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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE I BY KATIE KAILUS

CREATE A BRAND

ho are you as a business? What do your customers think of when they see your logo, store or website? Branding is one of the most important aspects of business — and, when done right, it can yield great results. Most big box retailers have it down pat. Target offers a witty and modern feel in both its store signage and TV advertisments. Urban Outfitters maintains a hip yet vintage vibe, from its clothing offerings right down to its selection of records, while Whole Foods boasts a natural and earthy feel which pairs nicely with its assortment of organic foods.

A few MI retailers have mastered their branding as well, such as Chicago

Music Exchange, which attracts acoustic enthusiasts with its vintage vibe and large selection of new and used instruments. The Music Zoo in Roslyn, New York, draws current and aspiring rockers with its corroded metal guitar wall and cool lighting.

Developing a brand strategy can seem like a large undertaking, but, as we learn in this month's cover story "From Puppets to Profit," page 40, it can be as simple as identifying your target audience. When ABC Music in Northern California was having trouble getting its target market — moms — into its store, it reached out into a whole new product category: educational toys and games.

"Our target audience has always been mom," said Stan Houston, who owns the two-location dealership with his wife, Marianne. "We think that's great, but we still have to get her into the store."

After launching the new product mix, the Houstons decided it was time for a new look as well, so they remodeled their Livermore, California, location, and debuted a new website and a new name — Mozart, Einstein & Me.

"Before the turnaround, we had chairs in the back by the lesson rooms that not a lot of people sat in," Stan said. "Now, with the [games and toys available] we have more moms hanging at the store, sitting here playing a game with one child, while the other one is taking a lesson. Kids are tugging at their moms asking, 'Can we please go into the store?"

Branding the store as a place to "feed and enhance the right side of the brain" not only increased Mozart, Einstein & Me's mom-base, but it also now draws in grandparents.

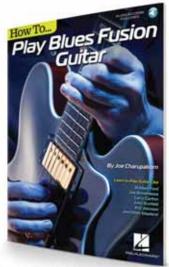
"They look in the window and see the educational toys mixed with the instruments," Stan said. "They want their grandchildren to be successful. They grew up in a different era, so their values are inherent there."

Read over this month's cover story and ask yourself, "Am I reaching my target audience?" Could stocking a few leather goods alongside high-end acoustic offerings draw more traffic? Is it time to redesign my store's 20-year-old logo to attract a new wave of aspiring teenage rockers? Even the smallest change can make a big difference. **MI**

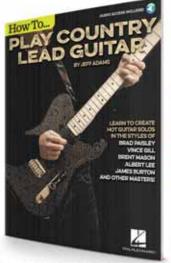


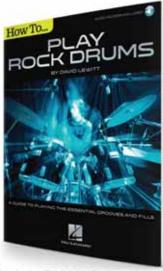
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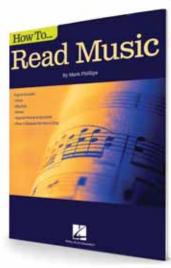
HOW TO PLAY **ROCK DRUMS**

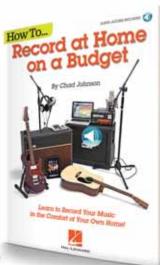
by David Lewitt

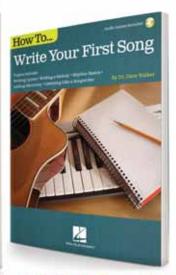
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LETTERS

Shout-outs to Staff

/e're very humbled by the Music Inc. [October 2015] cover story. I need to say thanks to all the people who work so hard in their career at Ray's Midbell Music. Thanks especially to our leadership team: Whitney Turner, Tim Barrett, Josh Tackett, and Jane Merritt ... I'm so excited for the future! Thanks also to Brenda Smith and Cory Birch for stepping up in so many ways, and to Logan Lansink for giving the show floor 110 percent. Last but not least, very special thanks to Lorna Stamp for 15-plus wonderful years and friendship ... we'll miss you, and we hope you enjoy your retirement years!

> Mike Guntren Manager Ray's Midbell Music Sioux City, Iowa

Collaborative Spirit

hank you for providing your readers with a peek into Line 6's innovative culture and collaborative spirit in your October 2015 issue. I am very grateful for the extremely talented team we have at Line 6 and how their efforts continue to push forward the boundaries of what is possible in our industry. Their passion is what makes it a pleasure for me to come to work every day!

Marcus Ryle President & Co-founder Line 6, Inc. Calabasas, California

Continued Support

s we celebrate our 91st anniversary in the music industry, we would like to take this moment [following the Retail Profile in *Music Inc.*'s October 2015 issue] to say "thank you" to our many friends that have made us South Carolina's oldest piano and organ retailer.

At Rice Music House we are proud of our 80-year history with



Steinway & Sons. As the oldest Steinway & Sons dealer in the Southeastern United States, we are committed to a tradition of excellence that has made more universities and colleges join the list of All-Steinway Schools. We look forward to completing that process soon with Coker College in Hartsville, South Carolina.

As the oldest Hammond Organ dealer in the United States (since 1938), our commitment to provide the most recognizable voice in gospel music continues to grow with each passing year. We also must thank the dedicated team at Roland for the groundbreaking work that has brought forth some of the most amazing instruments that our industry has seen.

The opportunity to foster music education, performance and competition has been a focal point of our company from the very beginning. Working closely with private, public and collegiate music educators to encourage the next generation of pianists is one we cherish. The opportunity to promote, sponsor and assist with major piano events, such as the Hilton Head International Piano Competition, piano student scholarships awards with local piano teacher organizations and the Southeastern Piano Festival is part of our ongoing investment in the future of the piano.

In addition to the organizations already mentioned, we would be remiss not to say "thank you" to the Chamber Music Series at the Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia Music Teachers Association, South Carolina Music Teachers Association, the South Carolina Philharmonic, University of South Carolina School of Music and the many other music

schools across the state.

During the past 91 years, the strength of this company has come from a tireless and dedicated team of men and women who have helped to build Rice Music House into the tradition of excellence it has today. Our current team includes piano technician Russell Osborne, customer service specialists Larry Cornish and Felix Jeter and our Vice President Robert Schaeffer, together they have over 80 years of service at Rice Music House.

We realize that the best part of our company can be found in the thousands of pianos and organs located in the homes, schools, houses of worship and performance venues across our great state. Like all of our fellow music merchants, we realize that the gift of music is both a lifetime investment and a lifetime gift.

While the methodology used to attract our next client has changed many times during our 91-year history, the introduction of modern social media and customer engagement tools prompted us to join with and launch the International Make Music Day in our home market during 2014. We embrace the change and welcome the opportunity for continued growth and success in this industry that our mutual passions bring us to.

To everyone who has stepped inside of any of our many different showrooms over the years, we once again say, "Thanks for allowing us to be a part of your musical journey."

Jyotindra M. "JP" Parekh President Rice Music House Columbia, South Carolina

Fostering Creativity

hanks for including my comments in your story on the state of the electric guitar market [in the October 2015 issue].

While the current data shows that acoustic instrument sales are outpacing sales of electrics, there is still cause to be optimistic.

Today's musician has access to and is influenced by a wider variety of input than ever before. We've met skatepunks who play bluegrass, heavy metal musicians who love hip hop, classical players who love EDM, and limitless other crossovers and fragmentations. The musical vision these players seek to realize is often an amalgam of numerous different styles and genres.

It's our opinion that because these instrumentalists live in a world of so many diverse interests, they will come upon the electric guitar in the course of their musical exploration. We meet their needs by building electrics with highend components that are playable and great-sounding — but are affordable enough to leave room in their stable for other instruments that also foster creativity.

Promoting musical diversity is essential to the continued growth of our industry at all levels. Thanks again for including us in the story.

Ashley Atz Director of Marketing & Artist Relations The Music Link Hayward, California

Friendly Advice

m writing to follow up on a recent article ["Quality Control," in *Music Inc.*'s October 2015 issue]. I would like to

add that our increase in sales [at Hot Licks Guitar Shop in Waldorf, Maryland,] this year has been due to taking our customer service to a whole new level. I have once-a-week sales and product training meetings where we discuss everything from a customer entering the shop to when they leave with their products in hand.

One of my big areas of concern is product knowledge, if you know the ins and outs of a said product, you're more likely to sell it than a salesperson who tries to fake his way through a demo. Every week I highlight a category for training and let the resident department manager lead the training. This has helped out my shop big time. When employees have to take time off, I

have the freedom to schedule any one of my employees to work any department in the store, and we have a lot of customers that appreciate the level of knowledge that we offer on a daily basis.

So, my best advice to shops that want to see increases in sales is: Start with product knowledge meetings.

> Dan Harsha Shop Manager Hot Licks Guitar Shop Waldorf, Maryland

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InsideRETAIL

- Reverb Integrates with e-commerce platforms
- > StringWorks
 Moves to Geneva, Illinois

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> Cascio Interstate Music Sponsors guitar competition

RETAIL

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CENTER I BY DAVID BALL

AVENUE OF ONE'S OWN

nown for focusing on education, Contemporary Music Center has continued to build its reputation within the community with the help of its in-house venue, @4410. Equipped with a stage that's all its own, the Chantilly, Virginia-based retailer has found ways to partner with schools and local organizations to get the word out — and, in doing so, has increased customer traffic by 100 percent.

