

music inc



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➔ **RETAIL**
RAY'S MIDBELL MUSIC FINDS
SUCCESS WITH A STRONG FOCUS
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James Harding

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY KATIE KAILUS

DESIGNING VIBES

While running errands at the mall the other day I noticed a pattern in the retailers' showrooms I was stopping at: they all have their own unique vibe. The Apple Store boasts a minimalistic, tech feel with its sparse product displays and spacious showroom. Nordstrom is great at creating synergy throughout its different departments.

And then there's Anthropologie, a speciality housewares and clothing retailer. There's something about this store that draws you in regardless of whether you're in the market for a crochet shower curtain or not. Maybe it's the bright displays. Maybe it's the boutique vibe — although, headquartered

in Philadelphia and currently operating 189 stores worldwide, Anthropologie is anything but boutique. Nevertheless, rustic wood flooring, burning incense and artistic window displays suggest otherwise.

Adding to that feel is the retailer's unique way of merchandising. Instead of placing products on ordinary stocking shelves, Anthropologie showcases its selections on antique wood tables and mirrored counters — many of which are for sale — interspersing kitchen items with clothing. Glassware and dishes are displayed in old, antique cupboards. Similar to the Apple Store, Anthropologie's showroom provides customers with more than just a place to shop — it offers an experience.

MI retailers like The Music Zoo in Roslyn, New York, do the same for their customers.

With corrugated metal backing on the electric guitar wall and glass doors on the stock room, The Music Zoo offers shoppers a truly unique vibe.

In this month's Ask the Retailer, page 66, Tommy Coletti, owner of The Music Zoo, explains the importance of unique store displays.

"When you walk into an Apple store or walk into an Urban Outfitters or any of the proactive modern retailers, they're doing things differently, and they're finding more inventive ways to display products," he said, adding that retailers should think outside the box when designing and merchandising their stores. "Don't walk into another guitar store when you're designing your store. Walk into a different retailer and see who's doing things differently. It's about the consumer."

With an extra focus on store design in this month's issue, we have included walk-throughs of both Ray's Midbell Music in Sioux City, Iowa, (page 36) and Guitar Center in Westlake Village, California (page 40). Both retailers have put extensive thought into the design and merchandising of their showrooms.

Check out these retailers and get some inspiration for your showroom. Create an experience for your customers. Take Coletti's advice and shop the mall to see what other retailers outside the industry are doing. But, if you're looking for some design concepts featuring rad guitars and DJ setups, we've got ya covered. **MI**



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LETTERS

Past & Present

Thank you to Dick Weissman, for the story on Pacific Winds Music [in the September 2015 issue of *Music Inc.*]. He was in our store long ago for an article he wrote, and again just recently, and enjoyed seeing how the store has evolved. We started in band instrument sales, repair, and school music support and continue with that work. Our ukuleles are a fun addition and appeal to first-time players, as well as band and orchestra players.

Thanks to all our loyal manufacturing partners, Yamaha, Pearl, Conn-Selmer, Kala, Ohana, Kamaka, Kanile'a, Breedlove, Kamao, Flea Market Music, Takumi; publishers Hal Leonard, Alfred, Mel Bay, and our many suppliers, including KMC, Harris Teller, St. Louis Music, American Way and Chesbro. Thanks to all our employees, past and present, who have given us and continue to give us their hard work and commitment. We appreciate all the visiting ukulele artists who give workshops and mini-concerts in our store.

Patricia Knau
Owner
Pacific Winds
Eugene, Oregon

New Ways to Partner

Music Inc., thank you for taking the time and featuring me in the [August 2015 issue's] "From The Top" column. My team at Korg USA is a major part of who I am, and I am proud to have a group filled with dedicated, passionate people who are among the best in the industry.

After being at Summer NAMM 2015, it's great to see the enthusiasm for the MI industry is thriving. While certainly a more laid back show than winter NAMM, the energy was electric and the conversations inspiring!



Korg USA is always creating new ways to partner with retailers. We are willing to explore any methodology, any philosophy, any program, any idea overall that could lead to healthy growth. If you want to be progressive and enhance the customer's experience, our door is open to new partnerships.

Joe Castronovo
President & CEO
Korg USA
Melville, New York

Made in America

Thank you so much for writing a feature about Kyser Musical Products' continuing to make guitar accessories right here in the United States [in the August 2015 issue]. In the realm of musical accessories, the location of product manufacturing is often overlooked or simply assumed to be somewhere in Asia.

For larger-priced items, like guitars, though, the place of manufacturing usually indicates much more: quality, sound, craftsmanship and even tone. For example, let's think about an American-made "big name guitar company" and a similar Indonesian-made "big name guitar company." Which guitar do you think would sound better? Which would have more value over time? Which do you think would have better craftsmanship? Yep, the American-made guitar.

Here at Kyser, we feel the exact same about accessories like capos, humidifiers, straps and care products. Would you put a plastic capo that was made in China on your high-dollar American-made guitar, or would you rather use a handcrafted aluminum American-made capo that has a lifetime

guarantee? We certainly hope the latter.

To further build upon Milton Kyser's legacy, we are fanatically passionate about the quality and craftsmanship of our products. Thank you to *Music Inc.* for noticing, and also for continuing to publish fascinating and informative reports on this exciting industry each and every month.

Max Lintner
Executive Manager of
Business Development
Kyser Music Products
Canton, Texas

Relationships Make Sales

I am fairly new to the MI business, so I try to read all of the magazine articles that I can find to get me up to date with the industry. [Gerson Rosenbloom's] article in [the June 2015 issue of] *Music Inc.* really struck a chord with me. I feel like as we get older we realize how much meaning our words really carry. Building relationships comes down to how we speak with others, and relationships makes sales.

I just wanted to reach out to [Rosenbloom] and say, "Good article."

Justin Grizzle
General Manager
Gold Tone, Inc.
Titusville, Florida

Correction:

In the Gear section of the August 2015 issue, *Music Inc.* included a product listed as the "Yamaha DTX502." The name of the product should have read "Yamaha DTX502 Hybrid Packs." *Music Inc.* regrets the error.

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RETAIL

RICE MUSIC HOUSE | BY JOHN JANOWIAK

STORIED RETAILER

This year marks a dual milestone for Rice Music House of Columbia, South Carolina. Not only has the retailer been in business for 91 years; it has also served as a Steinway dealer for 80, making it the oldest Steinway dealer in the Southeast.

An event will be held on Sept. 19 to celebrate both anniversaries and will feature performance by John Kenneth Adams, professor emeritus from the University of South Carolina.

Great performances are a long tradition at Rice Music House. The company was founded in 1924 by W.S. Rice and later taken over by his son, Emmett.

“He’s the one who really made this company into what it became,” said Jyotindra “J.P.” Parekh, the company’s owner and president since 2004. Emmett Rice is still remembered as a tireless promoter who believed in selling music and music education.

“Everybody from all over the state came to the place because of Emmett Rice’s reputation and his quality services and his promotional activities,” Parekh added.

Robert Schaeffer, the company’s vice president and director of sales, knew Emmett Rice well.

“The first time I came into



From left: Robert Schaeffer, Mary Parekh and Jyotindra “J.P.” Parekh.

Rice Music House, I was seven years old,” he said. “I came in with my mom and dad to get my very first piano. For years, growing up, I was in and out of that store as we traded up from my little starter spinet piano all the way up to an eventual grand piano.”

When Schaeffer finished his undergraduate work, he approached Rice about working for the company as a salesman. Rice told him he only hired men for his sales floor, and you’re not really a man until you’re 35. As strange as that sounded at the time, it proved to be rather prophetic.

“I came to work for the company when I was 34,” Schaeffer said. “I’ve been a part of the company now for 17 years.”

After Rice died in 1988, two

longtime employees — Tommy Gamble and A.J. Connor — bought the company, with Connor serving as president. When Connor died in 2001, Gamble took over, and when he was ready to retire, he sold it to Parekh. A veteran of the piano industry, Parekh was working for Jordan Kitt’s Music in Atlanta when they sent him to scout possible new locations in the Southeast. He took a liking to Rice Music House and Columbia in general, and when Kitt’s passed on it, he bought it himself.

LONG-STANDING TRADITION

Parekh has continued a tradition of value and integrity that is the key to the company’s longevity, in Schaeffer’s view.

“I think the biggest similar-

ity between all the generations of ownership of the company is the commitment to providing the very best selection of quality products, backing them with unquestionable service, and providing it all at a price that is a great bargain.”

A well-seasoned staff helps, too. Besides Schaeffer, technician Russel Osborne joined the store in 2001; delivery man Felix Jeter joined in the early ’90s and Larry Cornish, also a delivery man, has a tenure that goes back to Emmett Rice’s era more than 30 years ago.

Like most piano retailers, the company suffered from the recent recession, but it has seen modest sales increases of 5-7 percent in the past few years. A persistent email and social networking strategy helped them weather the storm, as has Parekh’s passion for the industry.

“I don’t say it just because he’s my husband, but he’s very innovative and imaginative about what he does,” said Mary Parekh, who serves as liaison with teachers and teacher associations. “He’s always working on some idea, some promotion, some new way to present the piano in music, some other way to become involved with the teachers, the students, the community. I think it’s paid off.” **MI**



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From left: Jojo Mayer, Benny Greb, Dave Weckl, Steve Smith and Mike Mangini at Martyrs'.



Student Blake Cooper (left) with Dave Weckl (right).

Photo Credit: Corey Dewald

VIC'S DRUM SHOP | EVENT

VIC'S DRUM SHOP HOSTS DRUM FANTASY CAMP

Vic's Drum Shop in Chicago hosted Drum Fantasy Camp from August 7-11. The roster of teachers included Benny Greb, Mike Mangini (Dream Theater), Jojo Mayer, Steve Smith (Journey, Vital Information), and Dave Weckl (Chick Corea, Mike Stern, Oz Noy). Each instructor taught a small group of students every day in an intimate classroom setting. This year, 65 campers from 16 countries participated.

All five Drum Fantasy Camp instructors performed two special gigs at Martyrs', a popular local venue, with an all-star band — James Genus (bass), Vinny Valentino (guitar), Chrissi Poland (vocals) and Stu Mindeman (keyboards). There also were three nightly jam sessions at Vic's in which each one of the campers was invited to sit in and perform with the all-star band. Each instructor got to sit in as well to join in on the fun.

"I was thrilled to be able to host such an auspicious event," said Vic Salazaar, owner of Vic's Drum Shop. "The five world class instructors are among the greatest drummers on the planet

today. I'm honored to have personal friendships with each one of them. I was also pleased to introduce Vic's to the Drum Fantasy Camp students who have never had the opportunity to visit us. Overall, it was a wonderful five days of education, inspiration, entertainment and camaraderie for everyone involved."



From Left: Steve Orkin, Jojo Mayer, Steve Smith, Salazaar, Mike Mangini and Benny Greb.

Photo Credit: Corey Dewald

GUITAR CENTER | LEGAL

GC Accused of Violating Federal Labor Law

Guitar Center has been accused of violating federal labor law by "discriminating against employees" at its flagship stores in Chicago, New York and Las Vegas, the *Chicago Tribune* is reporting.

GC is also accused of failing to bargain in "good faith" with the workers' union. A complaint was issued last week by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

According to the *Tribune*, the NLRB's general counsel is seeking an order requiring the company to bargain in good faith and reimburse the union for its costs and expenses since July 2013.

"This is vindication of what we have been saying, that Guitar Center crossed the line," Union President Stuart Appelbaum told the *Chicago Tribune*.

Since 2013, GC has been in contract negotiations with the union. Last year, GC withdrew its recognition of the union, ending talks with Las Vegas and New York. The union continues to negotiate on behalf of workers in Chicago. These negotiations could affect a total of 120 workers at the three locations. A hearing is set for October 19.

WILLIS MUSIC | ANNIVERSARY

Willis Music & Hal Leonard Celebrate 10 Years of Partnership

To commemorate the decade-long publishing and distribution partnership, Larry Morton, president of Hal Leonard and David Jahnke, HL's VP of National Sales, presented Willis Music President Kevin Cranley with a plaque at Summer NAMM.

Since July 2005, Hal Leonard has had exclusive long-term publishing and distribution rights, responsible for the sales and marketing of the Willis Music catalog in the Americas and beyond.

During that time, Hal Leonard has used its catalog of popular songs and editorial talent to expand the Willis catalog, creating a large library of publications that correspond to the various levels of the Willis piano methods. The territory covered in the agreement was also expanded to include a deal with Hal Leonard Australia.

"Anyone who's taken piano lessons has likely used a Willis publication," Morton said. "The Thompson and Burnam books are a trusted institution with piano teachers around the world, and continue to be market-leading methods today.

"We're happy to celebrate 10 years of offering these mainstays, and proud of all of the new supplementary songbooks we have jointly created. Willis has been an outstanding partner, and we look forward to many more years together."

"Hal Leonard has impressed us since the beginning," said Cranley, "and the many successes of the past decade have proven that our catalog is in outstanding

hands. Thanks to their excellent editorial and savvy sales and marketing, our publications reach more teachers, students and music retailers than ever before, through

clinics, mailings, catalogs and social media. The Hal Leonard team continues to be the most passionate and forward-thinking group in the music business today."



