in the mids and low end, while the Alpha neck pickup has been voiced to combine the best qualities of a neck and a bridge pickup, retaining a "fat, glassy" sound. [\[seymourduncan.com\]](http://seymourduncan.com)

**EPIFANI
PICCOLO 999**

Epifani's Piccolo 999 is a small yet powerful micro bass amplifier that features the clarity of Epifani's UL series preamps, plus the power and precision necessary to drive multiple stacks of speakers. The Piccolo 999's "Vintage" circuit adds a warm, tube-like 1960s tone to the overall output. The proprietary Class D amp makes the Piccolo 999 a full-sounding yet lightweight amp. [\[epifani.com\]](http://epifani.com)



CAD

CADLIVE MICS

CAD Audio has expanded its CADLive line with three new vocal and instrument microphones. The D32 is a supercardioid dynamic handheld vocal mic with a QuietTouch on/off switch. The D38 includes a high performance neodymium capsule for clear and articulate sound quality. The D89 is a supercardioid dynamic instrument mic designed to produce powerful, articulate response in live sound miking situations, and is equipped with a Trueflex diaphragm and PowerGap high gauss neodymium magnets.

{cadaudio.com}



BOSE

F1 MODEL 812

Bose's F1 Model 812 Flexible Array Loudspeaker is a powered portable loudspeaker that lets users optimize sound by creating up to four different vertical coverage patterns. Engineered with an array of eight Bose proprietary 2 1/4-inch drivers, 100-degree horizontal waveguides, a high-powered 12-inch woofer and a lower crossover point, the F1 Model 812 loudspeaker delivers high SPL performance while maintaining vocal and midrange clarity.

{pro.bose.com}



PRESONUS

DIGIMAX DP88

The PreSonus DigiMax DP88 8-channel mic preamp and A/D/A converter combines eight remote-controllable, high-headroom mic preamps with advanced remote control features, connectivity and integration with the Studio 192 audio interface. The newest member of the DigiMax series, the 24-bit 96 kHz DP88 features eight XMAX Class A preamps and Burr-Brown A/D/A converters with 118 decibels of dynamic range.

{presonus.com}





**BLUE
BOTTLE ROCKET MIC LOCKER**

Blue has debuted the Bottle Rocket Mic Locker, a system featuring the Bottle Rocket Stage One solid state condenser microphone, along with four of Blue's interchangeable classic capsules, housed in a custom-designed SKB hardshell case. Each of the four capsules are hot-swappable, making the process of auditioning mics faster and easier. MSRP: \$1,699.99.

{bluemic.com}

**AURALEX
GRAMMA V2**

Auralex has upgraded its GRAMMA line of acoustic isolation platforms. The GRAMMA V2 isolation platforms feature an Ozite covering over an inert structural layer that floats on a 1-inch pad. V2 upgrades include a lower profile for increased stability, better mid- and low-frequency definition and an easy-to-grab handle.

{auralex.com}



SABIAN PARAGON R40

To commemorate Rush's R40 tour, Sabian has announced four new Paragon models, including 17-, 19- and 22-inch crashes. In addition, the 15-inch Paragon hi-hats fill a need for drummers seeking larger hats. Paragon Crashes are medium weight models with large bells to boost volume, with a combination of wide-groove and pinpoint lathing for increased brightness.

{sabian.com}



YAMAHA MARCHING SNARE MOUNTS

Yamaha has introduced two marching snare mounts, the MSA-900 accessory mount and the MSCH-900 cymbal mount. Designed to attach on the side of modern high-tension marching snare drums, the mounts offer more stability than those that fasten to the rim of the drum because they affix to the high-tension tuning rods and provide a strong, durable fastener for percussion instruments.

{usa.yamaha.com}

PROMARK ACTIVE WAVE 570

Wilco's Glenn Kotche and Promark have collaborated to create the Active Wave 570, which features ActiveGrip — a heat-activated grip coating that gets tackier when a player's hands heat up and start to sweat. The Active Wave 570 also features Promark's WaveHandle, a contoured handle that provides additional grip and a comfortable place for all fingers.

{promark.com}

REMO POWERSTROKE 77

Remo's Powerstroke 77 drum-head consists of two free-floating plies of 7-mil film with a 7-mil inlay ring and a 5-mil top clear dot. This combination give the Powerstroke 77 enhanced response and projection, combined with warm, full tones. The inlay ring reduces overtones, and the 5-mil top clear dot adds durability. It is available in 10-, 12-, 13- and 14-inch sizes.