@4410

he last time *Music Inc.* checked in with Contemporary Music Center in 2012, owner Menzie Pittman's summer Rock Camp was growing like gangbusters, having nearly doubled the size of its student clientele in the program's fifth year.

Following an excursion to Nashville, Tennessee, in which a group of Pittman's students played a gig at Two Old Hippies, Pittman decided that it would make sense to create his own venue — one reminiscent of his own favorite clubs that he'd played as a touring musician. "Not only did we have a good vision of how it had to work sonically, but we had a really good vision of how it needed to work through historical recognitions."

So, he spoke with the building



Contemporary Music Center hosts community events to help its venue's reputation to go viral

owner of CMC's Haymarket, Virginia, location, and soon he had a venue up and running, complete with its own unique design.

Pittman said that having a room with a particular kind of ambiance, in a way, markets itself. "I knew that, if there's a benefit to the digitally distracted, it's that they all have cameras on them," he said. "If you make the room look completely unique, every time somebody's in there having fun, they're going to snap a picture and put it

on their social media. So, the room is a walking advertisement for teen conversations. And that's something that's created this culture with kids when they come to play."

PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

chieving a certain vibe was only part of the equation, though. Shortly after opening @4410, Pittman got to talking with a teacher at the helm of one of the local schools' lit magazines. Every year, the teacher

rented a stage and P.A. system for their annual open-mic-night fundraiser, but Pittman was able to offer the magazine a more convenient solution.

"I said what would happen if we did your open-mic night in @4410, and we have your kids run the evening? They're the MC, they put out the word, they get it to the school, and they do the ticket sales. But we give you the gate. If we exchange something, perhaps we can exchange for an ad."

The event was so successful that, by the following year, the magazine was well over its fundraising goals. Other schools' programs caught on, including choral groups and youth service groups in need of fundraising. This led to more traffic overall at CMC. "They keep the gate, but we have a full house of people that otherwise may not have a reason to come here. And then they find out about [the venue], and come back to see the shows."

And since people in the local community have started sharing their positive experiences in the room on Twitter and Instagram, CMC's venue has gone viral. "But they're not talking about us. They're talking about them, and about them having a great time with us. So as a unit, everybody is winning." MI





SWEETERWATER I EXPANSION

SWEETERWATER MAKES PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL EXPANSION

Sweetwater has announced plans to expand creating approximately 285 new jobs by 2018. The expansions and renovations will be in addition to three expansion projects completed since June of 2014. Sweetwater expects total full-time employees to grow to more than 1,000 by the end of 2018.

The company plans to invest \$8.8 million to make additions and renovations to its current 320,000-square-foot Fort Wayne campus at 5501 US Hwy 30 W.

The first of several expansions in the planning stage is a 16,000-square-foot building to house Sweetwater's marketing and merchandising departments, including a state-of-the-art video studio. Construction will begin this fall and hiring is ongoing.

Sweetwater Founder and President Chuck Surack commented,

"Sweetwater continues to grow at a remarkable pace, both in sales and in number of employees. In 2014, sales were up by 28 percent over the previous year, and we anticipate similar results for 2015. New expansion of our campus will build our capacity to ensure that we remain the country's most respected dealer in instruments and high-technology equipment for musicians, recording studios and broadcasters."

Through the efforts of Greater Fort Wayne Inc., Sweetwater will be receiving an incentive package, valued at \$3,117,089, from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, Northeast Indiana Works, and the City of Fort Wayne. The package includes a 10-year abatement from Fort Wayne of real property taxes and a 10-year abatement of personal property taxes (equipment).

REVERR I PARTNERSHIE

Reverb Integrates With e-Commerce Platforms

Reverb.com has announced that it has completed integrations with leading e-commerce platforms Shopify, BigCommerce and Magento. With this announcement, any dealer whose shop is built upon one of those platforms can sell more effectively on the Reverb.com marketplace.

The integrated website plugins instantly sync dealer inventory to the Reverb.com marketplace so that any changes to product availability, descriptions or prices are reflected immediately, eliminating inventory discrepancies and reaching new customers without any increase in workload.

"Independent musical instrument retailers operate in a very competitive market with low margins," said David Kalt, founder and CEO of Reverb.com. "Reverb.com's low fees and incredible user experience are big advantages for them, and now, with our integrations to leading e-commerce platforms, there's no reason for them not to list everything with us. We want to be the only place anyone would ever want to buy, sell or trade instruments and gear, and this is a big step in that direction."

The new integrations will also help them leverage Reverb.com's marketing and ad-

"Most small shops rely solely on word of mouth for growth, as they

vertising efforts.

don't have the manpower, expertise or budget for an effective online marketing effort," Kalt added. "By connecting to these big e-commerce platforms, we can more easily feature our dealers' inventory in our ad campaigns. In effect, we become their marketing team." STRINGWORKS I RELOCATION

StringWorks Moves to Geneva, Illinois

Wisconsin, StringWorks, a cello, violin and viola shop, has relocated to 327 Franklin St., in Geneva, Illinois.

StringWorks sells instruments, cases and bows, but no accessories or sheet music, owner Todd French told the *Kane County Chronicle*.

French, who lives in California, said the business in Appleton relied on family, but combined with retirements and a "scrappy" economy, it was time to relocate. French said he chose Geneva, because of its beauty and location, but also because Evan Lowery would be his on-site manager.

Lowery has a degree in music and business and was one of French's scholarship recipients at Illinois Wesleyan University as an undergraduate. Lowery's then-fiancée, now his wife, is a teacher in the Fox Valley, and if this was going to work, French said, the business had to be relocated to Illinois.

"I scoured around for the best place

for us to settle," French told the Chronicle.

He decided that Geneva and St. Charles fit the bill for their proximity to Chicago, the area having a high education level and wide variety of industry. He ultimately chose Geneva.

"It really seems perfect," French said. "It's tight-knit, separating itself from Chicago. We are our own vibrant community, the Fox Valley."

StringWorks hosted a grand opening during the weekend of Sept. 11–13.



Photo by the Kane County Chronicle/Shaw Media



MAIN DRAG MUSIC I EVENT

Main Drag Music Hosts Blackstar Clinic

Main Drag Music in Brooklyn, New York, recently hosted an intimate Blackstar evening for local musicians. Joined by Tad Kubler from The Hold Steady and Loren Molinare, Blackstar's product manager, attendees were treated to a clinic focused on Blackstar's Series One valve amps and its Artisan Series hand-wired guitar amps.

"Being able to sit with guitar players at their hometown, go-to music store and have an artist and brand expert walk them through the tone, flexibility and versatility of their favorite amps is so valuable," Molinare said. "The conversations we are able to have at these select dealer events with the players and staff are what continues to drive the passionate Blackstar team to provide players with the ultimate tools for self-expression. We are proud to have dealers such as Main Drag to host these grassroots events."

GUITAR CENTER I PARTNERSHIP

GUITAR CENTER PARTNERS WITH SUZUKI, OFFERS ONLINE PIANO PURCHASES

Guitar Center has teamed up with Suzuki to offer an online turnkey purchasing option for two of its popular acoustic piano models. The Suzuki SZG-53 Acoustic Grand Piano and the SZV-48 Acoustic Vertical Piano are now available through the online retail hubs of Guitar Center's family of brands.

In addition to making these pianos available to purchase, they also come standard with delivery service, set up and tuning, to anywhere in the continental United States. This lets Guitar Center brands ship brand-name acoustic pianos direct to the customer.

"Anyone who has bought an acoustic piano knows that it can be a complicated process," said Michael Amkreutz, GC's executive vice president of merchandising, marketing and e-commerce. "We have significantly simplified this process with our new Suzuki online acoustic piano purchasing and delivery program. When a customer orders a piano through our online channels, the ball is rolling immediately. In most cases, in a matter of days — their new piano is set up with white-glove service, tuned and ready to play. It's remarkably efficient and simple, and we're proud to be the first online brands to make this type of program a reality."





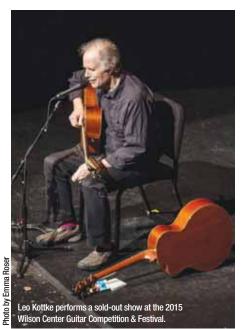
Cascio Interstate Music Sponsors Guitar Competition

Cascio Interstate Music of New Berlin, Wisconsin, provided promotional support for the third annual Wilson Center Guitar Competition & Festival, held Aug. 13–15.

Fifty-nine guitarists from 14 countries competed at the The Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts in Brookfield, a Milwaukee suburb.

A jury of renowned artists from each genre selected the semi-finalists from You-Tube and DVD applications received in the spring, and these guitarists were invited to perform in the live semi-final rounds on Aug. 13–14 at the Wilson Center. Six competitors in each genre were then selected to advance to the live final rounds on Aug. 15.

Cascio Interstate Music CEO Michael Houser said, "We were again proud to team up with our friends at the Wilson Center to help present and work to inspire guitar players and fans from across the globe. The multi-genre guitar stylings of fingerstyle, classical, jazz, and rock/blues of this year's performers provided an exciting experience for attendees throughout the three-day event. We are already working on plans for 2016!"



First-place winners in each genre received \$3,000 and an opportunity to perform as part of the Festival headliner concert featuring fingerstyle legend Leo

Kottke with special guest Antoine Dufour on Aug. 15. Second-place winners received \$1,500, and third-place winners received \$1,000.