Hal Leonard's David Jahnke (left) and Larry Morton (right) present Willis Music President Kevin Cranley with a commemorative plaque at Summer NAMM.

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Anselmo "Sam" Falcetti rehearsing with his New England Digital Accordion Orchestra.

FALCETTI MUSIC | EVENT

FALCETTI CONDUCTS NEW ENGLAND DIGITAL ACCORDION ORCHESTRA

On August 1, Anselmo "Sam" Falcetti, founder of Falcetti Music and conductor of the New England Digital Accordion Orchestra, performed with his orchestra to open for the Deana Martin Show with special guest artist Bobby Rydell at the 90th annual Enfield Italian Festival in Enfield, Connecticut.

The orchestra is the first United States Digital Accordion Orchestra, with over 20

members from throughout New England, and features Roland V accordions.

Falcetti started on the accordion at age 10 and began teaching lessons at 16. Before graduating from the University of Hartford with a degree in theory and composition, he opened his first accordion studio in Westfield, Massachusetts. During his career as conductor, he has toured with the Springfield Accordion Orchestra in Japan, Italy,

New Zealand and the United States, and has conducted his Westfield State University Accordion Ensemble for performances at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

"Even though I retired from Falcetti Music in January of 2008 it didn't last very long," Falcetti said. "I was never just a CEO and founder of my company, but also managed to find time for many other endeavors in music."

MOORE MUSIC CO. | CLOSING

Moore Music Co. Closes After 31 Years

Jack Moore, longtime Adams Central High School band director reported the closing of his store, Moore Music Co., on August 31.

Opened in July 1984 in Hastings, Nebraska, Moore Music Co. was the go-to band equipment and supply store in the area for more than three decades. Moore purchased the Molzer Music businesses in Grand Island and Lincoln and relocated the new store to Hastings after following a 15-year run at Adams Central as band director.

Moore told *The Hastings Tribune* he enjoyed his many encounters with band directors and administrators across Nebraska, many of whom have become good friends, and in some instances went above and beyond.

"If the directors needed something, they'd say, 'Jack will do it for us.' I fell good about that. I wanted to help them. I remember going up to the interstate at six in the morning with a pair of shoes because somebody forgot theirs and was going to a parade in Kearney. Would everybody do that? I don't think a lot would, but I did. That's why I got into it."

Moore said he would entertain offers from would-be buyers interested in keeping a band store presence alive in Hastings.

"This will be the first they've been without a music store for an awful long time," he said. "It's going to be different for Hastings unless somebody comes in and puts in a music store."



Jack Moore

Photo Credit: John Huthmacher, The Hastings Tribune

JT'S MUSIC STORE | OPENING

Longtime Musician Opens Store in Clovis, California

Jeff Taylor, a longtime local musician in Clovis, California, near Fresno, hosted the grand opening of JT's Music Store in downtown Clovis on July 18, with about 100 people in attendance.

Taylor, whose other job as a senior operator of a hydroelectric power plant for the past 32 years has

prevented him from playing music regularly, decided to open a music store as a means of keeping his life-long passion as a part of his life.

JT's Music Store carries "everything that a guitarist needs," he told the *Fresno Bee* — from guitars, amps and accessories, as well as percussion items.

The store will also offer lessons with guitar tutor Jim Hampton, who will teach beginning and advanced guitar in-store.



DUNKLEY MUSIC | MOVING

Dunkley Music Moves to Meridian, Idaho

Dunkley Music closed its Capitol Boulevard location in downtown Boise, Idaho, on August 1 and moved the store to Meridian.

The new location at 3410 N. Eagle Road opened on August 10.

Dunkley Music was first opened in Boise by William K. Dunkley in 1950 and had been in its Capitol Boulevard location since 1961. Dunkley Music also has stores in Nampa and Twin Falls, Idaho.

Mark Dunkley, who has owned the store since 1982, told the *Idaho Statesman* he had "mixed emotions" about the move. "It will be a little hard not to come down this way," he said. "There are some things I'll miss about downtown, and there's a few things I won't miss."

Dunkley sold the Capitol Boulevard store to the development company Pennbridge Capital, which plans to build a 10-story hotel on the site.

At about 20,000 square feet, Dunkley said the new store will be about 1,000 square feet larger than the old store. The main reason for the move was increasing from 35 parking spaces to about 90, which will ease demand during evening recitals.



Steve "Woz" Wozniak
Apple Co-Founder

2015 NAMM U Breakfast Session
on innovation, the creative process
and entrepreneurship with
NAMM President/CEO Joe Lamond



Note From Zach

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Grow Your Business in Q4

Here's a simple way to grow your business and recoup your travel costs to Anaheim next January: take advantage of NAMM U.

NAMM's educational programs will arm you with business-building ideas you can use right away, whether you're a veteran store owner, seasoned manager or first-time salesperson. NAMM U isn't theoretical. It delivers proven tactics and strategies straight from your music retail peers—ideas they've used to succeed in the hypercompetitive marketplace. And in January, NAMM U will offer more than 45 sessions at The NAMM Show to help you take your business to the next level.

In the meantime, we know you have a holiday season to prepare for. So, we've tapped into another educational resource, NAMM U Online (namm.org/nammu), to bring you ideas to drive traffic and engage customers in the critical fourth quarter. Here are a few highlights from successful retailers around the music products industry:

Start Early

Beginning in September, Larry's Music Center of Wooster, Ohio, offers free layaway until Christmas. If customers opt to use weekly automatic billing, Larry's covers the last payment. "Many people will take advantage of being able to pay a little at a time," said Gabriel O'Brien, the store's sales manager. "Others will pay in full and get the discount. Either way, you win." Likewise, Larry's Music Center makes a pre-emptive strike on Black Friday by hosting sales every Friday throughout the month of November.

Spread Holiday Cheer

NAMM's 2015 Dealer of the Year, Tracy Leenman of Musical Innovations in Greenville, S.C., holds Piccolo Christmas. Flutists wear Santa hats and perform holiday music at the local mall. "You

could do a similar annual event with a guitar ensemble, a Suzuki group, a New Horizons Band or even your in-store students. Performing downtown, in a mall or at another public venue will give you high visibility at a time when people are out to buy and willing to spend." She promotes her store with a sign, hands out fliers for her lesson program and invites people walking by to sing along.

Get Social

Mike and Miriam Risko of Mike Risko Music in Ossining, N.Y., use bad winter weather as an opportunity to connect with students and parents involved in the store's lesson program. "When the power goes out, kids can't watch TV, but they can practice acoustic guitar, piano and other acoustic instruments. Have parents email you photos of their kids (or themselves) practicing from their mobile devices. Post the first five photos on your store's Facebook page, and give those people prizes. This makes practicing interactive and fun and helps you make a connection with your students outside of their weekly lessons." This promotion could be adapted to milder climates, too. The point is to use social media contests to engage students.

You'll find hundreds of more smart ideas at NAMM U Online, namm.org/nammu, and in *Playback* magazine. That said, there's no replacement for a live NAMM Show. In Anaheim this January, you'll hear firsthand how the industry's best and brightest thrive. If you haven't booked your hotel and travel, do so now. This is your show, and your education program. See you there!

Zach Phillips
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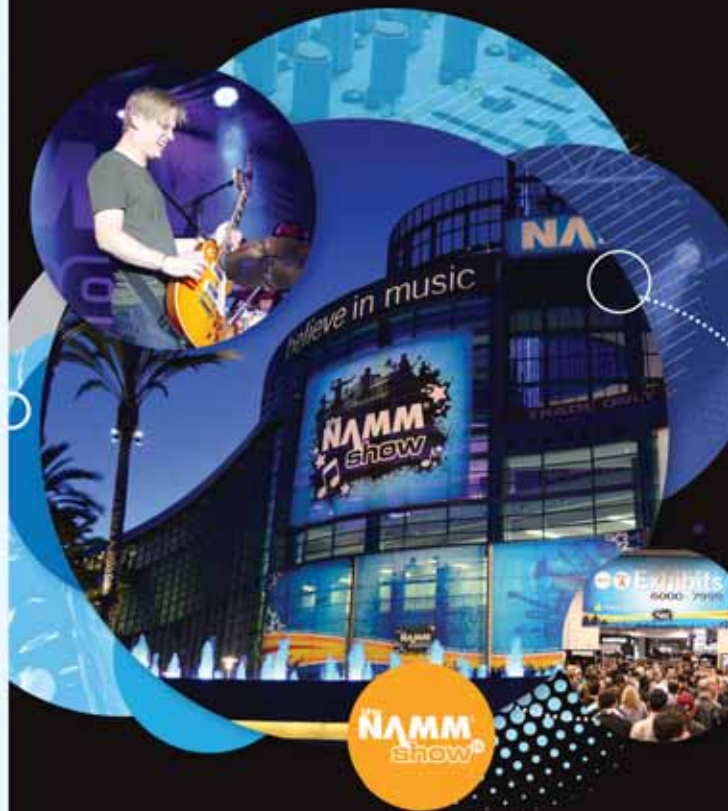
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SUPPLY

WILLCOX GUITARS | BY DAVID BALL

LIGHTWAVES AHEAD

Chances are, if you play an electric guitar through an amplifier, that sound is generated by a magnetic pickup. But in the late 1980s, Chris Willcox, president and founder of Lightwave Systems and, more recently, Willcox Guitars, decided he wanted to try something different.

“I would try various wood combinations and construction techniques, and I discovered that magnetic pickups are interfering,” Willcox said. “By their very nature, they’re dampening string vibration and they’re distorting the whole harmonic content of the vibrating string because of the magnetic field. I thought, there has to be a non-invasive pickup. So I wondered, ‘How can we spy on the string and not interfere with it?’ That’s where the optical pickup idea came into play.”

LIGHT & SOUND

Having worked both as a luthier’s apprentice and an electrician by trade, Willcox experimented with optical pickup prototypes in his workshop. By the 1990s, infrared technology had begun to filter down from military-grade applications into consumer electronics, making the components more affordable. With the increased availability



Chris Willcox

Willcox Guitars puts Lightwave optical pickup systems within dealers’ reach

of infrared technology, Willcox’s optical pickup idea began to look like a viable business model.

Here’s how it works: “There’s an infrared emitter on one side of each string,” Willcox explained. “On the other side is an array of photo detectors. So, the emitter is casting a shadow of the string onto the detectors, and when you vibrate the string, the size and the shape of that shadow changes, and it modulates a current that

runs through the detectors.” This current produces an analog signal that does not interfere with the strings’ vibration.

“It’s a totally accurate, transparent signal. That makes it very versatile, so that it doesn’t have its own tone. So, what kind of strings you use, your technique as a player, the way the guitar is constructed and what woods or materials were used in it — all of that will come through.”

CHANGING THE GAME

With the newly developed technology, Willcox began Lightwave Systems in the early 2000s, installing optical pickup systems on custom guitars. But he wasn’t content just making one-offs. “I thought this had enough potential to be a game changer,” he said.

In 2007, Willcox began building his own line of guitars, first with the Saber bass guitar, then the Atlantis acoustic-electric. He had just started putting together a boutique dealer network in 2008 when the economy tanked. “Dealers went into panic mode. They stopped focusing attention on new brands and new technologies, and we were both. [Laughs.]”

Since then, Willcox had been steadily selling his guitars directly from his website — until now. The company officially launched Willcox Guitars Powered by Lightwave at Summer NAMM 2015 and has since brought on reps that will give the brand coverage across 30 states. Now, ramping up production, and with a new team of sales reps in place, the Willcox brand continues to expand, bringing optical pickups into the hands of more dealers and, Willcox hopes, more musicians looking for a new sonic experience. **MI**

HEAR THE LIGHT



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HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

HAL BRUSHES UP ON CAJON

Hal Leonard has reached a worldwide distribution deal with Minneapolis-based Cajón Brush. Created by percussionist Paul Jennings, Cajón Brushes are designed and built specifically for the cajon, giving the instrument a rich, brushed sound while also letting players achieve warm low tones. One-inch in diameter, the natural wood handles give percussionists the right

feel and the ability to play with the best technique.

Jennings is also the author of the Hal Leonard *Cajón Method*. This guide takes players through the basics of the instrument and its techniques, with dozens of exercises and more than 30 grooves from many genres, including rock, Latin, blues, jazz, flamenco and funk. halleonard.com

CARL FISCHER | CHARITY

Carl Fischer Music Donation Keeps Nonprofit Groups Playing Along

Carl Fischer Music recently donated sheet music for a variety of instrument ensembles to NAEIR, a gifts-in-kind organization that connects products from charity-minded companies to schools, churches and other nonprofit organizations.

“We wanted to put our sheet music into the hands of people who would love and perform it rather than let it sit undiscovered,” said Elizabeth Holub, marketing man-

ager and interim performance promotion manager for Carl Fischer Music and its partner Theodore Presser Company. “With many schools struggling to keep their music programs afloat, this was one way we could help them and other nonprofit groups keep their costs down while performing beautiful music.”

NAEIR’s specialty is receiving donations of excess inventory from United States corporations and redistributing

HOSA | DISTRIBUTION

Hosa Teams With Roland Canada

Hosa Technology has named Roland Canada as its new exclusive Canadian distributor. The agreement went into effect in July and encompasses all lines under the Hosa Technology umbrella.