{remo.com}



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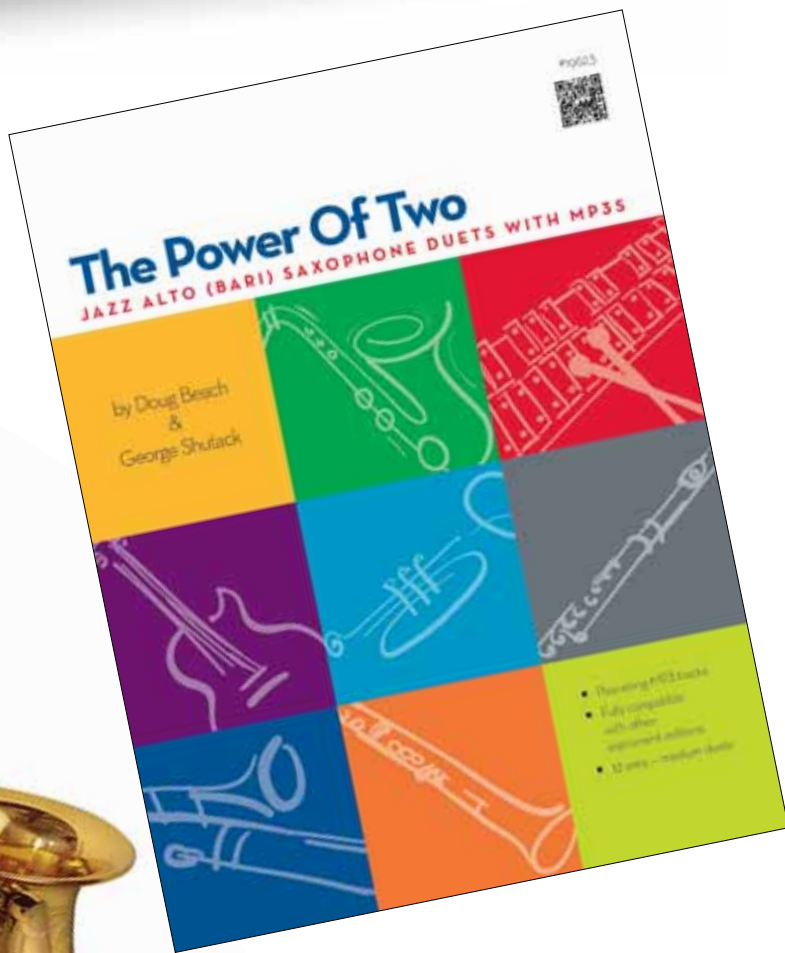
{daddario.com}



P. MAURIAT MASTER SERIES 97A

P. Mauriat has released the Master Series 97A alto saxophone — a horn designed for both professional classical musicians as well as commercial. The Master-97A alto saxophone features two sterling silver octave pipes that add an element of denseness and warmth, along with the shimmer of a yellow brass body, bow and bell. The Master-97A features premium Pisoni pro 105 pads for a great tactile experience, and nylon resonators to improve tone.

{pmauriatmusic.com}



KENDOR "POWER OF TWO"

Kendor has released *The Power of Two* by Doug Beach and George Shutack. This series of 12 easy-medium level jazz duets can all be performed with the accompanying rhythm section MP3 tracks, with parts fully interchangeable among various instrument editions, making these books ideal for lesson groups. The book also features four downloadable MP3 tracks for each duet allowing an individual to play either duet part while the MP3 plays the other.

{kendormusic.com}

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YAMAHA
CVP-700 SERIES

Yamaha has introduced the Clavinova CVP-700 series, a powerful, versatile new lineup of digital pianos featuring Yamaha's Real Grand Expression sound engine. The CVP series also features the sampled sounds of two concert grand pianos, the Yamaha CFX and the Bösendorfer Imperial, plus an expanded Piano Room, letting players select piano types and playing location settings.

yamaha.com



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HAL LEONARD
"BLUES KEYBOARD METHOD"

Hal Leonard has debuted its first self-branded stylistic keyboard method — the *Hal Leonard Blues Keyboard Method*. Written by Marty Sammon, keyboardist and musical director for Buddy Guy, this method book is designed for musicians with some basic piano chops who are looking to further explore playing the blues. This comprehensive guide focuses on teaching the essentials of the style, with lots of licks to play and absorb.