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Note From Joe

Discover Tomorrow's Technology at NAMM: Increase Sales and Improve Your Business in 2016

Technology is intersecting with nearly every aspect of our lives, including our industry, as a wealth of new innovations drive our businesses forward and influence the ways in which our customers create, record and share music.

At The 2016 NAMM Show, you'll experience these changes firsthand as you explore new product introductions and take advantage of the many educational forums designed to make businesses more efficient and profitable through the use of technology.

Technology Products to Increase Sales and Grow Your Business

Your customers are embracing music technology like never before, moving seamlessly between our rich tradition of handcrafted instruments and the latest digital music and sound technology. From apps that help students learn faster, to products that enable musicians to create and share music on their smart phones, and new lighting and video ideas that enhance musical performances, NAMM exhibitors are now putting the finishing touches on thousands of innovative products they plan to debut in Anaheim. Your customers will look to you for guidance and to bring home the latest product news of what to buy in the New Year. I can't imagine how one could get the same information and knowledge from four days spent at NAMM in any other way.

Attending The NAMM Show gives you the first look at what's new for 2016, allowing you to demo groundbreaking products and meet inventors of the latest technologies. In the pro audio and lighting sector, new hardware and software releases will push the boundaries of live sound and event production. The 31st Annual NAMM TEC Awards show celebrates this fast-growing segment, recognizing creative excellence and gathering the community of audio equipment and software manufacturers, top music producers, engineers, sound mixers and musical artists. New this year, SOFTWARE.NAMM will showcase the emerging developer and app community, and illustrate how their solutions help to create more music makers worldwide.

Technology to Make Your Business More Efficient and Profitable

With enhanced education tracks, NAMM will help you understand and make the most of technology solutions that can help you grow your business. This year's Retail Boot Camp will feature SEO expert Larry Bailin, and-as an extension of this popular show feature-NAMM will also introduce Technology Boot Camp, providing a fundamental overview of the evolving tech landscape as it applies to retail. In addition, NAMM U will feature a variety of sessions designed to help dealers improve their websites and implement the latest digital marketing techniques. NAMM's new TEC Tracks (formerly The H.O.T. Zone) will showcase future-forward sessions in areas like game audio, app audio and other pro audio product breakthroughs. We're also working with A3E to present The Future of Audio, which will explore the many ways that new products and technologies will impact our industry going forward. Attending The NAMM Show will enable you to identify important technology trends, learn implementation tactics and gain helpful strategies so you can use these new solutions to your advantage.

While technology continues to play a role in our industry and our lives, some things will never change— music continues to define us as individuals, as a community and as a global industry dedicated to achieving NAMM's mission of a world in which the joy of making music is a precious element of daily living for everyone. See you at The NAMM Show, where the music begins.

Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO

Over the last five years. The NAMM Show has seen an increase in the following product categories, offering attendees hundreds of new products to review:



Pro Audio



Computer Hardware and Software



DJ Equipment



Lighting



Technology Media

NAMM presents more education and events designed to grow your business and celebrate product communities:



NAMM TEC Awards

Celebrating the Best in Professional Audio and Sound Production



SOFTWARE, NAMM

The Music Software Community Presented by NAMM & IMSTA (International Music Software Trade Association)



Technology Boot Camp

Introducing Technology Boot Camp, basics retailers need to know to utilize new technology to their advantage



NAMM U

How-to tips, tactics and strategies for SEO, website development and other aspects of digital marketing

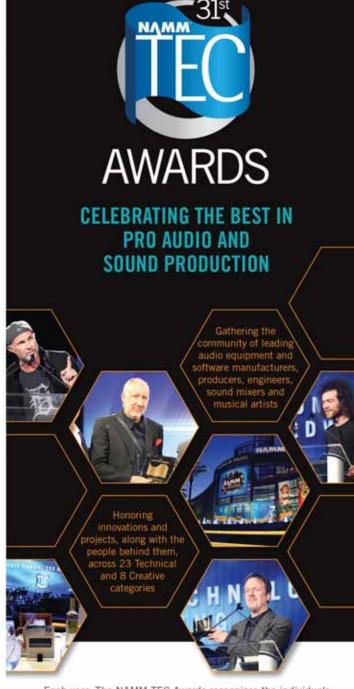


TEC Tracks

Formerly The H.O.T Zone, 70+ advanced sessions for sound, stage and studio pros

We're seeing innovation and change everywhere-especially at this year's NAMM with the big guys releasing major new products and the infant industry of brands we'd never heard of jumping right in the mix with them."

> Peter Dods OWNER OF EASY MUSIC CENTER, HAWAII



Each year, The NAMM TEC Awards recognizes the individuals, companies and technical innovations behind today's sound recordings, live performances, films, television, video games and other media. In addition to acknowledging the companies pushing the boundaries of sound, they also honor the creators behind these game-changing products, and celebrate the musical powerhouses who bring them to life.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit tecawards.org

TEC AWARDS • JANUARY 23, 2016 HILTON PACIFIC BALLROOM . ANAHEIM, CA











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SUPPLY

CASIO I BY DAVID BALL

THE GRAND BENCHMARK

n Sept. 16 at Lincoln Center in New York, Casio unveiled its first foray into the digital grand piano market with the release of the Celviano Grand Hybrid digital pianos. (See sidebar.)

Although these particular instruments — the Celviano GP-500BP and GP-300 — have been in development for the last few years, the release marks the achievement of one of the company's longterm goals.

"If you look back, we're 35 years old," said Stephen Schmidt, vice president of Casio's electronic musical instrument division, "and from day one our main goal has been to develop an instrument that closely mimics a grand piano. You could really say [that this has been in the works for] 35 years."

The Celviano Grand Hybrid digital pianos both feature Casio's AiR Grand Sound Source, which includes the sound profiles of three historical grand piano styles: the Berlin grand, the Hamburg grand and the Vienna grand. Both models also employ Casio's Grand Acoustic System, which mimics the sound of a grand piano as it emanates from above and below the soundboard.

To achieve an authentic



Casio's Celviano Grand Hybrid raises the bar for digital pianos

Berlin grand piano sound, Casio partnered with C. Bechstein Company. Schmidt said that's when the Grand Hybrid design really started to take off.

"We developed a proprietary mechanism using the same wooden keys that Bechstein uses," Schmidt said. "They're full-sized wooden keys made from Austrian spruce. In effect, our action mimics an actual grand piano's action, with the hammer action; but instead of striking strings, it strikes a contact."

"The 'Berlin grand' is modeled after the C. Bechstein grand piano," Schmidt continued. "C. Bechstein's engineers went to Tokyo, and then the Tokyo engineers went to Germany to perfect that sample. It has all the nuances, so that everything is as close as it could be to the authentic sound, critiqued by the makers."

A NEW BENCHMARK

Chmidt acknowledged that, before the introduction of

the Celviano and Privia lines, Casio's emphasis had been on building more portable pianos.

"Everybody thinks we started out with toy pianos, but we actually started out with serious professional pianos, where the benefit at the time was portability," Schmidt said. "There was a point in our history a few years later that the company said, 'We want to make pianos that everyone has access to.' So, we went a little bit more towards the entry-level and mass [market] pianos."

Then later, the company's Celviano and Privia lines introduced players to professional level console-style and 88-key digital pianos. But, "What [the Celviano Grand Hybrid] does is it puts [Casio] in another league. By partnering with C. Bechstein and utilizing some of their own technology, it really gives us a kind of jump ahead that would have taken us longer to get to.

"I think this sets a new benchmark," Schmidt went on. "There have been products that have attempted to do something like this, but not to this extent.

"We've put everything we had into this to get us as a company to a new level. We're always striving to improve our brand, and the value of our brand, and the prestige of the brand. I think that's what we've done. And the good news for the consumer is it'll drive more of our competitors to go beyond what they've done — to improve their products.

"I think more and more, you're going to start to see the acceptance of this type of piano with better artists because it has that touch and feel that an acoustic has. You can hold down a key, and you'll hear the resonance of that note while you can still be playing other notes. That's an acoustic nuance.

"What'll happen is, some of this technology will makes its way down to other products in the future. It's going to be a better experience for the consumer in the long run." MI

RELEASE AT THE LINCOLN CENTER

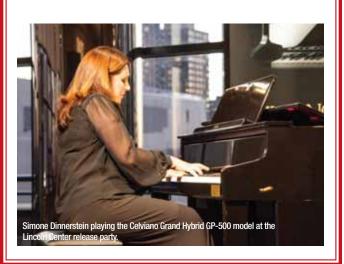
By Ken Micallef

Casio introduced the Celviano Grand Hybrid during an event at Lincoln Center's Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse on Sept. 16. Representatives from Casio Worldwide and Celviano development partners, C. Bechstein, were present as well as Sony artist Simone Dinnerstein, who performed on the new model.

"Casio used to be associated with toy keyboards," said Mike Martin, Casio's general manager of marketing. "But we have come a long way since then. The company has transformed, from its higher-end product to the Privia digital pianos. The Celviano is on a completely different level. This is a groundbreaking achievement."

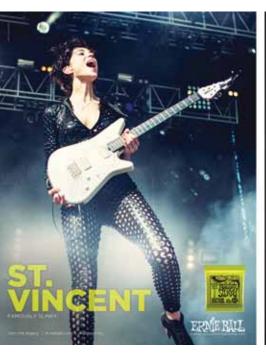
Pianist Simone Dinnerstein closed the event with selections from Bach's "Goldberg Variations" and Schubert's "Impromptus."