“As part of our drive towards being the best supplier of inspiring creative technologies in Canada, we’ve had a long-held desire to provide retailers and consumers with fully-considered solutions complete with all necessary audio, video and MIDI/data connections,” said Paul McCabe, CEO of Roland Canada. “With the world’s most comprehensive catalog of cables, connectors, adaptors and additional accessories, combined with unmatched quality in products and services, Hosa Technology represents the perfect complement to our total-solution approach. We are excited and honored that Hosa has chosen to enter into this partnership with us.”

“We’ve challenged ourselves to keep pace with advances in technology, and to support our products with service which is second to none,” said Jonathan Pusey, Hosa’s vice president of sales and marketing. “From our experience working in partnership with Roland in Australia, we have come to learn that our companies share very similar goals and values, and are very happy to now have this chance to work together with Roland Canada.”

hosatech.com



Winners of the annual Yamaha Young Performing Artists national competition perform with Jeff Coffin (far left).

YAMAHA | EVENT

YAMAHA AWARDS NINE YOUNG MUSICIANS

Yamaha Artist Services Indianapolis, in conjunction with Yamaha Corporation of America's Band and Orchestral Division, recently announced nine 2015 Yamaha Young Performing Artists (YYPA) Competition Winners. The annual YYPA Program recognizes exceptional emerging jazz, classical and contemporary musicians. Winners are chosen after submitting recordings and supporting material, which are evaluated by a panel of Yamaha Performing Artists and musicians. In addition to the nine winners, the judges chose five honorable mention recipients.

The winners received an all-expense paid trip to the YYPA Celebration Weekend, which was held June 20-23, and included rehearsals, master classes, social events and workshops focused on how to establish and maintain a career in music. The weekend culminated with the YYPA Concert at Emens Auditorium on the campus of Ball State University. yamaha.com

SLM | ACQUISITION

SLM Picks Up Kiwi

St. Louis Music (SLM) has purchased Kiwi Wind Products.

Made in the United States, Kiwi has had a long-standing reputation building protective neck and mouthpiece pouches.

"Having used them as a player and known them as a business partner for many years, we're really excited to bring Kiwi into our family of brands," said Craig Denny, vice president of band and orchestra at St. Louis Music. "It's a great fit for us because of the broad base of customers that we serve."

stlouismusic.com;
kiwiwindproducts.net



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NAMM Empowers Iowa Arts Advocates

NAMM joined national and regional partners to present the Iowa Arts Advocacy Caucus in Des Moines, Iowa, during the state fair. Partners included Americans for the Arts, Iowa Alliance for Arts Education, Iowa Arts Council, The United States Conference of Mayors, Americans for the Arts Action Fund and Bravo Greater Des Moines. The event with Iowa’s arts and culture leaders offered advocacy training as a prelude to Iowa’s presidential caucus process. Four campaigns sent a candidate or representatives to present their policy positions about the importance of music and the arts in schools and the community. The event attracted 170 leaders from various organizations, as well as educators and supporters from across the country.

“NAMM is honored to be part of the Iowa Arts Advocacy Caucus,” said Mary Luehrsen, NAMM director of public affairs and government relations. “We must urge our presidential candidates, and all elected officials, to articulate their support and plans to assure that

all children have the opportunity to learn and grow with music and the arts.”

At the Caucus, former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum shared why he supports music and the arts. Robin Walenta, vice chair of NAMM and president of Iowa-based West Music Co., introduced former Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley’s daughter — who represented his position. Senator Bernie Sanders and Dr. Ben Carson each

had campaign representatives attend on their behalf.

The event also featured interactive training sessions presented by a coalition of organizations, including Americans for the Arts, Iowa Alliance for Arts Education, Iowa Arts Council, The United States Conference of Mayors, Americans for the Arts Action Fund and Bravo Greater Des Moines. namm.org



From left: Leon Kuehner, executive director of the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education; Robert Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts; Mary Luehrsen, NAMM director of public affairs and government relations; Robin Walenta, West Music Co.; Rick Santorum, presidential candidate; T.J. Marcisak, CEO of Nishna Valley Credit Union; Chris Kramer, deputy director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs; Linda Langston, Linn County Supervisor; Paul Dennison, Iowa Arts Council Board/ KILJ Radio.

APPOINTMENTS

LOWREY NAMES IMAMURA PRESIDENT



Seijiro Imamura

Lowrey Organ Company has named Seijiro Imamura its new president. Formerly the executive vice president, Imamura has many years of MI industry experience and has lead numerous

achievements and innovations at Lowrey. “Lowrey is in a very unique and advantageous position to offer an even higher level of value and service to Lowrey dealers and their customers,” Imamura said. “We have taken the initiative over a relatively short time period and transitioned to a new production facility which is doing quite well. We have also made a number of team adjustments that have improved performance in shipping and

service. We have new product development team partners, have added to our artist staff and are building a new sales team.

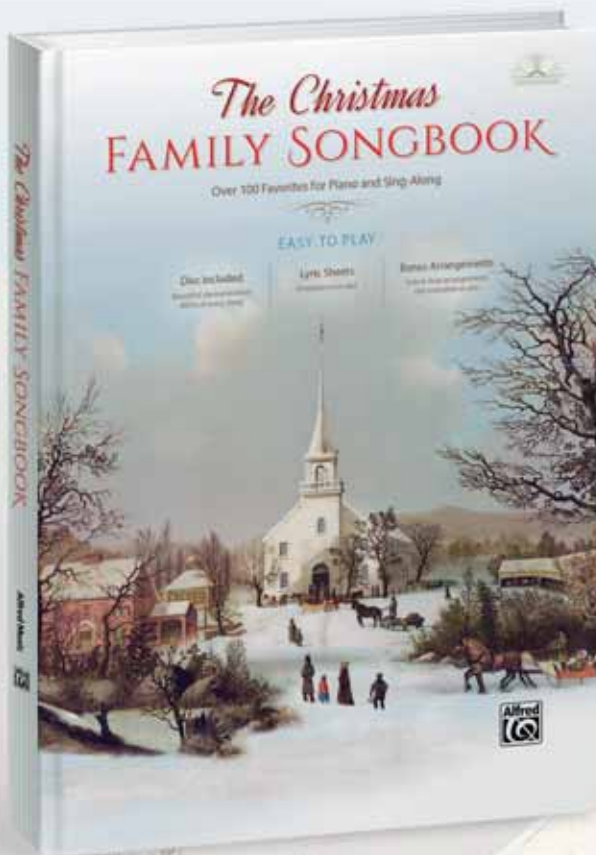
“These efforts point to our ultimate goal of doubling our sales numbers over the next 36 months. By supporting our current dealers to make them stronger and creating new dealers here and overseas, we are confident in our growth potential.” lowrey.com

Cordoba Music Group has added Jim Thomas to the Guild team as director of manufacturing operations.

Jason O’Keefe has joined the **Antigua Winds** team as a sales manager.

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IDEAS

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THE TECH BEAT | BY JAMES HARDING

PROFITING FROM RECITALS

If you're like me, you spend most of your sleepless nights trying to find ways to bring people into your store. You may have great products, fair prices and a skilled staff, but you would give your left arm for a sustainable method to drive traffic to your business. During those late-night "stress sessions," the problem often seems unsolvable ... but what if the answer was staring us in the face the whole time?

A few years ago, I had an epiphany. It occurred to me that the single, most reliable method to bring prospects into my store was to host recitals. The more recitals I could fit into my schedule, the more people I could fit into my store. The problem was that these recitals rarely resulted in much business. Attendees would come in, say "hello," use the bathroom and leave — without supporting the business. I realized that my problem wasn't getting people in the door, it was finding subtle and creative ways to generate profit from the people who were already coming here. That's when I began to rethink recitals.

RECITALS AS MARKETING TOOLS

The first change I made was to use recitals as marketing



Think of recitals as a marketing tool to get traffic into your store

tools. I created a red carpet-style banner with several logos on it (including my company logo and the logos of my top name brands). I then hung this banner behind the stage so every recital photo would include a subtle ad for my business. I also provided my teachers with a downloadable PDF file that they could quickly fill in and use either as a download from my website or as a printed program for their recital.

Of course, the PDF contained my logo and a special coupon that was only valid on the recital day. I also created a 15-minute (looping) DVD pre-roll that would function like movie previews. Since the recital hall doors opened 30 minutes before the program, attendees got to hear my entire message at least once before the show began. I included reminders to turn off cell phones, to check-in on Facebook and to take advantage of the "today-only" discount for their recital. Since the use of our recital hall is a free service to our partner teachers, I had very few complaints about the changes. Of course, I offered to take these things down for teachers who didn't want the banner or the pre-roll ... but I charged a "custom decorating" fee to do so.

Finally, I began making a personal appearance at each recital. I created a very quick, five-minute presentation that welcomed guests to my professional home and invited them to discover one or two new items that I was featuring at the time. I also highlighted the current "special event" going on and encouraged folks to sign up for email notifications so they wouldn't

miss any of the similar events we had coming up.

The results were impressive. Our sales to partner teachers and their students tripled. We saw huge increases to our website traffic, and we even got a bump on social media from all the pre-recital check-ins. Over time, we began to see year-round benefits as recital families returned more frequently to do business with us.

I think the trigger for this change was simply asking for the sale. We offered a great place to host recitals. We offered interesting DVD content, and we made the process work for our teachers. But, we also took a second to help everyone see that we need their support to continue these services. Once we started asking for the sale, our families started to comply and our recitals instantly became profitable.

Why not rethink recitals in your store? If you can find creative and subtle ways to make recitals work for you, it might help you sleep better at night knowing that you have an unlimited traffic source of prospective customers. **MI**

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

FROM THE TRENCHES | BY MYRNA SISLEN

Lasting Impressions

I don't intend to get all touchy-feely with you, but we, as dealers, could be much better off emotionally and physically if we took the time to consider the small miracles that occur every day in our businesses — remarkable things that we may not even be noticing.

In my case, the overlooked miracle involved a young man named Zachary Lynch. Zachary started taking voice lessons at Middle C Music in 2006 when he was 15 years old. His mother, Laurel Bergold, had been searching for some way to reach her autistic son Zachary. The Washington, D.C. school system was failing him, and she couldn't find special programs that addressed his needs. Laurel was not going to give up, so she brought Zachary and his sister Miriam to study voice at Middle C Music with our instructor Esther Haynes who has a real talent for reaching special-needs students.



Zachary Lynch with his mother Laurel Bergold.

'Sometimes it's important to take a moment and think about the impact our businesses have on people.'

I've known Zachary well for nearly a decade. But it wasn't until Laurel's eulogy that I realized just how important Middle C Music was in his life. It was a real wake-up call: I needed to

be more aware of my customers and students in an even more personal way. Not just to say "hello," which I certainly do, but to keep a closer eye on how their lessons are going and to ask more questions.

ENJOYING THE SMALL MIRACLES

We all know the power of music and how important it can be in people's lives. We know the effect we have — or that we hope we have — in our communities. But sometimes it's important to take a moment and think about the impact our businesses have on people like Zachary. I can assure you that Zachary's experience is not unique.

This isn't about sales or marketing or margins; it's about us taking a step back to observe what is happening on an individual level in our stores every day. We get so caught up in the day-to-day running of our business that we don't look at the individual benefits that our business brings about. If we take the time to enjoy those miracles, even briefly, we will be even more energized to run fabulously successful businesses.

Zachary still comes to Middle C every week for his voice lessons, now with his father, Jack. **MI**

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



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THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

What I Learned From Vic Firth

Over the years I've written about the awesome lessons I have learned from attending events, such as Warped Tour, DCI World Championship and the AARP Convention. This time I would like to talk about the lessons I learned from drum industry veteran Vic Firth — who passed away in July. I was fortunate to have met Vic Firth at The NAMM Shows, visited his factory, and, most importantly, attended many of his private drum teacher seminars with my music lesson teachers. The lessons he taught apply to all teachers, not just drum teachers.



The lessons I learned from the late Vic Firth

With Vic's passing there have been many great parts of his life and legacy written about. Vic touched me through his dedication to the private music teacher. During his sessions, I learned many things about teaching from him, including: teaching is about the student — not about the teacher; accept all styles of music in your lesson room; professionalism as a teacher creates success; be humble and sincere; support music education and develop your music teachers.

During one session, Vic, who was a college-level teacher explained that, "All I do is polish the bumper [when I teach.]" Meaning it's the teachers early on that get the students excited and create the musicians. Beginning-level teachers are the ones that put the bumper on the car. Anyone can polish it. Vic knew that the hardest part of developing musicians is on that beginning level, not "tweaking" those fine points on an existing musician. The beginning teacher can "light the fuse" or "snuff the fuse out" with a beginner student. These teachers are the ones that needed his attention. As an industry we teach more beginners than advanced students in our businesses. He knew the industry needed professional music teachers and wanted to help create them.

Vic invested his resources to raise the bar on private music lessons in our industry. As my friend and fellow drum instructor Dom Famularo, who did these seminars with Vic, said, "The

bar was so low we were tripping on it." If Vic could help our industry teach better, we would create long-term music students and in turn lifetime musicians. In other words, better teachers equals more musicians, which equals more business — a simple but effective formula. Vic knew the usual non-trained "go get 'em tiger" approach to become a private teacher wasn't very successful.