{halleonard.com}



CASIO
PX-160

Casio has introduced the latest addition to its Privia line of digital pianos — the PX-160. As the successor to the Privia PX-150, this 88-key digital piano includes a dual 8-watt speaker system and comes equipped with AiR technology, which features the sound of a 9-foot grand piano at four dynamic levels. In addition, the PX-160 uses Casio's Tri-Sensor Scaled Hammer Action II keyboard.

{casiomusicgear.com}



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{numark.com}



MONO EFX SERIES

The MONO EFX series mobile studio luggage collection is designed to meet the travel and performance needs of musicians, DJs, techs, producers and engineers. Each item in the EFX series collection of backpacks and handbags features 360-degree protection, built-to-last construction, riveted handles and shoulder straps, and weather-proof materials.

{monocreators.com}



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Adam Levin

Chuck Levin's Washington
Music Center
Wheaton, Maryland

We do some inside sales contests to get [employees] excited — like whoever can sell the most [of an item] gets a prize or a gift card. We do a decorating contest, where whoever can decorate their department best for the holidays gets a prize. We try to keep the atmosphere exciting and fun because that's kind of what the quarter is about. Black Friday starts in September now, so we try to maintain that level of excitement throughout the entire quarter.

We do load up, to make sure we don't run out [of product] during the holidays — smartly, though — we don't just order mountains of things.

We have a new website this year. It'll be our second holiday with this website. That's going to be a whole other channel of marketing and sales, and it's a whole new ball game for us. Last year, we launched our new website right before the holidays. Now that we've actually had a year under our belts with this thing, we expect this holiday season to double over what we did last year online.



Gabriel O'Brien

Larry's Music Center
Wooster, Ohio

One of the big things we've been doing [with the staff] the last few years is doing 15-minute product knowledge drills. [For example], I'm a guitar player, but I don't play bass. We'll take our bass guys and have them teach us about different things in the store, so then we have enough information handy so that if the bass guy is not here we don't go, "Oh you'd have to talk to the other guy." Everybody needs to know enough to answer more than basic questions.

The big thing about Q4 for us is you're not competing against other music stores — you're competing against everyone in the entire world. People who come here very often have already price checked [online marketplaces] and already know what the lowest price is. You can't stand there and say, "Well gosh, we have service," and then expect them to buy things from you. You've got to be prepared to compete as well.



Shane Kinney

Drum Center of Portsmouth
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

How do you get ready for the Q4 sales season?

Very carefully. We're in an interesting position because we're still growing, so it's a challenge every year to get it right. Basically, we're just putting our systems in place with new staff, and we're trying to make a template to prepare for being able to fulfill everything. That's my main concern: I want to fulfill everything and find opportunities for things to fulfill.

It's like any other time of the year, it's just times three. I have [hired more staff]. What we're doing right now is just creating as many templates as we can in terms of processes. For instance, we are writing out every process, from

order processing to fulfillment. And we're trying to make it as error-free as possible. The three processes are: We want them to be able to fulfill everything, and then once we get that down, we need them to know the product, and then we need to make sure the customer has a better experience than they'd expected. That's really difficult when you do it on a macro scale, when you try to do it on different sales channels and then in store.

For the fourth quarter, we order a lot of drum sets all at once. That way we can have one day of sweating it out and getting it off the truck and putting it in

the warehouse, and then we'll sell through it for the remainder of the year. The rest of the stuff we can order in on an as-needed basis. We keep a very large stock year round, but it gets amplified around this time.

[Changing store displays] is something we do routinely, but for the fourth quarter we haven't really decided what the real push will be, but it will likely be drum sets.

We put a focus on what we think we're going to sell the most of. So when we have our entry level drum sets and midrange drum sets, we make sure that those are very prominent. **MI**

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A photograph of three black Samson RSX Active Series loudspeakers. One is a smaller, cube-shaped top horn speaker mounted on a stand. Below it are two larger, rectangular 2-way active speakers. The speakers are positioned on a wooden surface against a warm, golden-brown background. The text 'RSX ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKERS' is printed in white in the upper right corner.

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