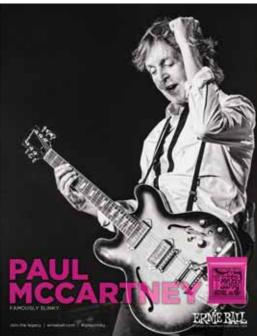
"It's wonderful to play on an electronic instrument that has incredible subtlety of sound and touch," Dinnerstein told the audience. "This piano creates a singing, sustained sound which is very unusual." MI

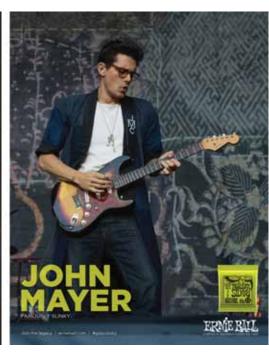












ERNIE BALL I MARKETING

ERNIE BALL LAUNCHES ICONIC CAMPAIGN

When Dustin Hinz, executive vice president of marketing at Ernie Ball, joined the company back in February, he challenged himself to create a new comprehensive advertising campaign for the iconic brand that capitalized on its rich history and roster of storied artists. A loyal Ernie Ball string user since the age of 14, Hinz decided to focus on what inspired him, his marketing team, and much of the public at large to play guitar.

"Music is an influencer-driven culture, where the dreams of becoming a guitar player are sparked by a hero," Hinz said. "Whether a live experience, a song that resonates to our cores or a poster of a favorite artist pasted on our bedroom wall, every guitarist can recall the moment his or her dream was born. By focusing on the reason we all play, and highlighting the icons and stars who choose Ernie Ball, we're conveying the purest testament to the Ernie Ball family's legacy of quality and tone."

Hinz approached a few players with the idea, eventually getting everyone from Slash, John Mayer and Jimmy Page to James Hetfield, Paul McCartney and St. Vincent to join the campaign. Dubbed "iPlaySlinky," each ad includes a iconic photo of the artist along with the year they began using Ernie Ball. Consumers can get in on the action too, by building their own custom iPlaySlinky ad, in the style of the campaign, on the Ernie Ball website, which Ernie Ball has been sharing with its social media audiences.

"The response to the campaign has been incredible, and speaks volumes about the strength of our brand," Hinz said. "A lot of string companies talk about tone, longevity and tensile strength, which we knew we could back up with our products. But we felt that would have been a 'me-too' marketing strategy, so we chose to allow our artists, and their longtime association with the brand, to speak for us."

Hinz is confident that this campaign — which officially launched last month — will capitalize and expand on the brand's legacy and show that Ernie Ball is more powerful than ever, driving demand among musicians, and ultimately purchases.

Hinz offered some advice to retailers that may be working on advertising campaigns of their own, underscoring the importance of an engaging story to convey the experience of playing music.

"The most important question to ask yourself as a retailer is, 'How can I best connect with your customer and entangle them in your experience?" Hinz said. "Price and selection are important, but the experience is king — from the guitar selection process, to the expert staff that helps them navigate the slew of options, to programs that help further their passions and inspire the need to pick up and play, as well as environments where they can meet other like-minded players. Give players a reason to play, and you'll see your business grow and generate invaluable good will." {ernieball.com}





LA BELLA I OPENING

La Bella Strings Opens Showroom in Brooklyn

BY FRANK ALKYER & DAVID BALL

a Bella Strings has opened its new showroom at 225 34th St. in Brooklyn, New York. The company hosted a grand opening party at the new location on Oct. 3.

The new showroom will serve as La Bella's New York City home base for artists who live, work or are passing through New York. La Bella's entire string catalog, from electric guitar to international folk strings will be available to players involved in the artist program.

The showroom will also serve as a workshop for master luthier Mas Hino, who builds all La Bella Olinto basses by hand. The space is divided into three sections: a boutique section where select gear will be sold to the public; a repair shop open seven days a week; and a custom-build workshop where players can commission instruments built from scratch to exact specifications. Mas Hino NYC and Carbonetti Guitars will be heading sales in the boutique, repair department and custom build-shop.

This past September, *Music Inc.* sat down with Eric Cocco, general manager of La Bella strings, who gave us the grand tour of the company's new digs.

"Here, we're kind of redefining what a boutique instrument is, in the sense that Mas is building these [instruments] by hand, they're winding the pickups by hand, and I'm winding the strings by hand," Cocco said.

The showroom has already served as a creative workshop where new products have gone through all phases of research and development.

"We actually developed a whole new line of bass strings here, with Mas and a couple of really close friends," Cocco said. "So this is like ground zero for a lot of the creative ventures that we embark upon. But we're not only building, we're doing the retail thing too."

The new showroom will also be home to a few boutique aplifier lines, including Indigo Amps, Phil Jones Amplification and TecAmp.

"This is somewhat of a grand experiment," Cocco concluded. "But we hope to be here for awhile." {labella.com}

CONQUEST I ARTIST APPROVED

Caffery Chooses Conquest

onquest Sound has announced that Chris Caffery, guitarist with the Trans Siberian Orchestra and Savatage, has joined the Conquest Sound family of endorsers. Caffery uses the Custom Shop SNI Cables, which feature Conquest custom designed four-conductor wire and Neutrik straight and right angle gold plugs. The design offers full coverage braid shielded wire designed for maximum low frequency EMI noise rejection. {conquestsound.com}







SABIAN I EDUCATION

SABIAN LAUNCHES EDUCATION NETWORK WITH NYC ROUNDTABLE

Sabian recently launched its SABIAN Education Network (SEN) at The Collective in New York City. Hosted by SEN director Joe Bergamini, the event was a discussion panel featuring top educators Jojo Mayer, Mark Guiliana, Dom Famularo, Memo Acevedo, Anthony Citrinite, John Favicchia, Camille Gainer, Jim Mola, Rod Morgenstein and SABIAN CEO Andy Zildjian.

"The Sabian Education Network (SEN) is a community where drum teachers can obtain tools and exchange ideas to build their education and business skills," Bergamini said. "We have a members-only website where drum teachers have a forum to discuss issues pertaining to their craft and a sizeable library of videos and articles to assist teachers as well."

Additionally, SEN hosts online and live events to help drum teachers develop, manage and grow their teaching business.

"Everything from teaching materials to recruiting new students to bookkeeping is discussed in our community," Bergamini added. "The whole thing has been designed to help drum teachers and give them a voice and a place to make new professional acquaintances, compare notes and ask questions."

The next two live events will be held in Nashville, Tennesee, on Oct. 27 and San Antonio on Nov. 14.

SEN is open to all educators, including private home studio teachers, music schools and educational institutions.

{sabian.com/joinsen}

POLYMAKER I TECHNOLOGY

Polymaker Creates Guitar Using 3D Technology

3D Printing Solutions Australia recently created a fully functioning 3D-printed electric guitar out of Polymaker's PolyMax filament, chosen for its high strength and resistance to warping.

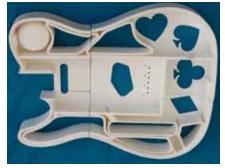
By printing the body of the guitar in multiple layers of Poly-Max, 3D Printing Solutions designer Michael Tyson built a durable instrument.

The design incorporates the four suits in a standard deck of playing cards in which each is individually embossed into the body. The completed product is a blue "hybrid" wood and PolyMax guitar featuring a maple neck and mahogany block fitted in the body to provide a deep tone and consistent sustain.

According to Tyson, 3D Printing offered considerable advantages over conventional woodworking techniques particularly when it came to the intricacies of the four-suit playing card motif found in the body. "Typically, musical instruments pro-

duce prototypes using wood or metal, which is understandable

but can be costly, time consuming and leave room for error," Tyson said. "3D printing prototyping allows for greater control and the ability to quickly make miniscule or significant changes that are perfectly accurate. This process can eliminate count-



less hours of trial and error while reducing production costs and generating a quality model."

{3dprintingsolutions.com.au}

OVATION I COMPANY

PRODUCTION OF OVATION GUITARS TO RESUME IN NEW HARTFORD

The New Hartford, Connecticut, factory that produced Ovation guitars for nearly a half-century before closing in the summer of 2014 will once again resume production.

Drum Workshop purchased the brand earlier this year from Fender Musical Instruments Corp. (FMIC) along with several other KMC brands. Fender had shuttered the plant in June 2014 and moved production to Asia, leaving only a small crew for repair and restoration work.

According to the *New Haven Register*, DW had plans to move the plant to California — where DW is headquartered. But after seeing the efforts of the plant employees in setting up leftover equipment for future use, the company decided to reopen.

"I'm really happy Chris Lombardi [DW CEO] was willing to take a chance on the place," Darren Wallace, one of the employees who set up the equipment, told the *Register*. "That wasn't their original intention, certainly." **{ovationguitars.com}**

KHS I WARRANTY

KHS Updates Hohner Harmonica Warranty

HS America has updated the Hohner Harmonica and Melodica warranty to better fit with the purchasing habits of today's consumer. Until now, customers who received a harmonica with a manufacturing defect straight out of the box had to send it back to the Hohner service department for repair or replacement.

The new 90 Day Diatonic Harmonica and Melodica Warranty, effective now, includes a 14-day grace period for the return of harmonicas and melodicas to the place of purchase for exchange. Retailers will be able to return these harmonicas for credit through KHS America. Chromatic, Tremolo, Octave and Orchestral Harmonicas are exempt from the return policy, however the warranty period for this catagory has extended from 90 days to six months.