So my question to music retailers is: What are you doing to "raise the bar" in your business with music lessons? Are you investing in the development of your music lesson staff? Are you and your lesson program putting the bumper on the car, or just wanting to polish the bumper and collect your money? If you have better teachers, you will have more business. Now is the time to have your own professional development sessions for your music lesson program and create your own PMT (Professional Music Teacher) training. Let's look at some topics you could include:

1. NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION.

Show your new teachers how things work. Go over everything from the scheduling process to making sure they are ready to teach on time. Don't assume anything; help set them up to

be successful from day one.

2. STOCK NEW BOOKS.

Vic always had print music for teachers to evaluate. When new books come in, pass them around to the applicable teachers. This way teachers know what is new in your store. How about forwarding those digital monthly new releases you get from Alfred and Hal Leonard to your teachers? Keep them in the loop on the print world. As a teacher, you're always looking for new books to keep your lessons exciting.

3. USE TECHNOLOGY SESSIONS.

Is someone on your staff a whiz at Finale, Band-in-a-Box, ProTools or GarageBand? Set up some sessions to help the more technologically challenged members of your staff learn some new tricks. (I'm always picking the brains of my younger colleagues on this stuff.) Today's student doesn't use pencil and paper much anymore.

Technology can make lessons exciting.

4. MARKET YOUR TEACHERS.

Help your teachers market themselves. (This is especially important if you are relying on them to bring students into your store.) Show them how they should use social media and Web searches to get more students.

5. FOCUS ON STUDENT RETENTION.

Your store and the teacher are successful if you retain students. Gaining 10 new students after having 12 leave is not good for anyone. Ask yourself what your teachers and store can do to increase retention.

I hope these ideas will help you raise the bar when it comes to your music lessons. Help your teachers put the bumper on the car. Create a professional music teacher development program.

Vic's drumsticks weren't the the only

"Perfect Pair" he developed. His commitment to developing the professional music teacher was his other "Perfect Pair." And for that, we are grateful. **MI**

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



Vic Firth (center) with my former drum teachers Dave DeJulio, Mason Wallace, Steven Rodriguez and Mike Lund at the 2011 Vic Firth PDT (Professional Drum Teacher) at Musicians Institute Hollywood.

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PEOPLE-MINDED RETAILING

Ray's Midbell Music has operated a successful business for the past 35 years by investing heavily in its most valuable resource: people

By Katie Kailus, Photos by Žaneta Čuntová

WALK THROUGH THE DOORS of Ray's Midbell Music and you are greeted by what looks like a typical full-line showroom. Instruments hang in clearly marked departments. Accessories are organized on moveable displays. Track lighting makes the finishes of the guitars shimmer. Floor displays neatly situated grab customer attention. But there is something about the Sioux City, Iowa-based retailer that you can't see, but can definitely feel.

Since April 1980, Ray Guntren and his family — wife Karen and son Mike — have brought a family feel to the music business. Enter the doors and you are instantly an extended family member.

"We are a true family business," said Mike, vice president and general manager. "My dad's here, my mom still works here in accounts payable. We have done this together as a family. [Ray] laid the ground work, and there's been challenges over the years, but we've done it together and had a good time."

That tightknit family feel is what attracts customers, most of which are families themselves.

"We describe this business type as the family music store — we cater to the family," Mike said. "I think our customers feel comfortable

with that because we are a family."

While a succession plan may be in place for Mike to take over the company by the end of the year, he wasn't always at helm of the store's leadership. When Ray purchased the Sioux City branch of Midbell Music in the early 1980s, it became a family endeavor. Mike recalls putting stickers on brochures in the break room at eight years old. Summer jobs sorting parts on the trucks followed, and eventually Mike started calling band directors as an educational service rep — which as a heavily B&O-focused store, prepared him for the future.

"We've been serving the music educators in this area for a long, long time," said Mike, adding that the dealer services not only Iowa, but nearby Nebraska, South Dakota and Minnesota as well. "It's a tight-knit group of band and orchestra directors. We've partnered with them and serve in their programs. That relationship is really important to us."

Two full-time road reps and a few part timers make sure each school gets a call once a week.

"The band and orchestral business is one that requires a great deal of care and maintenance with hands-on weekly service calls," Ray said. "That's the way we do it versus an online presence. Giving that hands-on service on a regular basis is key."

SOLID STAFFING

According to the Guntrens, the store wouldn't be able to offer that regular service to its directors







The Ray's Midbell Music team.

and customers if it weren't for its solid staff.

"It really is our people that make this place work," Mike said. "We are really blessed with great people. We try to create an environment that is fun to work in and still productive and allows our employees to have lives as well."

And as a result, employees don't want to leave.

"Our retention rate is incredible," Mike said. "We have many people that have been here for 15 or 16 years."

Communication with employees is key at Ray's Midbell. The store recently changed its hours to open an hour later on Fridays in order to accommodate a weekly staff meeting.

"It freed up some time and designated nothing else to happen during this time except good communication," he said. "Whether it is a small little huddle or a full staff meeting, we now have that every week. And that is so important."

Taking an interest in its employees lives is also important to the Guntrens. They recognize all employees' birthdays and celebrate work anniversaries by bringing in treats.

"We've got great morale here," Karen said. "We try to hire people with good attitudes and that spreads."

When hiring, Mike stresses how important it is to "staff smart," adding that he'd rather go short staffed than hire the wrong candidate.

"I get comfortable being uncomfortable for a little while," he said. "We will do second interviews and off-site interviews and really screen them well so when we bring someone on we have confidence that they are going to fit in well."

Focusing on musicians when hiring is also a must for the

Guntrens. "You can't take musical knowledge for granted in this business," Mike added. "It's important for me to know that our employees know what they are talking about with our customers and that our customers can feel comfortable knowing that there is going to be someone here every hour that we are open that can answer their question."

"When a band director calls, I want the person that answers to be able to help them or be able to route them to the person that can best answer their question."

Oftentimes, if the phone rings and all associates are busy, Mike will answer the phone himself.

"We want a live person answering the phones whenever possible."

GOOD WORD TRAVELS FAST

Ray said it is important for his staff to understand the customer service model.

"Our future depends on our customers," he said. "We want them to have a good shopping experience when they come here. That is something that we hammer into our staff. The comments on the website will attest to that."

And do they ever. At press time, Ray's Midbell had a 4.8-star rating on Google Reviews, which was filled with such comments as, "I would recommend anyone in the Midwest to these guys," and "The customer service is amazing!"

Mike makes a special effort to monitor his store's online presence. "I'm active on Facebook," he said. "Once, I went on and messaged the few people that gave us a '3 star,' and asked if there is

anything we could do to help their experience. We are always wanting to make sure all customers are pleased.”

So much so, they’ve devoted an entire section of their website to satisfied customers. Aptly named “Happy Customers,” the section features photos of shoppers holding their recently purchased instruments. Mike and his team post these on the store’s Facebook page as well.

“We ask them to sign off that we can use a photo of them with the instrument they just bought and ask them to give a testimonial of their buying experience,” he said. “A lot of times we try and get the customer to ‘like’ us on Facebook while they are in the store and then we can tag them in our Facebook post.”

RETAIL MAKEOVER

The Guntrens moved their store to its current location nine years ago, building the store from the ground up to suit their needs.

“Our building was built with retail in mind,” Mike said. “We wanted to make sure that our facility was one that served people and that customers could try out our instruments with no problems.”

As a result, behind the walls of the electric guitar room (as well as the stepup saxophone room, performance space and lessons rooms) there is quarter-inch thick rubber matting isolating all sound.

Eight lesson rooms — which serve about 200 students a week on guitar, drums, B&O, piano and voice — boast double-stud construction with insulation woven between the studs, and the ceilings feature a hard top. The heating and cooling system has angled duct work that is insulated as well preventing sound from flowing from one room into another.

“The point to all this is that we can have the New Horizons Senior Band practicing in the recital room, eight private lessons going on, someone trying out a stepup instrument in the stepup room and someone turning up an amp in the electric guitar room all while allowing customers to rent a flute at the front counter without disturbance,” Mike explained. “It’s a great design — it’s well thought out.”

The team stays on top of changing around displays based on the time of the year.

“Right now we’d normally have more intermediate and professional instruments on the wall, but given that it is the back to school time, we have changed up the display to focus on beginners,” Mike said. “We have a huge banner to let people know when they walk in the door that they are in the right place.

“In the stepup area we’ve placed signs that explain that beginner instruments are [on a special display], because, in the past, I’ve heard a beginner player who’s found themselves in the intermediate or professional section of the store, say ‘Oh my gosh — a trumpet costs \$2,900.’ So, we try to have really good signage throughout the store, saying ‘beginning band is this way.’ We don’t want the display wall to work against us. It should be the silent salesperson.”

SUCCESSION PLANNED

As the Guntrens head into their 36th year

in business, Ray looks forward to handing over the reins to Mike completely.

“I’m ready to step back, and get out of everyone’s way,” Ray chuckled. “Mike’s role as general manager and part-owner of the company has been great. I feel very fortunate to be in the position that I am in and that, through a succession plan, I can turn over the business to my son.”

Mike said he knows the future holds some challenges, but he’s ready to take them on.

“We are an American small business success story,” he said. “My dad started from very humble beginnings. He’s a self-made man. He bought into this company, worked hard and ended up owning the business and went through all the challenges of doing that for all those years. Today, there are different challenges that I’ve had to face while taking the helm of the company, such as Web business and managing more employees. But we’re ready to take them on.” **MI**

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WALK THROUGH ▶▶▶



ACOUSTIC GUITARS ▶

"Acoustics are a strong seller for us," said Mike Guntren, vice president and general manager, adding that they stock Taylor, Yamaha, Breedlove, Alvarez and Cordoba. "We try to hit all the price points."



▲ ELECTRIC GUITARS

"We wanted to make sure we built our facility so people could try our instruments," Guntren said. "We built a jam room with the thought that people could come in here, turn up an amp and play as loud as they want."



◀ PERFORMANCE SPACE

This space is used for recitals as well as larger group lessons, such as the New Horizons Senior Band. The room can also work as an overflow ninth lesson room if needed. The room seats up to 90 and with sound isolation and lights on dimmers, it is ideal for recitals.

Ray's Midbell Music is housed in a 10,200-square-foot standalone, circular building, built specifically for the retailer. As a result, the showroom is shopper friendly with each instrument having its own department. Here's a glance into the space:



◀ **BAND & ORCHESTRA**

A large part of the store's business is devoted to B&O. As a result, Ray's Midbell has an entire high-end, sound isolated try-out room. The dealer also devotes two walls to the category, one for beginner instruments and another for stepup and professional.



◀ **DRUMS & PERCUSSION**

Ray's Midbell sells a large volume of box sets and cymbals and has felt the world percussion fever. "Every time we get them in, we seem to be ordering more," Mike said.



Going For **GOLD**

By Katie Kailus

Guitar Center opened the doors of its headquarters for its third annual Media Day and addressed everything from its financial status to its showroom standards

GOING FOR GOLD

GC recently launched its GOLD Standard initiative (which stands for Grand Opening Look Daily), and its newly opened flagship location in Westlake Village, California, is its example showroom. The goal is to maintain a consistent look and feel throughout all of GC's 270 showrooms. The standard focuses on good stock position, crisp merchandising and clear pricing. For example, with the GOLD Standard all price tags should be tucked under the first fret of all electric guitars on the guitar wall. Employees are then expected to maintain this standard in their stores on a daily basis.

"The GOLD Standard is meant to give stores a look that is as close to a grand opening look as possible on a daily basis," said Wayne Colwell, senior vice president of stores. "And that also stretches not only from store to store, but also from offline to online — from our call centers to our contact center. No matter what store you go into, you should expect that same look, feel and experience."

FINANCIAL HEALTH UPDATE

During a panel discussion with GC's executive team, CEO Darrell Webb dis-

cussed the company's financial health.

"As we embarked on this calendar year, we explained to our board of directors that we are going to build a multi-year strategic plan that we will share with you in fall 2015, but in the meantime, there are a ton of tactical initiatives that we can execute that will dramatically improve the financial performance of the company," Webb said. "From how we manage promotions to selling and discounting in our stores, we have made a ton of tactical changes in how we run the business, and the results have been fantastic. Our financial performance is dramatically better than it was a year ago, and we are on a trajectory back to our record levels of EBITDA in the not-too-distant future."

Tim Martin, executive vice president and CFO, addressed negative rumors that have been circulating regarding the company's financial status.

"The tales of demise were greatly exaggerated," Martin said. "We've experienced a strong front end of this year. We are sleeping well when it comes to the financial situation of the company. Companies that have financial liabilities don't open new stores. We are going the opposite direction. In fact, we are spending more

on our store base and more on technology. That doesn't happen with a company that doesn't have financial liquidity way in excess of making its debt payments."

GETTING INTO THE EDM GROOVE

GC is expanding its marketing campaigns to be more inclusive of all gender, generation and genre tastes — and expanding into the EDM (electronic dance music) world is one way it's doing that. The company just wrapped up one of its first EDM contests, "Cover Me Zedd," which asked participants to submit a cover or a remix of one of Zedd's latest singles.

"We had over 13,000 entries to that contest which is insane on a first time out," said Brian Berman, vice president of marketing. "EDM is a future focus for the brand. It's one of the fastest growing segments in music today."

"Zedd is a classically trained, cross-over artist, and he fits really well in our pocket. You would think with our core audience being 35-to-54-year-old Jimmy Page lovers that we'd get a lot of hate on social media for Zedd. But, I have to tell you it was one of the most positive experiences not only for our social media, but also for the brand itself. We are going to

continue to explore more crossover artists like Zedd, so we can continue gain legitimacy, not only with our existing artists, but with additional audiences in the future.”

Building on the EDM trend, GC plans to retro fit 50 to 60 stores’ DJ departments by the end of the year with plans to do another 40 to 50 each year thereafter. The Westlake Village showroom is one example of the new DJ station concept, highlighting four major brands with stations featuring that brand’s top-of-the-line gear. Each station boasts advanced volume control so customers can try out gear next to each other without disruption.

CONTESTS & ‘SESSIONS’

Aside from the company’s Zedd promotion, GC’s Singer/Songwriter contest enters its fifth edition this year. Last year, the contest saw almost 16,000 entries from musicians trying to win a four-song EP with producer Don Was, mentoring session with Colbie Caillat, performance on Jimmy Kimmel Live and new gear. Drum Off, GC’s annual search for an undiscovered drummer, kicked off its 27th year in September. Past winners have played with such artists as Jay-Z, Beyonce and Prince.

Contests aside, Guitar Center Sessions — the company’s DirecTV concert program — will be celebrating its 100th episode this fall. Featuring such artists as Jason Mraz, Brandon Flowers, Silversun Pickups and Dwight Yoakim, GC is now looking at additional platforms to deliver episodes, including airline TV, Qello and Xbox. “We have people knocking on our door all the time wanting this show,” Berman said.

GC’S STATE OF MI ADDRESS

A state of the music industry panel offered a breakdown of industry trends by three of GC’s senior vice presidents of merchandising. Michael Doyle, senior vice president of guitar merchandising, said down sales of new electric guitars has given way to an uptick in sales of used electrics.

“We have seen a growth in used —

both in electric guitars as well as amplifiers,” Doyle said. “We believe that being in both segments of the business is good for the category, good for the company and good for the music industry.”

As far as the general shift from electric guitars to acoustic guitars, Doyle said demographics and culture are to blame.

he sees the industry facing: keeping children interested in music.

“Trends for MI follow a lot of other hobby industries, like golfing,” Walter said. “We are in an instant gratification world, so we have to overcome and get folks to start young — which they do, we have a healthy B&O business — but



From left: GC’s Michael Walter, Bill Wrightson and Michael Doyle.

“When I think of myself, I grew up with nothing but electric guitars,” he said. “There aren’t as many Eric Claptons and Jimmy Pages. It’s more Ed Sheerans and Taylor Swifts, and so there has been a shift to acoustics culturally and demographically.”

Bill Wrightson, senior vice president of technology merchandising, mentioned that GC is partnering with more smaller vendors and seeing success.

“We are staying ahead and anticipating trends,” he said. “That will result in certain things like cultivating smaller vendors that we think are really on to something. I think that is going to become very important in the music world in the next couple of years, and we do that with pretty good frequency.”

Finally, Michael Walter, senior vice president of percussion and B&O merchandising, shared the biggest challenge

also keep them in the fold learning long term. That is one of the biggest challenges we are going to face in MI.”

LESSONS EXPANSION

Guitar Center reported continued growth in its lesson program. The company currently employs 1,000 teachers to instruct its 16,000 students participating in the program.

“We’ve got our own curriculum so there is some consistency and that helps bring people in at the right level,” said Susan Starnes, senior vice president of services.

Every Wednesday and Saturday, one GC location across the country holds a free introductory workshop that can range from recording made easy to beginner uke.

“It’s a great way to get peoples’ hands on the instruments,” Starnes said. “We’ve had 58 sessions so far this year with 28,000 attendees.” **MI**

By Katie Kailus

WALK THROUGH

Guitar Center's flagship location in Westlake Village is one of the company's newest stores, opening this past April. The 10,000-square-foot location is also the example showroom for the company's new GOLD (Grand Opening Look Daily) standard, which helps maintain a consistent look across all 270 locations. Here's a glimpse into the store:

DJ TABLES

Westlake's showroom is one example of the new DJ station retro fits. The station at this location features four major DJ brand setups boasting top-of-the-line gear. The environment is volume controlled so customers can demo next to each other without disturbing each other or shopping customers.



DRUMS & PERCUSSION DEPARTMENT

As part of the GOLD Standard, employees maintain the drum department, making sure sticks are available and all electric and hybrid kits are ready to be played.

Even as a tertiary store, Westlake's location still has four electronic sets on the floor at all times.



ELECTRIC GUITAR WALL

Modeled after the guitar wall at GC's Times Square New York location, the cold rolled steel wall features three tiers with LED back lighting allowing the guitars' color to pop. As the steel ages it turns a rusty brown color helping the guitars to stand out.

ACOUSTIC GUITAR ROOM

The acoustic room is humidified and monitored by employees who keep a daily log of the temperature levels. The acoustic walls at this location feature fixed hooks, but any new stores or future remodels will feature completely adjustable hooks.



GUITAR CENTER WESTLAKE VILLAGE, CALIFORNIA



RENTAL ROOM

The majority of Westlake's rentals are backline, including speakers, mixers and mics, but the location often rents out guitars to tourists or bands when they can't fly with their own instruments. The store also sees a lot of DJ, church and private party rentals.

"We make sure that we demo all gear in front of the customer before they leave, so we make sure that they won't get a speaker or a cable that doesn't work," said Johnny Contreras, store manager of the Westlake Village location.

LESSONS ROOMS

"All of our teachers' bios are posted up on the wall for everyone to read," Contreras said. "We are fortunate to have some high-caliber teachers at our location."

To keep parents involved in their students' lesson, surveillance cameras are mounted in every room and displayed on a TV in the waiting area for viewing in realtime. The rooms themselves are specific for each instrument and feature double hanging doors and complete sound isolation.



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FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

MARCUS RYLE | LINE 6

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

I'm the sort of person who embraces the abilities that technology gives us to communicate, so it's great to be able to catch up early on emails. I get up around 5 a.m. — I don't need a lot of sleep — and check from home. Since we work with Yamaha in Japan and our partners in Europe, I like to find out what's been going on while I was asleep. I'm also old-fashioned and still like to read the newspaper everyday.

WHAT'S YOUR HISTORY WITH THE COMPANY?

I'm one of the co-founders, along with Michel Doidic, a French engineer I worked with at Oberheim, and Susan Wolf, who's also my wife. We started a consulting company in 1985 and decided to branch out on our own, with the goal of developing innovative technology for musicians across a broad range of product. We felt that it was best to do that by focusing on development, and not on building a brand or manufacturing. So, as Fast Forward Designs starting in 1985, we became fairly well known in the industry working for companies like Digidesign, Alesis, Fostex and Steinberg. We probably became the most well-known for helping develop products like the ADAT, though we also worked on keyboards, drum machines, sequencers and even some digital lighting controllers.

THE ADAT WAS HUGE AND NOW IT'S OBSOLETE. TIME MARCHES ON ...

It's fortunate for innovators and visionaries that it does. Otherwise, we'd have nothing to do! We saw at the time that digital tape was going to be a transitory medium, but hard discs were still prohibitively expensive, and we figured that the ADAT could really change the world of recording for a good 10 years or so — and it had about that long a life.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH NEW TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS, LIKE THE APPLE WATCH, TO DEVELOP FOR?

It's a multi-variable equation, and there's no simple answer. We're looking for the intersection of what we see as real customer needs and what is technologically possible, along with what's feasible for the business. Sometimes you can have ideas that are amazing but are going to be way too cost-prohibitive to pursue. Other times you can have great ideas that will only solve problems for a few people, so that makes

something unfeasible as well. Or you can just have a great idea where the technology hasn't caught up yet.

BUT NONE OF THOSE WERE THE CASE WITH THE APPLE WATCH.

Our app for the Apple Watch was a straightforward extension of our AMPLIFi products, which are truly unique in how they integrate with a modern, mobile lifestyle. AMPLIFi is a wireless, Bluetooth stereo system that's also a great guitar amp, and you can control everything from your phone. So when the Apple Watch came out, it seemed like a natural fit. If you're changing sounds or even just using the tuner, you can use your watch to interface with AMPLIFi.

AND THE APPLE WATCH SOFTWARE IS FREE?

The app is free because it's just another benefit for customers who already have AMPLIFi. It's a unique proposition — we have the best success with dealers who recognize that this is a product where the dealer can play an important role in introducing new customers to brand new benefits. We sell lots of AMPLIFi products to customers who aren't even in the market for a guitar amp.

HOW DOES THAT WORK?

Until a dealer shows them, many customers simply don't know that a product could exist where you could choose any song from your phone's library and instantly be given the perfect guitar tone to jam along with it, all wirelessly and from the comfort of your living room. Plus, it's a product that the whole family won't mind having in the living room, since it looks stylish and can be used to play back music whenever anyone wants a great-sounding sound system.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE?

I'm fortunate to have lots of really talented professionals working with me at Line 6. The folks that run our day-to-day business are always able to reach out and bounce something off of me. I like to be available to them as much as possible when they need me, but I don't have to check up on them very often. My style is definitely not "command and control."

CAN YOU ELABORATE?

Different styles of management get different names —



THE DETAILS

MARCUS RYLE, PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER

HQ: Calabasas, California

Founded: 1985 as Fast Forward Designs; Renamed Line 6 in 1998.

Employees: Roughly 150

Best-selling products: POD HD500X amplifier and effects modeling pedal, Relay guitar wireless series and Spider IV series modeling amplifiers.

Fun Fact: Before renaming the company Line 6, Ryle and Fast Forward Designs helped create numerous products including the ADAT, the game-changing multi-track digital tape recorder, sold by Alesis, that became ubiquitous in recording studios for roughly a decade.

“command and control” has been a tradition in the United States for some time and there are still environments, like the military, where it’s appropriate, but in business, fortunately, it’s no longer viewed as best practice. Instead, it seems that there’s an understanding that the people who are closest to the action in their field of expertise — whether it’s developing new technology or working relationships with a specific dealer, or talking with customers — are likely to have the most knowledge and understanding of the situation. You want to be able to create an environment where you have clearly outlined the philosophy and strategy of the company so people can make informed decisions in that context for their own particular areas of responsibility.

SO TRUST IS IMPORTANT.

It’s crucial — but it gets misinterpreted by some leaders, who think that trust means assuming that someone else would do exactly what they would have done in any given situation. That dynamic creates a situation where you hurt trust. You end up with a team that’s constantly trying to guess what might please you, rather than taking advantage of their own expertise — which is the reason that you hired them in the first place.

‘ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS IS DISCOVERING SOMEONE SOLVED A PROBLEM IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAY THAN I IMAGINED.’

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ROLE OF TRUST IN YOUR MANAGEMENT?

Trust is being able to rely on the judgment, knowledge, and experience of the people around you to do things that will follow the philosophy, values, and key goals of the organization. One of my favorite things is discovering that someone solved a problem in a completely different way than I imagined and got great results. That’s when you know that you’re getting the value of diversity of your team and not just creating a group of people that’s constantly trying to read your mind and make you happy.

HOW DO YOU TEACH YOUR EMPLOYEES ABOUT LINE 6’S VALUES AND GOALS?

We have a little 32-page booklet that every employee has, and it talks about our core values, company philosophy, and history and heritage. It enables people to go about their day-to-day work with an understanding of how best to represent the company and what goals we want to achieve. We’ve also always had open dialog and discussions about these topics.

HOW HAVE THOSE CORE VALUES EVOLVED?

When you start as a small company, like we did, the company philosophy is inherited from the founders. It happens

organically as you’re hiring people who are likeminded and share those same values. But you reach a scale, at some point, where you may unknowingly hire people who don’t exactly embody those values, but you don’t know it until you start seeing their actions and how well they fit. That’s usually when you find it useful to start writing everything down.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE RECENT ACQUISITION OF LINE 6 BY YAMAHA?

Over the years, Line 6 was approached by many companies that were interested in acquiring us, but in talking with Yamaha, we were pleasantly surprised to find, culturally and philosophically, a company that was extremely well aligned with our own. We have great admiration for their company and, personally, I’ve been a fan of their products for as long as I can remember. We learned that they admired what we had accomplished, and it seemed like a great opportunity for synergistic thinking.

HAVE THEY CHANGED HOW YOU OPERATE OR JUST LEFT YOU TO DO YOUR THING?