"While there were a variety of reasons that this practice was employed, from sanitary issues to allowing our service techs to correct any user error, it simply doesn't fit today's market," said Drew Lewis, harmonica and melodica product manager for KHS America. "This new customer-centric warranty is a significant change that will allow dealers the ability to service their customers immediately without the fear of taking a financial loss."

{us.playhohner.com}

APPOINTMENTS

ROLAND EXPANDS U.S. TEAM



As part of its continued expansion, Roland U.S. has added to its team with new appointments in sales, management, support and HR.

Antonio Ferranti has been named piano strategy manager. He comes with a rich business background in sales and marketing, most notably as the recent vice president of sales at Alfred Music.

Quynh Nguyen has been appointed senior human resources manager. Mike McAndrew has been named district sales manager (DSM) for the Southwest U.S.

territory. Chris Agazaryan has joined the product team as product manager, Roland/BOSS accessories. Dana Toma has been promoted to the position of piano sales manager for the Western United States. Louie Gomez has joined Roland's Telesales department. Carlos Garcia has been promoted from contract employee to full-time administrator in the Roland Corporation U.S. Distribution Center.

Additionally, Roland U.S. made several key changes to its sales team that, it says, will enable the company to offer more focused dealer support and new perspectives on product development. Bob Bailey has been promoted to director of BOSS U.S. sales/marketing. Most recently, he held the position of key account manager. Denis Andelin has been named national accounts manager for BOSS and Roland products, and Brent LaCasce has joined the company as key account manager, handling all Roland and BOSS products. **(rolandus.com)**

FENDER ADDS DIGITAL OFFICER



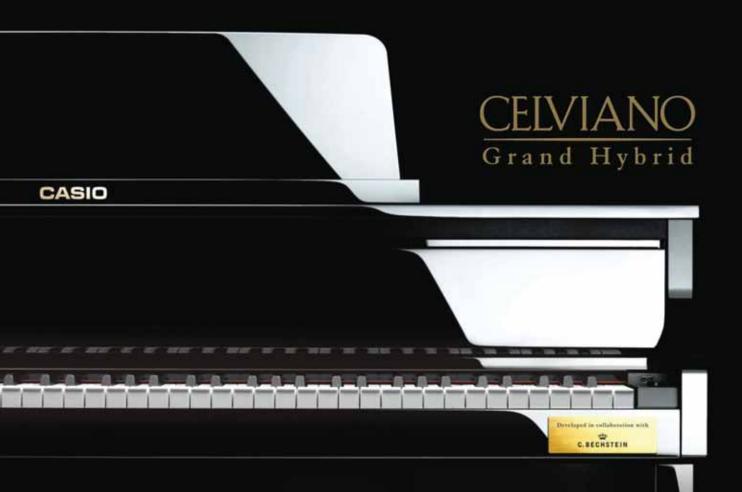
ender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) has hired Ethan Kaplan as its first chief digital products officer. Kaplan is tasked with building a new global digital products division to support the long-term growth and expansion of the Fender brand and to create deeper connections with its global community of players. Kaplan has nearly 20 years experience building brands and driving growth across music, technology and digital product development.

Most recently, Kaplan served as senior vice president and general manager of music at Gracenote, a *Tribune* media company. Prior to Gracenote, Kaplan was head of product, technology and engineering at Live Nation Entertainment's Labs division. **(fender.com)**

John Mlynczak has joined Noteflight as director of educational technology.

The Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) Executive Committee has added Sarah Hagan to its advisory board.

The Perfect Combination of Innovation and Tradition



- Natural Grand Hammer Action: Authentic piano touch with full-length wooden piano keys made with the same materials and processes as C. Bechstein, plus a revolutionary grand hammer action mechanism.
- New AiR Grand Sound Source: Delivers every subtle nuance of three legendary pianos: Vienna, Hamburg, and Berlin (developed with C. Bechstein), including mechanical sounds and several types of modeled resonance.
- Grand Acoustic Sound System: Multi-channel, six speaker soudn system recreates the sound field of an aoustic grand piano.
- Hall Simulator: Recreates world-famous concert halls, opera houes, cathedrals and other immersive spaces.



CASIO.
www.casiomusicgear.com



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INDEPENDENT RETAIL I BY TED ESCHLIMAN

EASON OF IMPRESSIONS

e forget how tiny our engaged but marginal music-making cross section of the population is compared to other professional and hobby industries. Our customers are players, students and people purchasing for players and students. The perpetual challenge of effectively advertising and promoting the store can be daunting for such a small market. The "traditional" media opportunities of print (newspaper, Yellow Pages, billboard, local magazines) and electronic (TV and radio) have been turned on their ear the last two decades. and it's arguably cost prohibitive to embrace these forms en masse like we did in the past.

The most cost effective way to reach out and touch someone is to dig into our database of familiar customers and ask them to return through direct mailing, blogs and special events aimed at them and (hopefully) their friends. Your best foot forward is a happy customer that tells friends and family about happy experiences with you.

The most important way to open up the "family" is to exploit



Make good **impressions** on first-time customers this holiday season

cycles of search, seasons that outsiders might come into our store and its resources. These seasons are Christmas and Back-to-School. The former has musicians buying more for either their musician friends or family (or themselves). and the latter has someone of influence, a teacher perhaps, freely promoting your store as a resource for what they might need to complete their newfound musical activity (band or orchestra).

This is a smart time to increase the advertising budget, and most of us do, but fair warning — you are about to embark on what should be called a Season of First Impressions. This is when that new person, maybe with the whole family, will step into your store for the very first time and experience your staff, your store layout and — for better or worse — your store culture.

Step back and see your store through newbie eyes. Your staff "lives" there. Like a teenager in her bedroom mess, native clutter and disorganization are invisible. Boxes on the display area may always be gone before day's end, but strangers assume the mess is perpetual. Not only order, you need signage that directs and enlightens. It needs to educate. Don't depend on staff only for these busier times; they won't have the chance.

Include everyone in the con**versation.** If a family is renting an instrument, talk to the kids. If they feel important during this first encounter, they will want to come back next time for their stepup instrument. They will warmly remember feeling included.

Be a host. We want to get people in and out the door and move on to the next customer, but you still want everyone feeling complete. If they are new to the store, this is the perfect opportunity to point out the myriad of other activities in the store, such as lessons and repairs. Don't assume folks already know this! You never know when mentioning guitars while renting a clarinet might make Dad reminisce about the garage band he once played in.

Keep the "corners" clean. Did you know health inspectors never look at the center of the floor? They check corners where the wall meets the floor because the only way these stay pristine is if cleaning is systematic and routine. Your restrooms have to be spotless, carpets stain-free and counters devoid of scratches. You can't afford to ignore this.

Invite them back. Never assume a customer will return. Be overt in your desire for them to come back. In the days of point and click, you need to habitually register your appreciation for their presence.

You only make a first impression once. Don't blow it! MI

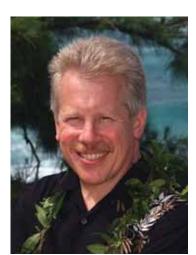
Ted Eschliman is a music industry veteran and co-owner of Dietze Music, based in Lincoln, Nebraska.

LESSONS LEARNED I BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Danger of Great Demos

icture this scenario: You go to a NAMM Show and hear an amazing demo of the latest, greatest whizbang product. Based on what you hear, you order lots of them because you're sure that your customers are going to be equally impressed. Then the product arrives and sales are disappointing. What happened? Well, it turns out your sales associates don't have quite the same chops as the clinician at NAMM, and therefore your customers are not motivated to buy.

Or there's another way that this can play out. Maybe you have an associate who becomes passionate about the product and gives demos that are just as good as what you heard at NAMM. But then, for some reason, you find that the return rate for this product is terrible or that the customers aren't recommending the product in question to their friends. Does this sound familiar? After that happened more than a few times to me at my store, I took it as a lesson learned. And now I'd like to share the solution with you.



Educate your customers and they'll reward you with repeat business

ASK OR YOU DON'T RECEIVE

learned to attach one simple condition to my purchase lorders when buying new products that I suspected would be difficult to demo. I insisted that I'd buy this new, untested product only if the manufacturer

could and would support my team's selling efforts. This could come in the form of visits by their clinician, training sessions by their sales rep, support videos, how-to guides and/or hands-on training at their facility. My goal was to enable my staff to make as compelling a presentation as I had seen when I saw the product introduction at NAMM. Remarkably, many suppliers were happy to provide precisely what I wanted. Make a point to ask suppliers for help in selling their products.

Just as it's important for manufacturers to

help dealers know how to use their products, it's imperative for dealers to offer that same level of service to their customers. If your associates are superbly effective at selling products, but offer no support to ensure the successful use of that product, then they are closely akin to the old snake oil salesmen! When a customer

gets a product home and can't make it work or gets results nothing like what they heard at the dealership, they're going to be terribly disappointed. At best, they'll return the product to your store. At worst, they'll keep it along with a healthy dose of animosity towards your store, your sales associate and possibly even the manufacturer. Customers like that are highly motivated to share with others their stories of disillusionment.

So, how do we keep this from happening? At the most basic level, if you sell a beginner's guitar, for instance, you should be providing lessons that encourage them to learn to play.