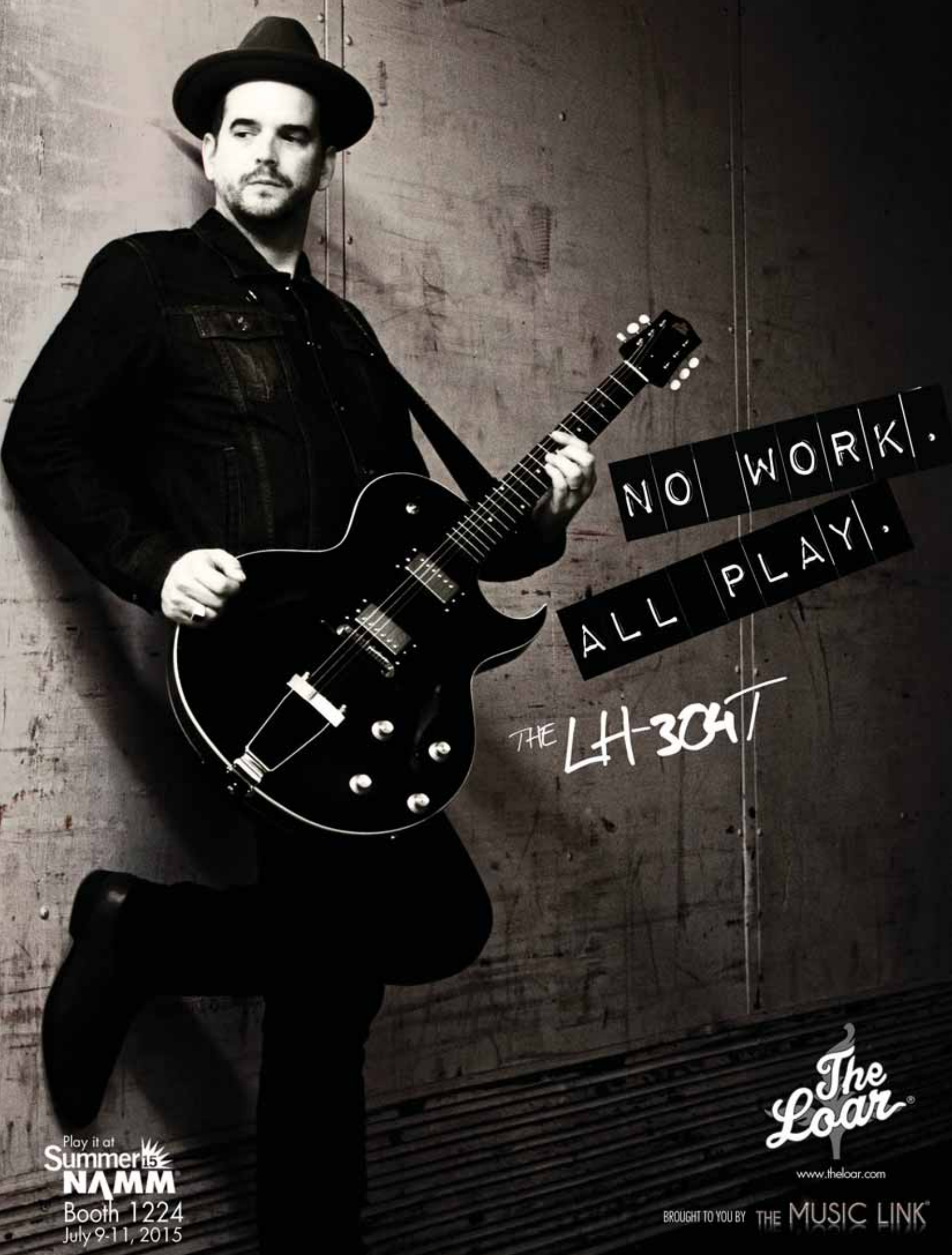
Believe it or not, largely the latter. Normally, acquisitions don’t work in business, but this one really occurred for all of the right reasons. Yamaha has been extremely supportive in wanting us to pursue our vision and, unlike being acquired by a big business company or investment firm, Yamaha is a company that is truly passionate about making the world a better place through music. They appreciate that we are here to do the same thing that they are, and they’re not looking to make changes.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO SELL IN THE FIRST PLACE?

It’s about wanting to make an impact. We had venture capital partners who were minority shareholders, and we had an obligation, at some point, to help them make their money off of the investment, so there was always the expectation that, some day, we would go public or be acquired so they could sell their shares. The main reason it didn’t happen earlier was that, certainly for the founders, it had to be about more than just money — we wanted to create the potential for more future innovation and Yamaha provides that for us.

IF NOT MUSIC, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

I have no idea! My mother comes from a long line of musicians, and my father was an innovator who helped design computers for the Saturn V rockets, so I think I was destined to be involved in music and technology. I feel very fortunate that I get to do something fun and exiting like this for a living.



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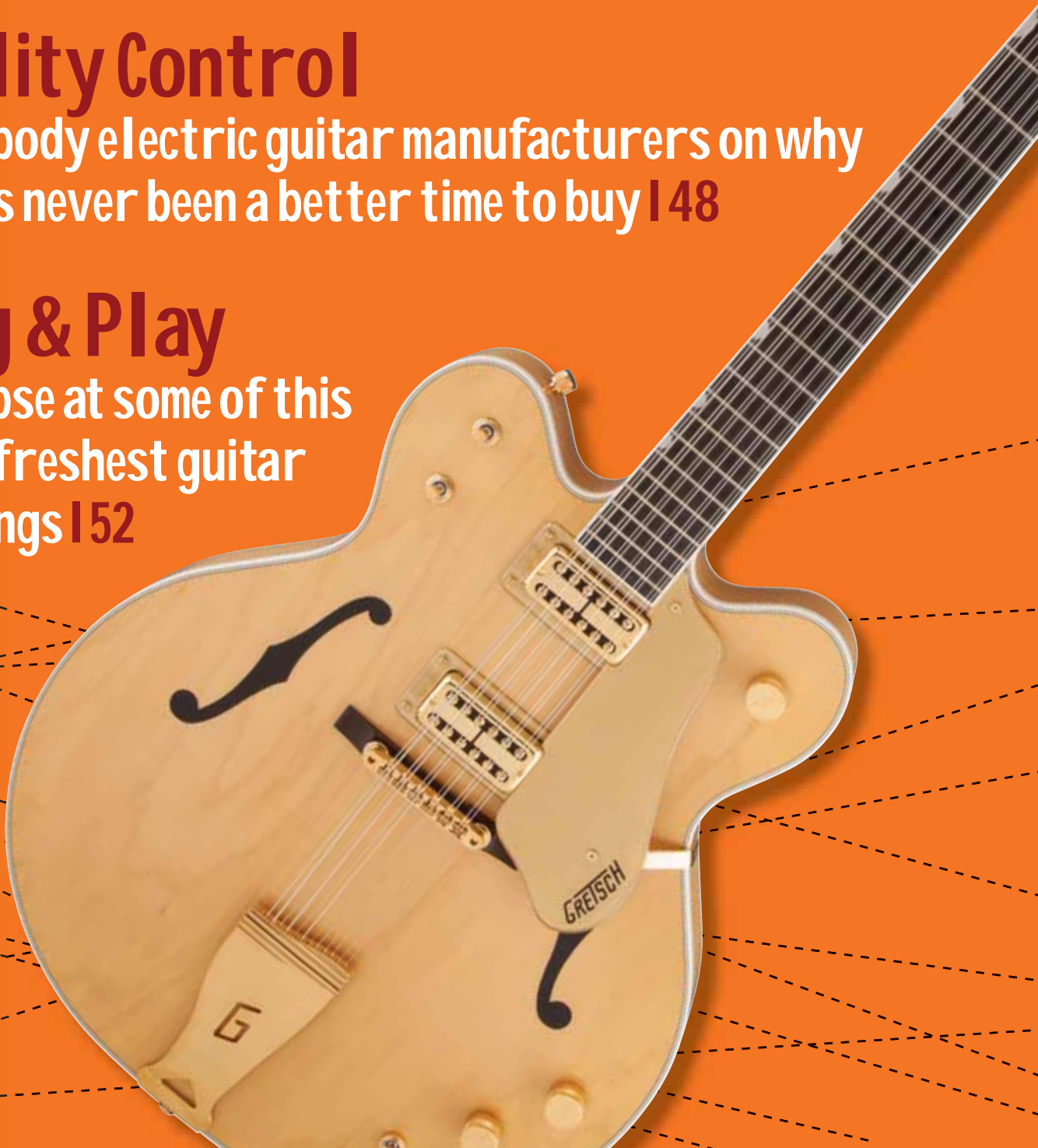
ELECTRIC GUITAR MAKERS UP THEIR GAME TO GIVE CONSUMERS MORE BANG FOR THEIR BUCK

Quality Control

Solid-body electric guitar manufacturers on why there's never been a better time to buy **| 48**

Plug & Play

A glimpse at some of this fall's freshest guitar offerings **| 52**





QUALITY CONTROL

For years, the solid-body electric guitar was most combo retailers' bread and butter. But in the wake of the economic recession, electric guitar sales slowed while acoustic sales began their steady climb.

To combat the downward trend, solid-body electric guitar manufacturers have both streamlined their offerings and focused on providing consumers with better quality instruments at lower price points, making it easier for retailers to stock what potential customers are looking for.

Now, some retailers are beginning to notice an upward trend in electric guitar sales, giving dealers and suppliers alike a renewed sense of optimism for the future of rock 'n' roll's iconic instrument.

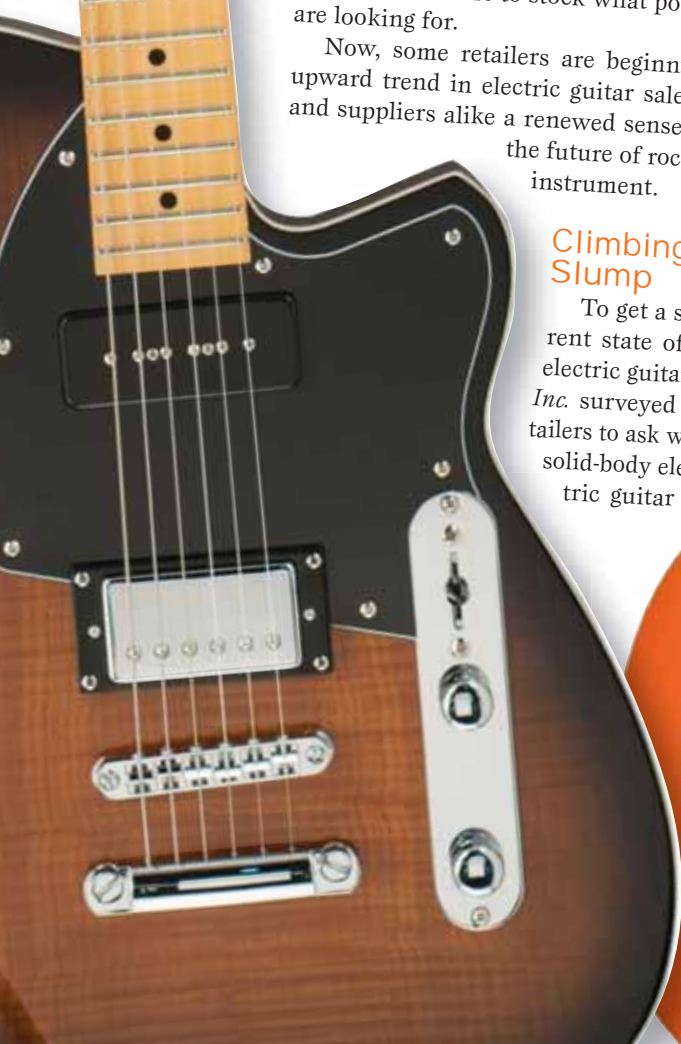
Climbing Out of the Slump

To get a sense of the current state of the solid-body electric guitar market, *Music Inc.* surveyed nearly 100 retailers to ask whether solid-body electric guitar

sales have been higher or lower since 2004. Of the 82 dealers that responded, 43 percent said electric guitar sales have been "significantly lower" while another 20 percent said "slightly lower" — thus, over 60 percent of retailers reported that sales have been down (in spite of a healthy 18 percent saying sales were higher to some degree). Even after the question was amended by limiting the inquiry to sales over the past five years, a strong majority of those who answered the amended question still said sales were lower.

When asked what might be the cause, nearly half of those surveyed attributed the slump to popular music trends. As one anonymous retailer put it, "Popular music has had a significant shift toward acoustic instruments. A surge in bluegrass flavored music, along with more acoustic performance venues, has created a greater demand for non-electrics." Another claimed, "Our main guitar teacher said that 10 years ago, 70 percent of his students played an electric, while 30 percent [played] acoustic. That [number] totally flipped a few years ago."

Just over one quarter of those surveyed point to "used guitar sales online." And another quarter said that "economic rhythms" are still the culprit



WHILE SOLID-BODY ELECTRIC GUITAR SALES MAY NOT BE AS HIGH AS THEY ONCE WERE, MANUFACTURERS HAVE STEPPED UP THEIR GAME TO GIVE CONSUMERS MORE BANG FOR THEIR BUCK

more than five years since the economic downturn hit.

Evening Out the Scales

As the electric guitar market creeps upward (albeit ever slowly), some chain retailers, like Sam Ash, are seeing a spike in high-end gear sales. "Sales are solid, but we seem to be selling more high-end guitars than we ever have," Sam Ash's COO Sammy Ash told *Music Inc.*

Ash posits that, as we get further away from the panic of 2008, consumers aren't keeping as tight a grip on their pocketbooks. "Sales have picked up a lot over the past six months in dollars, but units [remain] flat. The reason: Those that have the money are no longer ashamed to spend."

With 45 storefronts and a large-scale online presence, Sam Ash may be an exception to the rule when it comes to high-end guitar sales, especially when you consider the fact that an overwhelming majority of the stores surveyed report that most their electric guitar sales revenue comes from instruments at the entry-level price point.