If you sell high-tech products, you should offer tutoring in the use of the product. Many dealers have had great success with YouTube training videos on the products they sell. They're not hard to produce, and they add great value beyond the hardware and software you've sold. I used to even offer playing tips at the point of demo. ("If you play an oboe patch as if it were a piano, it will sound like a terrible piano.")

Educate your customers and they'll reward you with repeat business and plentiful referrals. MI

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

STOCK SOMETHING

McPherson

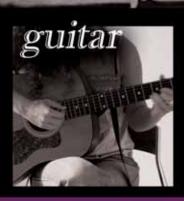


Musical instruments are an extension of our soul and deserve quality care. For 28 years, the original String Swing® guitar hanger has satisfied millions of music enthusiasts around the world. Its low-profile design is attractive and cradles your instrument comfortably and securely.

Each instrument is unique. The experts and craftsmen at String Swing® have created displays for almost every one. Ask your local retailer for an authentic String Swing® hanger, or shop online at www.stringswing.com.

String WING

Displays for everything musical



String







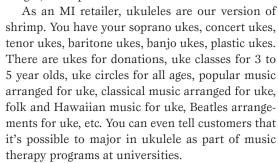


FROM THE TRENCHES I BY MYRNA SISLEN

Banking in on the Uke

f you saw the 1994 film "Forrest Gump," then you'll remember Forrest's army buddy Bubba, and the lecture Bubba gave Forrest about the endless versatility of shrimp. "Shrimp," Bubba said, "is the fruit of the sea. You can barbecue it, boil it, broil it, bake it, sauté it. Dey's uh, shrimp kabobs, shrimp creole, shrimp gumbo. Pan fried, deep fried, stir-fried. There's pineapple shrimp, lemon shrimp, coconut shrimp, pepper shrimp, shrimp soup, shrimp stew, shrimp salad, shrimp and potatoes, shrimp

burger, shrimp sandwich. That — that's about it."



Never, in my experience, has there been an instrument so versatile and reasonably priced. With great margins and little to no buy-ins, ukuleles have become a mainstay of my business. I have never seen an instrument that spans so many age groups and with so much print to back it up. So, this might be

a good time to update the many uses we have found for ukuleles and the way they are helping with our bottom line.



Lessons and giveaways are two great ways to bank in on the uke trend

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF THE UKE

will assume that you are already stocking ukuleles and uke print music. The most encouraging trend we are finding is that customers are moving towards the more expensive instruments, and we are selling almost as many stepup ukes as entry levels. This tells us that playing levels are going up and, thus, the demand for more advanced print music is also there.

At my store Middle C Music, we have just finished another session of ukulele lessons for 3 to 5 year olds. The lessons are

30 minutes long and each sixweek session ends with a little concert. We started these classes more than a year ago and they have become our fastest-growing lessons. The classes are taught by one of our piano teachers because she feels that ukulele is an excellent gateway to piano. She also has piano/uke classes for 3 to 4 year olds and 5 to 6 year olds. On the other end of the age spectrum, we offer uke circles for seniors. They meet once a week on Sunday afternoons, while the store is open. This brings in more people who buy more music and more instruments.

And then there are donations. All of us are deluged with requests for donations almost on a daily basis. I have found that the best "bang for my buck" in the ever-growing world of donations are ukuleles and uke lessons. The cost is minimal; we give an entrylevel uke like the Kala Dolphin or Shark, or the Amahi Flower series, and a free lesson by a staff member — which most importantly brings a new customer into the store. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and at the auctions, bids always go higher than posted. Everyone wins, and Middle C becomes the hero of the day. MI

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



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NEXT GEN RETAILING I BY STEPHEN OLSEN

Becoming the 'One'

re you just another employee? Are you the funny one, the prankster, the hard worker, the one who hides behind product displays to check your phone? Every business has all types of employees — some good, some bad. The question is: Who are you? I have always been of the mindset that if I make myself stand out in all the right ways then there's no way it could possibly go unnoticed by my superiors. Your superiors have a need and that need is to accomplish a goal — which

could be greater output or better quality. Every manager knows who their best performers are. We managers rely heavily on those whom we can count on the most and ideally either improve or remove those who cannot or will not strive to be better. You see all types of employees in retail stores, but the ones that always seem to stand out the most are those who either do the best, the most, and the fastest work or those that do the worst, the least and the slowest work.



BECOMING THE 'ONE'

ou as a retail employee should be striving to be "the one" that your boss comes to when they need something done above and beyond the normal call of duty. If your boss needs you to stay late then you should not only be willing to do it but happy to. This speaks volumes about one's character and the willingness to grow and

excel. Every business has employees that have to be asked to do everything, but it's the ones who not only perform their duties but perform them above and beyond that will be the first asked to move into an upper-level position. There are a lot of us managers out here who want to promote from within, but it's hard to do so when your staff is simply unable, or worse, unwilling, to grow into what managers need.

The willingness to grow and excel speaks volumes to mannagers

DRESS TO IMPRESS

Always maintain a professional appearance. If you come to work without a fresh shave, you're hurting yourself. If you come to work without your hair combed or with your hair wet, you're hurting yourself. If you come to work smelling like smoke, you're hurt-

ing yourself. Portray the perfect model of professionalism, which is looking good, smelling good and maintaining a confident and professional demeanor.

I've hired and fired numerous people, and the first ones to be considered for a job opening 100 percent of the time portray these qualities.

GROW, BABY GROW

o matter what your current position is, you always have room to grow. When I first started at Blues Angel Music, I had vastly less product knowledge than many of the current employees, and it was my job to lead them. I made it my own personal goal to learn everything I could. I was taking home — and still do to this day — all the information that I could to help me do my job better.

Every good employee should find ways to evolve, whether it's reading up on what's hot or joining a group like NAMM Young Professionals to meet others who are trying to advance themselves and the industry. Never sit idle. Set yourself apart, and conduct yourself with professionalism and you will succeed. MI

Stephen Olsen is the manager of Blues Angel Music in Pensacola, Florida, and a member of NAMM YP, a young professionals organization focusing on the future of the MI industry by providing opportunities to connect, learn and grow. Find out more at nammyp.com.

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RESPONSE

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MY TURN I BY RAVI

Millennial University

illennials are not to be ignored. According to Pew Research, 15 to 35 year olds are the largest generation and in two years will outspend baby boomers.

Business looks bright for those embracing millennial culture. Guitar gods vanished when glitz and glamour gave way to authenticity and relatability. Taylor Swift is the savvy girl next door, and the response to Bieber's innocent rise, arrogant fall, and introspective resurgence reflects millennial values.

Drawing comparisons to boomers often evokes negativity and condescension toward youth — a tendency that repeats itself with every generation. One must develop empathy for the customer and that begins by recognizing the events that shaped their values.

Events, such as 9/11, the collapse of Wall Street, rising cost of education, and high unemployment are largely the palette from which millennials paint. Consequently, they are truth seekers valuing people and purpose over products and profits.



ATTRACTING THE MILLENNIAL SHOPPER

illennials are not technologically savvy, but rather, technologically transparent — mobile devices are a seamless means for self-expression to cultivate social circles. Previous generations made friends lo-

cally by wearing sports team jerseys or rock band t-shirts. Today, we broadcast "likes" globally on social media and instantly engage with respondents. Millennials are the most socially connected and diverse generation.

To reach them, advertising must be mobile friendly and channeled through social media, conveying socially responsible brand messages over capitalistic promotional jargon. "Personal development" and "global impact" trumps "lifestyle." Millennials want to know how playing music empowers them to influence the world.

Playing instruments and writing music remain essential to personal and cultural development. In-store lessons now compete with a navigable online video lesson smorgasbord, which local teachers must recognize as a resource. Posting their own store branded videos

doubles as essential marketing, and they can also create lesson plans using available clips from highly regarded players. Yesterday's page numbers are today's clickable links.

In-person weekly lessons can become monthly, adding Skype sessions in between. Baby boomer parents working long hours will also appreciate the flexibility and time saved. This way, one can follow customers into their living rooms and increase overall engagement.

The most effective way to attract millennial customers is to hire millennial employees. The silent generation worked hard to support their families. Baby boomers work long hours to advance their careers. Millennials work comfortably and view going to work as a resultsoriented endeavor rather than a location-based or punch-clock activity. They work 24/7 when motivated by a larger vision and will constantly promote their activities on behalf of your brand to peers around the corner and across the globe. While consumers often use stores to browse and then close deals with competitors online, that is less likely if their "friend" is on the other end of the transaction. MI

Ravi Hutheesing is a popular motivational speaker, pilot and musician helping various industries as well as the Department of State prepare for the future. Learn more at Ravillnites com

'The most effective way to attract millennial customers is to hire millennial employees.'

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FROM THE TOP

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

FRED GRETSCH | GRETSCH

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

Because this is my 51st year in the business, my wife — who works with me every day at the company and has for 36 years — often reminds me of a simple question: how long do we have? It's already incredible that we've worked in the business for this long, and I want to continue, so I start the day by taking care of my health. As I've gotten older, I've realized that getting little sleep wasn't a formula for lasting much longer, so I work on getting a good night's rest. I exercise six days a week for an hour, including treadmill, weights and stretching. After a real breakfast, I arrive at the office by 9:30, give or take, and I may be at it, full-tilt, until seven in the evening. I am a practicing Catholic, so I also start the day by saying my morning prayers.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE?