Though also reporting an increase in electric guitar sales since last year, Dan Harsha, general manager of Hot Licks Guitar Shop in Waldorf, Maryland, said that the hardest part about competing with large scale retailers is the glut of options flooding the market. "Being an independent dealer, you can't stock every unit," Harsha said. "That's what the big Internet sites have over independent dealers — they can throw dollars at [a manufacturer] and just have every SKU available."

"I get a budget every month," Harsha continued. "There's what to buy, and how much I can spend. And every month it's like I'm rolling the dice and praying that someone likes it."

Harsha recommends that, when it comes to high-end guitars, online marketplaces like Reverb are the best way to turn inventory and compete with the larger chains. "All of the

higher priced stuff we sell on Reverb. [It] has been our saving grace."

To counter the problem of over-saturation, some manufacturers, like Ernie Ball Music Man, are slimming down their product lines, making it easier for dealers to stock more of what suppliers are offering. "We're completely streamlining a lot of our options and getting rid of some of the models," said Scott Ball, vice president at Ernie Ball Music Man. "One of the reasons we're doing that is because it was so hard for our dealers and our distributors to stock everything. So, if a customer would see something was available, [the dealers] wouldn't have it."

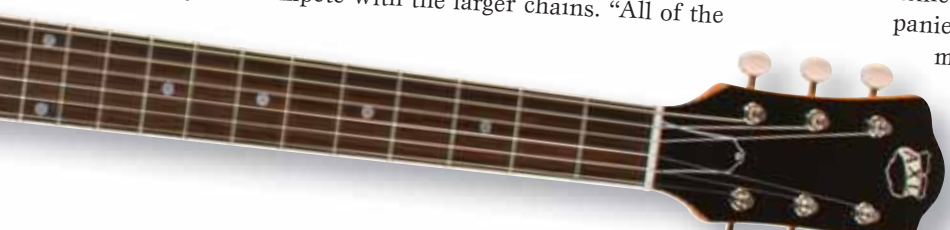


Scott Ball

Closing the Quality Gap

While a few stores may be enjoying a spike in high-end electric guitar sales, some independent retailers are altogether rethinking the lines that they carry in order to focus on quality and, by doing so, have increased sales revenues.

Once such retailer is The Candyman Strings & Things in Santa Fe, New Mexico. "We've chosen the path of dealing with companies that, when purchased correctly, offer a greater margin," said owner, Rand Cook, "and we're shying away from companies that are a little too large





Ken Haas



Ashley Atz



Sam Ash

'The quality of gear that you can get for the money now is probably the best it's ever been.'

– Ken Haas, Reverend Guitars

for their own good.”

“There are a few companies that are a little bit more on the upstart side of things and building a brilliant product at a good price point with a thick margin,” Cook continued. “Those are the companies that we’re focusing on.”

One of the benefits of working with such manufacturers is that they can more quickly adapt to the consumer’s needs. “Some of these more nimble manufacturers have a much better beat on what’s going on in the world,” Cook said, “and they can respond a whole lot quicker to it, because they don’t have a molasses-like corporate structure run by [executives] who really don’t know about the end user.”

Ken Haas, president of Reverend Guitars, agrees: “[Big name companies] spend way more time thinking about their past than they do about their present or about their future. And, in my opinion, they do that in reaction to the marketplace.”

Ashley Atz, director of marketing and artist relations at The Music Link, said he thinks there’s never been a better time for up-and-coming brands to make moves. “There’s been a huge diversification in guitar manufacturers,” Atz said. “Now, I see tons of boutique builders doing their thing.”

And since a majority of the units currently being sold still fall under the \$1,000 mark, Atz said that this is a price point where quality and innovation are key. “The people who are buying more affordable instruments, I would say they have far less brand loyalty than previous generations. And I don’t think that’s necessarily bad. In fact, for a company like [The Music Link], it’s really good. So, our response to that has been trying to pack as much value into the electrics that we make in order to try to capture people who are interested in something a little bit different.”

Reverend Guitars, another company focused on building quality mid-priced electrics, has seen a surge in growth year-over-year, following a “hard reset” in 2008. “Since 2010, we’ve quadrupled the size of the company’s sales numbers,” Haas said. “Our growth rate is about 20 percent a year.”

“We truly offer a guitar that competes with custom shop instruments at a price that people can afford,” Haas continued. And by making affordable, high-quality instruments, Reverend has managed to create products that can be marketed as high-end models at smaller shops dealing mostly in entry-level gear, while simultaneously serving as a more affordable option for buyers window-shopping at stores specializing in the high-end market.

“We seem to work in both kinds of retail environments, being in this mid-range,” Haas said. “That’s a reason I attribute to our growth: I’ve figured out how to maneuver in both of those store situations.”

Although the electric guitar market may still only be creeping upwards, a surge in the quality of instruments, especially at the low- and mid-level price points, has led to a renewed optimism for some retailers. “Each manufacturer is raising the bar on quality, so everyone else is following suit,” Sammy Ash said.

Ken Haas expressed a similar sentiment: “The quality of gear that you can get for the money now is probably the best it’s ever been.” **MI**



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FOCUS: ELECTRIC GUITARS



AXL

USA BEL AIR

AXL has released the USA Bel Air, a single cutaway guitar that's hand-assembled in Hayward, California, and features a single TV Jones Power 'Tron pickup as well as a USA B5 Bigsby vibrato. The AXL USA line includes a coil tap so players have an equally powerful single-coil tone with a push-pull pot.

{axlguitars.com}

YAMAHA **PACIFICA 510V**

Yamaha's Pacifica 510V features an Alder body and Maple neck, with a single Seymour Duncan Trembucker P-Rails pickup that offers three distinct tonal setting options, including a full humbucker, a soap bar single coil, and a traditional single coil. The PAC510V also includes a Wilkinson bridge.

{usa.yamaha.com}



GRETSCH **COUNTRY**

GENTLEMAN 12-STRING

The Gretsch G6122-12 Chet Atkins Country Gentleman 12-String doubles the sound of the classic model with the chiming, jangling sound of the '60s, and is available in an Amber Stain finish. The G6122-12 also features a bound double-cutaway hollow body with arched top, parallel tone bar bracing and simulated f holes, a maple neck with bound ebony fingerboard, a zero fret and mother-of-pearl Neo Classic thumbnail inlays.

{gretschguitars.com}



**WILLCOX
ATLANTIS**

Willcox Guitars' Atlantis ElectroAcoustic guitar is the first guitar to employ the LightWave Optical Pickup System, which uses infrared technology to sense string vibration for a natural amplified guitar sound rich in harmonic content. Light-wave pickups featured enhanced sensitivity and wide dynamic range, and is capable of catching the subtle nuance and articulation of the player's style.

{willcoxguitars.com}

**FENDER
DAVE MURRAY STRAT**

Fender's Dave Murray California series Stratocaster is inspired by the longtime Iron Maiden guitarists' onstage go-to guitar, combining Strat tradition with the modern roar of three Seymour Duncan humbucking pickups, the fast feel of a compound radius fingerboard and the high-performance reliability of a Floyd Rose bridge and nut.

{fender.com}

**REVEREND
DESCENT**

Reverend has released the Descent, a baritone guitar on Reverend's double-cutaway bolt-on platform, featuring a 26 3/4-inch neck. The Descent H90 comes with two Humbucker-sized Gnarly 90 Railhammer pickups and is available in Oceanside Green with Maple fretboard or Rock Orange with Rosewood fretboard. The Descent RA comes with chrome-covered Railhammer Chisels, and it is available in Violin Burst Flame Maple with Rosewood.

{reverendguitars.com}



MONO GUITAR & BASS SLEEVES

The Guitar Sleeve and Bass Sleeve are the latest addition to MONO's collection of professional luggage for musicians. Designed for traveling lightly, the new Sleeve collection of cases merges MONO's high quality construction into a slim and stylish design, featuring MONO's patented Headlock neck suspension system. [\[mono creators.com\]](http://mono creators.com)



GUITARGRIP WALL-MOUNT GUITAR HANGER

GuitarGrip offers a new take on the conventional wall-mounted guitar hanger. These grips combine practicality with décor, letting you store your instruments conveniently and artistically. GuitarGrip features cushioned inserts to protect the neck of your guitar and swivels to adjust for most headstock styles. [\[guitargrip.com\]](http://guitargrip.com)



DIGITECH DOD MEATBOX

Digitech has re-released the DOD Meatbox Subharmonic Bass Synthesizer, which is an update on the Meatbox from the 1990s. With modern features like true bypass, TRS output and a 9-volt power supply, the Meatbox adds subharmonic enhancement and low-end power to bass guitars, extended-range and down-tuned guitars, synthesizers and drum machines. MSRP: \$187.44. [\[digitech.com\]](http://digitech.com)

TRUETONE 1 SPOT PRO SERIES

Truetone's 1 SPOT Pro line expands the 1 SPOT line's power supply offerings. Using the powerful 1 SPOT technology, the CS7 and CS12 offer power and flexibility for any musician's pedalboard power supply. The CS7 features seven fully isolated and filtered outputs with three voltage options, while the CS12 has 12 outputs with five voltage options. [\[truetone.com\]](http://truetone.com)





ORANGE
OBC210 MINI

Orange Amplification's OBC210 Mini is the company's smallest conventional non-isobaric cabinet. As part of the OBC series, the new by 10-inch cabinet ensures the maximum punch from the smallest available space. It is constructed of birch plywood and features a pair of 10-inch Eminence Legend speakers.
orangeamps.com

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FOCUSRITE

REDNET NATIVE BUNDLES

Focusrite has introduced RedNet product bundles for DAW Native users. Each RedNet Native Bundle consists of either a RedNet 1 eight-channel A-D/D-A interface or a RedNet 2 16-channel A-D/D-A interface, a RedNet PCIe card, Red 2 and Red 3 AAX-compatible plugins and a Sonnet Echo Express SE I Thunderbolt chassis.

{focusrite.com}



PIONEER

BULIT MONITORS

Pioneer Professional Audio has unveiled its BULIT line of active reference studio monitors. Offered in three models, BULIT5, BULIT6 and BULIT8, each features improved bass response and reliability, three types of inputs (XLR, TRS and RCA), plus built-in equalization.

{pioneeraudio.com}



VOCO PRO

UDH MULTI-CHANNEL SYSTEMS

VocoPro has released four new high-quality multi-channel wireless microphone systems for musicians, churches and schools. The UDH series systems combine VocoPro's UHF transmission technology with a DSP chip that replaces hundreds of analog components, making these UDH Hybrid wireless mic systems a reliable choice for all multi-channel uses.

{vocopro.com}





**ROLAND
M-5000**

The M-5000 live mixing console, based on Roland's O.H.R.C.A (Open High Resolution Configurable Architecture), brings configurability to live mixing consoles by providing a mix engine of 128 freely definable audio paths. The M-5000 offers an open audio architecture, with support for Dante, MADI, Waves SoundGrid and Reac audio protocols. rolandus.com

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{warwick.de}



ZILDJIAN

L80 LOW VOLUME CYMBALS

Zildjian's L80 Low Volume cymbal is for drummers looking for a quieter sound without losing the feel of a Zildjian cymbal. It is ideal for practice rooms, drum lesson rooms or low volume gigs. A specialized pattern, designed to deliver musical sound and lower volume, is combined with a proprietary alloy and then given a matte finish that enables the L80 Low Volume cymbal to be up to 80-percent quieter than a traditional cymbal.

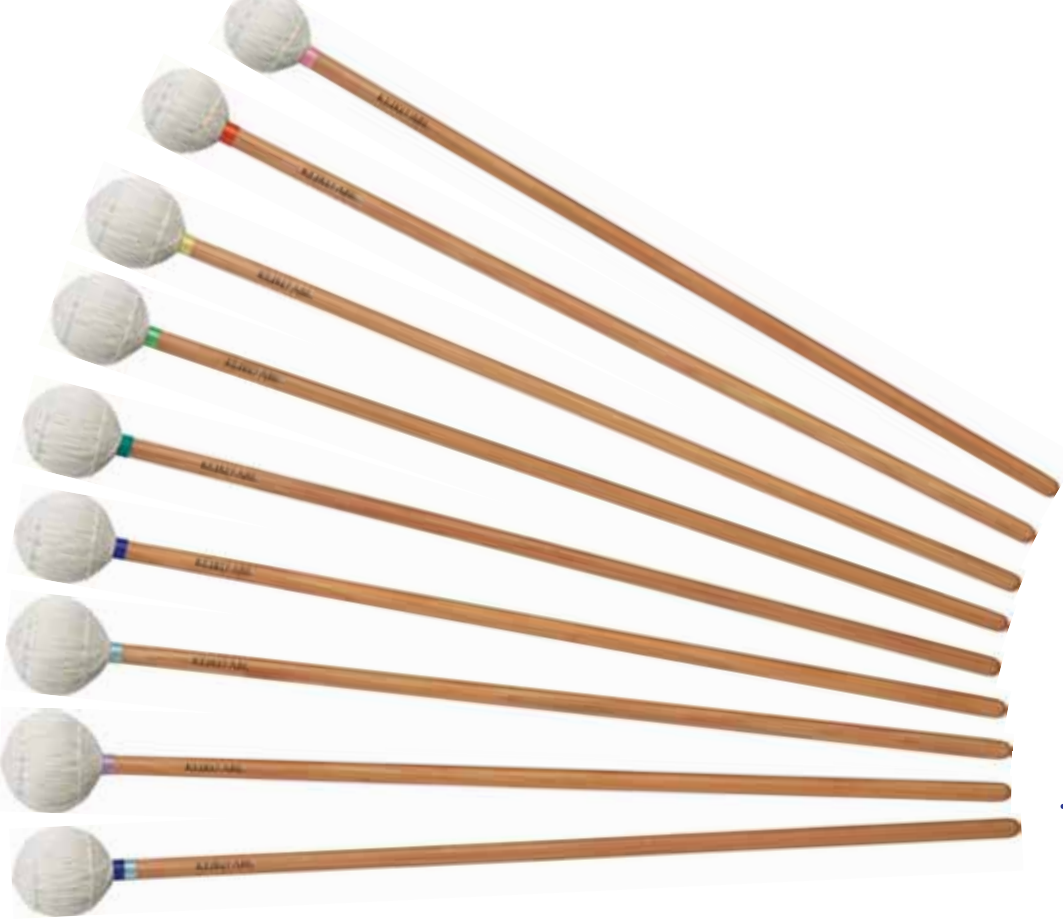
{zildjian.com}

KICKPRO BASS DRUM PILLOW

The KickPro Bass Drum Pillow combines a weighted core with a non-skid, rubberized bottom and a fleece cover, letting the Pillow be easily positioned with as much or as little contact with the bass drumhead as desired, yet keeping it securely in place without applying Velcro or other adhesives.