I have an owner's perspective, but I'm a hands-on manager. You can't run a business without being very involved in it. I tend to be brief and to the point.

TO YOU, WHAT MAKES GRETSCH INSTRUMENTS UNIQUE?

There are three things — sound, feel and appearance. All of those contribute to the very nature of the involvement of these products in the soundtrack of our lives, over so many generations from the Greatest Generation to the millennial generation. Their ability to contribute to so many different genres over such a long period of time makes them unique.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF RUNNING A COMPANY WITH SUCH A STRONG FAMILY LEGACY?

One challenge certainly is maintaining continuity in our products over a long period of time in a world that is constantly changing. I like looking at our latest guitar catalogs and seeing the Chet Atkins model guitar, which was first introduced in 1954 and is still in high demand today, as well as adaptations of earlier Gretsch designs that I personally made when I was involved in product design in the '90s. On the drum side, maintaining the Gretsch sound is important. As glues, plastics and metals have changed over the years, it's required us to work harder to come up with equivalents that will produce the same tone and feel and have the same look of what we did 50 or 60 years ago. We still innovate

with our drums, but a drum is a pretty basic instrument. The innovations tend to be in the worlds of colors, finishes and metal parts.

COMPANY-WIDE, HOW DO YOU APPROACH THAT CHALLENGE OF CONTINUITY?

I started in the summer of 1958 working part-time in the factory in Brooklyn. Being a student of the industry, I've seen an incredible amount of change since then, and it's the personal drive of individual family members that bridges that gap over time. It's the same drive and continuity that we see in some retailers over the generations, but it's much more unusual on the manufacturing side. It's always a challenge. The dustbin of the industry is littered with brands that were strong years ago, but gone today.

BEYOND YOUR GUITARS AND DRUMS, HOW DO YOUR OTHER BRANDS PLAY INTO YOUR OVERALL STRATEGY?

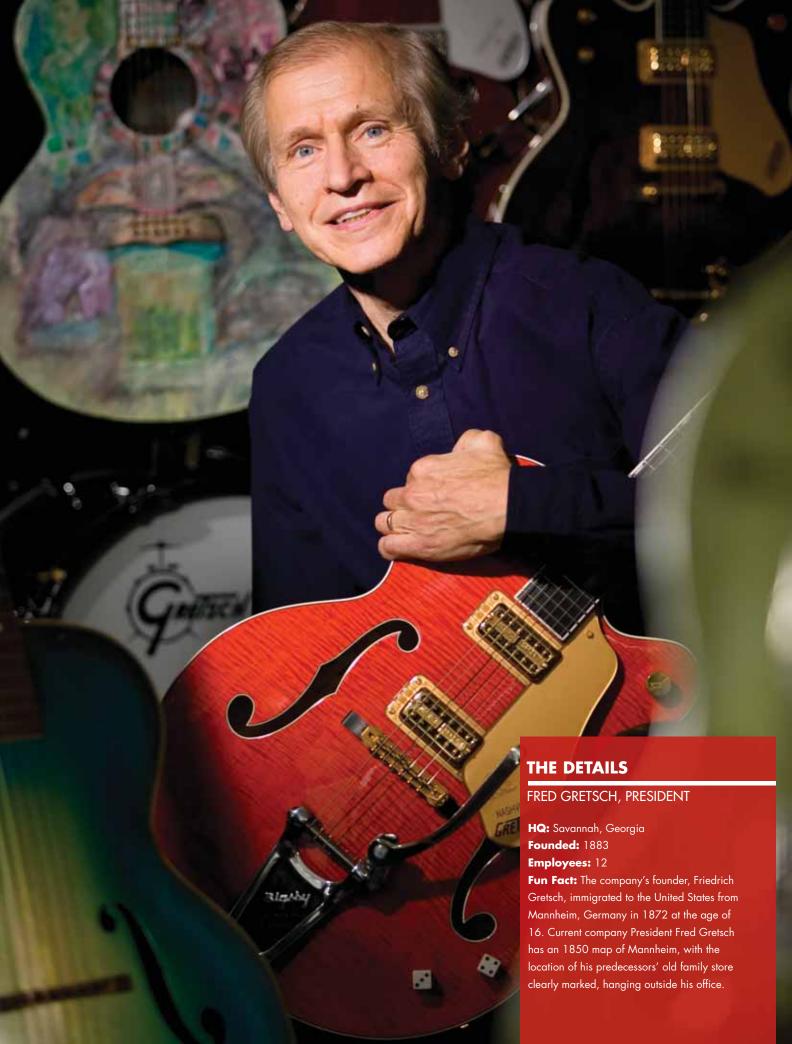
We purchased Bigsby from Ted McCarty in 1999. Their vibrato components are used in so many brands, and we continue to enjoy running that business. The other brands — like Leedy drums, Sho-Bud pedal steel guitars — are arrows in our quiver to be further developed in the future.

IS THERE MUCH SYNERGY BETWEEN THE DRUM AND GUITAR BRANCHES OF THE BUSINESS?

They're largely independent but, whenever you do get them together, they're extra cool. There was a picture of the Rolling Stones on Rolling Stone magazine that went online recently to highlight that this year was the biggest year ever for sales of tickets to music events. That picture of the Stones had Gretsch drums with Charlie Watts behind them and Keith Richards playing a guitar with a Bigsby Vibrato. We looked at that and said, "That's worldwide distribution in that one picture." [Laughs.] It's hard to get any better than that.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT ROLE IN THE COMPANY?

The Gretsch business today follows a model that I developed 15 years ago, when we partnered with Kaman in percussion, and 13 years ago with Fender in guitars. At that point, our goal was — and still remains — to not be the biggest in the industry, but to partner with the biggest in the



FRED GRETSCH | GRETSCH

industry to be the best. Whenever there's a discussion of the best drums or guitars, we want the Gretsch name to be on the tip of the musician's tongue. So given all of that, my main role is relationship manager between the Gretsch family and our partners. That's job number one for me.

CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THOSE PARTNERSHIPS?

It's not a model where you can look at other companies in the industry and say, "it's like so-and-so," because it's a unique model that I'm pursing on behalf of the Gretsch family. We essentially made an agreement with each company whereby they would do the marketing, manufacturing and worldwide distribution of our product lines and bring new product lines forward. It's worked out very well. We have

grown substantially in size, worldwide footprint and depth of product line.

WHEN PARTNERING WITH FENDER AND KAMAN, WHAT RESPONSIBILI-TIES DID YOU ABSOLUTELY WANT TO KEEP UNDER THE GRETSCH ROOF?

We're all about supporting the partners and making them as successful as we can. Obviously, family members that are involved bring a personal family touch that's recognized by artists. We couldn't leave that to our partners, nor would we want

to. Maintaining that family involvement is a significant value for the brand, and it's my personal goal that, 100 years from now, we'll be doing more of the same.

WITH OTHER COMPANIES HANDLING YOUR MANUFACTURING WORK, HOW DO YOU INSURE QUALITY?

We partnered with the best, and quality and customer service are stock and trade for the best. You don't stay the best unless you provide both. The quality of our partners has been shown over 15 and 30 years, respectively. Of course, we'd have a bone to pick if the quality slipped — you don't let it slip in this day and age, especially when you have a growing business that's doing well, and competitors who will be there to grab anything that they possibly can.

WHAT'S ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE ASPECTS OF RUNNING GRETSCH?

The feedback that I get from the worldwide community of artists who use our instruments, the excitement about the music they're making while playing on Gretsch instruments. It's amazing to hear wonderful feedback from artists all around the world. Another benefit is the personal pride that I, my

wife, and other family members feel in running this business day in and day out. The music business has been very good to the music product industry, and very good to the Gretsch family. We've been given so much that we try to give back through involvement in Little Kids Rock, my alma mater Elmhurst College, Berklee College in Boston, and then the Gretsch Foundation. It all comes down to enriching lives through participation in music.

WHY IS PHILANTHROPY SUCH A BIG PART OF YOUR COMPANY'S IDENTITY?

When someone gives you something, just as the industry has given us so much, it's a natural human inclination to give back.

'MAINTAINING
FAMILY
INVOLVEMENT IS
A SIGNIFICANT
VALUE FOR THE
BRAND.'

WHAT'S ONE OF YOUR LEAST FAVORITE ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB?

It's gotta be the tendency today for things to get done silently, by email or text, without speaking or human interaction in the give and take. Music is not silent. Collaboration is an integral part of the music composition and performance process and great work is achieved by multiple musicians playing in time and in tune. The same goes for the worldwide Gretsch team.

GIVEN YOUR DECADES IN THE INDUSTRY, WHAT ADVICE COULD YOU OFFER TO UP-AND-COMING ENTREPRENEURS IN THE MI BUSINESS?

Establish relationships with artists and customers. We're in a marketplace where consumer contact goes very deep, and it's networking and building relationships over time that's absolutely going to help you achieve success.

IF YOU WERE NOT RUNNING GRETSCH, WOULD YOU STILL BE INVOLVED WITH MUSIC?

As I mentioned, my family has a goal of enriching lives through participation in music. If I wasn't devoting myself to making music products, I'd be out there facilitating music learning programs for all ages, and I'd be working with supportmusic.org, because that's a wonderful connection to so many music making programs.

IF NOT MUSIC AT ALL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

I'm in the fourth generation of an entrepreneurial family in the United States that's made musical instruments for 132-plus years. If I was not involved in that, I'd be involved in some other entrepreneurial endeavor, probably making something else.