{kickpropillow.com}





YAMAHA
KEIKO ABE
MARIMBA MALLETS

Yamaha has introduced the MKAW series of Keiko Abe signature marimba mallets.

Designed with input from Abe, the MKAW series features Birch shafts (unlike the MKA series' Rattan shafts), and includes nine different degrees of soft-to-hard mallets that make it easy for artists to select a voiced set of four for any musical situation.

{yamaha.com}



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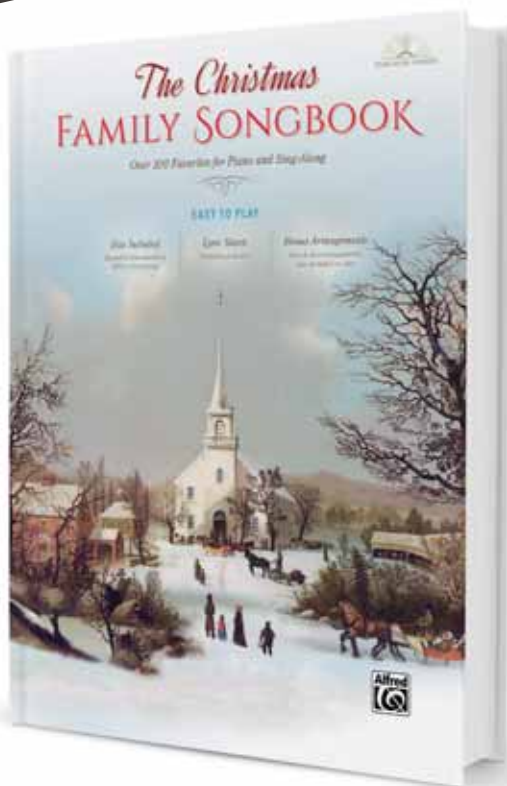


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Alfred's *The Christmas Family Songbook* comes as a beautiful hardcover keepsake edition featuring over 100 popular Christmas songs that can easily be played at the piano and for family sing-alongs. Each song in *The Christmas Family Songbook* is arranged for easy piano and includes lyrics and guitar chord frames. The multimedia disc within contains MP3 demonstration recordings for every song and printable lyric sheets to all of the songs and carols provided. MSRP \$34.99. alfred.com



KORG SV1-73 & -88

Korg's SV1-73 and -88 pianos are now available in limited edition Black Reverse models, including a black RH3 keyed with red accidentals. The SV1 features 30 sounds, including a compendium of electro-mechanical, transistorized, tape-driven, analog and early digital keyboards. Vintage FX chain and amp modeling enhance the keyboards with six separate stages of signal processing. korgusa.com

YAMAHA REFACE MOBILE MINI KEYBOARDS

Yamaha's reface (sic) Mobile Mini Keyboards reimagines the interface of four classic Yamaha instruments. The series boasts built-in speakers, 37 keys with professional-grade HQ-Mini action and battery-powered portability. Available in reface YC (combo organ), CP (combo piano), CS (control synth) and DX (modeled after Yamaha's DX7), these keyboards connect with external speakers, smartphones, tablets, MIDI devices and computers. yamaha.com



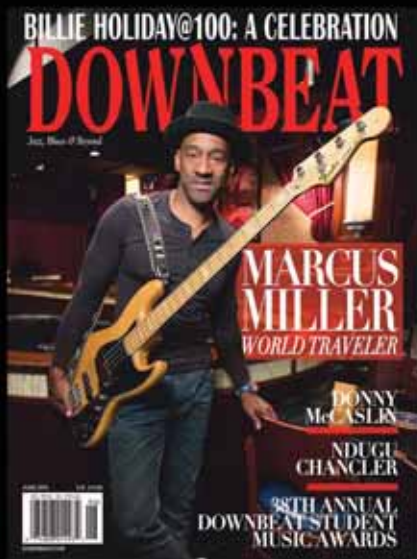


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Jean Baptiste's TP717 Merveille Professional Trumpet is a hand-assembled instrument designed to meet the standards of performance sought by professional players. The TP717 features a lightweight hand-hammered bell and a large step-bore that, along with its fast taper bell, creates a dark, smoky tone well-suited for jazz.

{jeanbaptiste.com}



THOMASTIK-INFELD ALPHAYUE STRINGS

Thomastik-Infeld's Alphayue student violin strings are designed to be the first string in a student's journey. Their advanced synthetic core delivers a rich, colorful sound that is difficult to achieve with solid steel core strings. Alphayue strings boast a long lifespan and are unaffected by temperature and humidity changes.

{connollymusic.com}

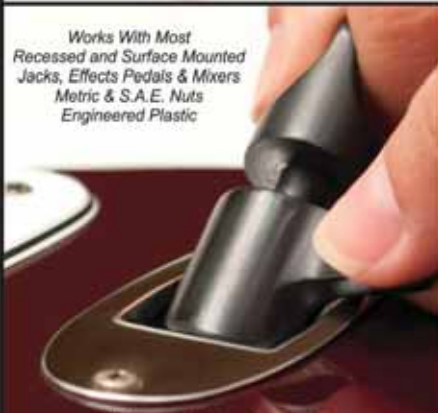


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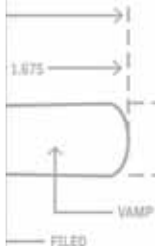
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{daddario.com}

NUMARK

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Numark's HF Wireless DJ Headphones are designed to free the DJ from the restrictions of a traditional fixed-length headphone cable, allowing greater movement and flexibility while performing. The HF headphones use Bluetooth 4.0 technology with NFC pairing and feature a wireless range of over 30 feet.

{numark.com}



AKAI

MPD SERIES

Akai Professional has introduced its new MPD series of pad controllers. The MPD series models feature ultra-sensitive Thick Fat MPC pads, as well as an expanded control set to maximize the sounds and effects available to the user, plus iOS compatibility using the Camera Connection Kit and free software (including Ableton Live Lite and Big Bang Drums).

{akaipro.com}

TRUSST

SCRIM FABRIC

TRUSST has released a new line of its Scrim fabric designed to cover trussing of different sizes, as well as tripod stands and X-stands, to provide a neater, more polished appearance to stages and DJ booths. TRUSST Scrim will not only conceal unsightly cables and cords for a much cleaner look, but it can also be used with uplighting.

{trusst.com}



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Gayle Beacock

Beacock Music
Vancouver, Washington

We try to have a look that we maintain not only throughout our store and education center, but on our website, as well. And if we have off-site shows, we have “our look.” For us, that’s a Northwest-y natural look.

For example, we made an old-fashioned trail sign with wood for the back-to-school season, that says rentals are “15 steps to the left” and accessories are “29 steps this way.” We just try to make it fun. The design elements are hopefully helpful and convey to the customers what we want them to know.

There are four levels that we talk about all the time. 1) The store has to be immaculately clean. 2) The product has to be organized and priced. 3) Everything has to be [well-]displayed. 4) And then you do your seasonal displays and decorations. So there are four layers that we’re always working on. Is it clean? Is it organized? Are there some good displays? And then, do we have the appropriate decorations?

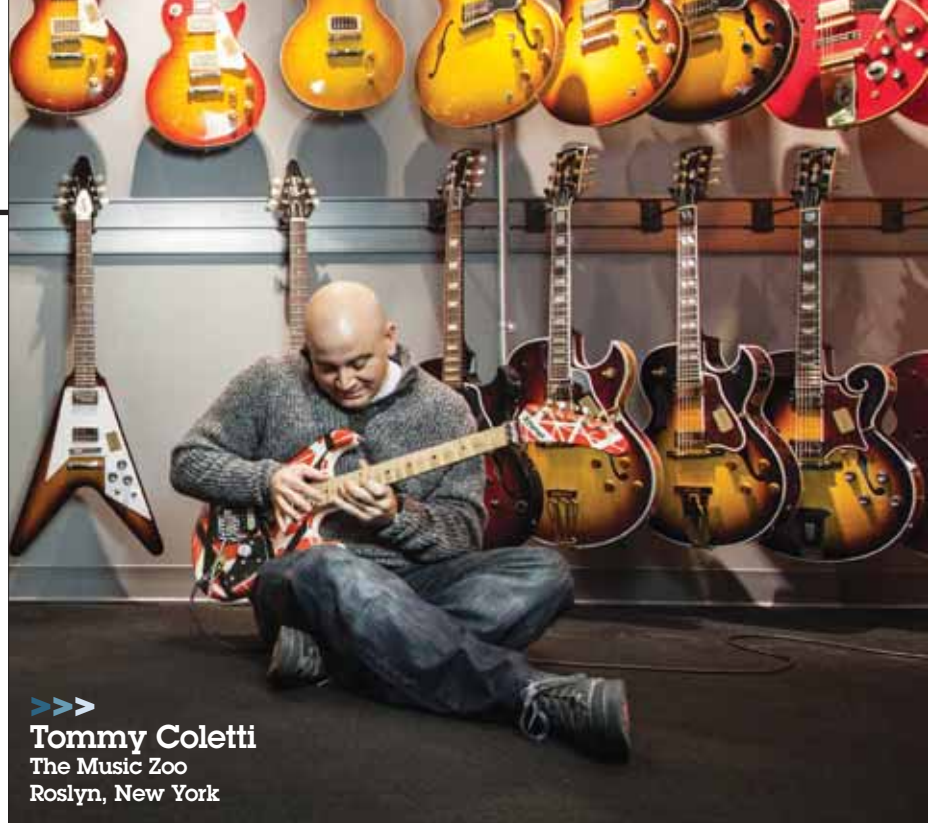


Mike Craig

Gelb Music
Redwood City, California

Through the years the store has morphed just by adding more and more rooms, and we try to theme those rooms based on the store. Everything was in one room at one point, but now we have an acoustic room, and a small boutique amp room, and we have an area where you can get all your bass gear, and then guitars pretty much throughout the store.

We’re remodeling the drum shop now. Do we need to? Probably not, but it’s nice to have a new look and feel. And when you do that people tend to come in and say, “Wow, I never really looked over there,” and they discover things. Kind of the way the Nordstroms and Macys of the world change their floor up on a daily basis, just to have [the customer] see things differently. We try to do that in a way that makes a little bit more sense [to us], just to have fun with it. After all, it’s music.



Tommy Coletti

The Music Zoo
Roslyn, New York

What makes your store’s design stand out?

As a consumer in different places, when you walk into an Apple store, or walk into an Urban Outfitters, or any of the proactive modern retailers, they’re doing things differently, and they’re finding more inventive ways to display products. As advice to a retailer that’s thinking about designing their store, don’t walk into another guitar store when you’re designing your store. Walk into a different retailer and see who’s doing things differently. It’s about the consumer.

We’ll go into our store and just move everything. The Les Paul that was in the left side of the store just goes to the right side of the store. Really fundamental

stuff. Because, at least for us — you know that old rule, 80 percent of your business is done from 20 percent of your customer base — you want those same people to continue to have a different experience. If they keep coming back and seeing that XYZ bass that you had in the left corner of the store, and it has a pile of dust on it from 1994, they cease to see it, and it doesn’t even exist to them. But if you clean it up and stick it somewhere in the front, they say, “Oh, when did you get this in?”

To me the lighting in the store was really important. I spent a boatload on the lighting because I wanted the right colors on the bursts of the guitars.

There’s this big push now to LED lighting. And I get it, because obviously there’s a cost savings and there’s energy savings. But, when I look at an LED light and I look at a warm halogen light, it’s like night and day to me. It’s like the difference between microwaving your food and actually cooking it on a grill. Do you want your guitars to hang under fluorescent lights? What’s the energy expense that you’re going to incur in the end? What’s it worth to you to spend an extra 10 percent on your lighting when you go to redesign your store? Those are things that I think retailers should think about. Don’t always go for the cost savings. **MI**

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