ATTEND THE MOST INSPIRING JAZZ EVENT OF THE YEAR







IANUARY 6-9 LOUISVILLE, KY







When Stan and Marianne
Houston saw sales slipping at
their store, Mozart, Einstein &
Me, formerly ABC Music, they
turned to an unusual source for
help – a wooden puppet.
The result? A sales growth of 30
percent and a product mix that
now includes guitars,
ukuleles, greeting cards and
science games



ingerprints on glass windows may annoy some retailers, but not Stan and Marianne Houston, owners of Mozart, Einstein & Me. These fingerprints are left behind by the hundreds of kids that have stopped and peered in at the four wooden puppets bouncing up and down in the windows of the retailer formerly known as ABC Music. These puppets are called Wuppers, and believe it or not, they saved the music retailer when not much else could.

"Only about five percent of the general public is involved in music of some kind," said Stan, who operates the two-store retailer in Benicia and Livermore, California. "So, that meant that 95 percent of people walking down the street were going, 'Oh look, a music store,' and walking on by."

By September 2014, Stan and Marianne knew they needed to make a change. Shortly thereafter, a toy sales rep made a cold call urging the Houstons to consider stocking the Wuppers. Stan was open to adding another product category into the music stores' mix, especially if it was something that turned on the right hand side of the brain — the same side music stimulates. After looking into a few different gifts and games, the Houstons decided it was time to take a leap of faith.

Today, in addition to guitars, ukuleles, hand percussion, music lessons and a small band and orchestral rental program, Mozart, Einstein & Me offers educational games and gifts that promote science, art and learning, including Newton's Cradle, boxed sci-

ence experiments, greeting cards and puzzles.

"The link between music and gifts related to music, the arts and science is critically important to young families and grandparents of today," Marianne said. "It's a way of growing interest in music through a 'back door' so to speak in an untapped market."

And while the children and their parents walking by might not be drawn in by the guitar or ukulele selection at first, once they see them hanging on the wall, their interest is piqued.

"One of the first things we noticed was moms with strollers were coming in because they saw the toyishness of it," Stan said. "Then they'd look around and see the ukuleles and guitars and eventually come to the front desk and ask, 'Do you do lessons?' And the Wuppers were what drew them in. And that started the conversation."

CHANGE IS GOOD

Stan said that while the Wuppers nabbed attention right away, a rise in sales came gradually.

"It took a little time and then all of a sudden, after having the gifts and games in the store for a while, it started to click," Stan said. "We sold 150 of the Wuppers in November and December [2014] at our Benicia store alone."

By the end of 2014, the Houstons were seeing 30 percent sales growth over the previous year.

After witnessing Benicia's success, the Houstons introduced the same gifts and games to the Livermore store in January 2015. "I think we have found a different way to service the customer,"

"WE'VE CAMOUFLAGED THE RETAIL PART, IN THAT IT IS JUST A FUN PLACE TO BE AND YOU JUST MIGHT HAPPEN TO BUY SOMETHING."

- Stan Houston

Stan said. "By doing that, we have a different customer, a new customer. We've camouflaged the retail part, in that it is just a fun place to be and you just might happen to buy something."

The window display with the moving puppets grabs passerby attention, which, oftentimes, has converted into residual musicial instrument sales.

"I would say 20 percent of the time someone [drawn in by the windows] purchases an instrument," Stan said. "They were drawn in by what they saw in the window."

The stores' lessson programs have felt a jolt as well.

"What happens even more often is [customers] see that we sell musical instruments and ask if we do lessons as well," Stan added. "We get a lot of retired grandparents coming in asking about lessons for their grandkids; they want their grandchildren to be successful. They grew up in a different era, so their values are inherent there. By the time we finish the conversation they have their purse on the counter and are looking you square in the eye and telling you the ages of the kids."

Today, Mozart, Einstein & Me's lesson program is flourishing. The Livermore location alone has about 250 private lesson students with 12-15 teachers instructing everything from French horn to voice and piano. As an added bonus, parents and silblings of lesson students are completely amused with the store's toys and games while they wait for a lesson to be over. The retailer even has an in-store button making machine that kids can use for free.

"They draw on a piece of paper and then put it in the machine and pull back on the arm and make their own button," Stan explained. "Kids love it, parents love it and it's free."

EXPANDING THE CUSTOMER BASE

By broadening its product offerings, Mozart, Einstein and Me has expanded its customer base to include those who are looking to enhance their brain capacity — be it through the educational





DOING WELL BY DOING GOOD

One of the first things you notice when you walk up to Mozart, Einstein & Me's Livermore location is a sign in the window explaining the owners do not take home any profit from the store. After expenses, all proceeds go towards a scholarship program for students who can't afford their band and orchestral instruments as well as school music programs.

"We decided a long time ago that we didn't really need the money the store brought in," Stan said. "We decided to take the money and dump it back into the school districts or scholarships. So, if you walk into one of our stores and are interested in one of the scholarships, all you have to do is show us the front sheet of your 1040, and if there's not a lot there, we'll help you out."

Stan said helping the community is payment enough.

"I've had dads sit at the front desk in September when they want to rent something and just sit there and cry and say, 'I need to get my son or daughter into a band class, and I just lost my job.' This happened a lot during the height of the recession. We'll take the charge part of the contract and zero it out." MI

games or music.

"Three to four percent of our clientele are either cancer patients or people that have some kind of dementia to where they want to keep some part of their brain active," Stan said, adding that recently a woman recovering from cancer stopped in to donate her cello because radiation treatments had made it too difficult for her to play.

"She had had a lot of radiation, and she said her nerves just weren't there," Stan explained. "She told us, 'I can bow, but I just can't articulate my fingers and feel the strings.' I sold her a trumpet hand exerciser. Four months later, she came back, threw her arms around us and said she was playing the cello again — not great, but her fingers were there — and she was so glad that she got that exerciser and that Marianne had talked her into keeping the cello."

TAKE THE LEAP

For any retailers that might be thinking about expanding their product selection,

Stan advises to go for it.

"Try it. Roll the dice. I think anyone who is saying to themselves, 'I've got to do something different,' has already made a leap of faith," he said. "If some music store came to me and said, 'I'm thinking about putting in a small ice cream counter.' I'd say, 'do it.' The whole key was to bring more people into the store."

Due to the changing landscape of modernday retail, Stan said he believes consumers are used to seeing unusal products next to each other in a retail environment.

"Macy's just announced that they are going to be putting in little Best Buys in their stores," he said. "Ace Hardware, you'll notice, 10 years ago didn't sell reading glasses or jerky and candy. They sell all that stuff now. So retail is changing.

"I think the mistake that we make as retailers is we say to ourselves, 'Damn it, I went into this business wanting to be the best guitar shop or the best piano merchant in my area, and I'm not going to lose my focus and that's what I am going to be.' And what's happening is the world has changed. You've got to get out of bed every morning and actually embrace change. We look at innovation as the fun part of business."

While innovation is good, Stan main-





tains that you should keep your target audience in mind when adding new products.

"For us, our target is mom," Stan said. "It will always be mom. Eighty percent or more of any purchase in retail is done by mom. And we love that. We think that's great, but we still have to get her in the store.

"Our strategy is that when mom walks in she won't see a guy my age with a Rod Stewart hairdo and leather pants. That's over. That train has left the station. So, I wanted this really friendly atmosphere where she can come and shop."

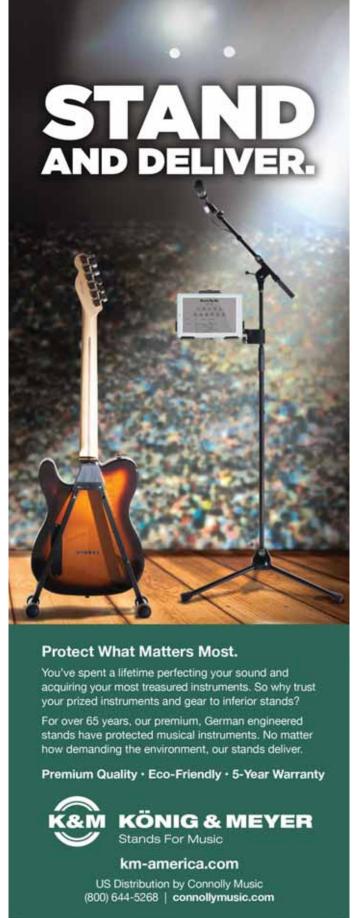
MOZART'S FUTURE

In addition to the product turnaround, the Houstons changed the name of their store to Mozart, Einstein & Me from ABC Music — the original name of the business which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. (The Houstons have owned it for the past eight years.)

Along with the name change came a new logo and a new website. "We wanted to give everything a new feel," Stan said. "The new store name fell out while driving in the car one day. We were driving along and it just clicked, I said, 'How about Mozart, Einstein & Me?' It feels really good, and the customers really like it."

After seeing the success of the gifts and games mix, Stan would like to continue to branch out by mixing musicial instruments with other markets, including possibly leather goods.

"I like the idea of taking a store and doing strictly handmade acoustic instruments and pairing them with handmade leather goods — something like a men's store," Stan said. "Really nice cigars, really nice wines, leather goods and then these handmade guitars. [The product offerings] have to have some continuity. They have to have chemistry." MI



WALK THROUGH

Mozart, Einstein & Me's Livermore, California, showroom was remodeled at the beginning of the 2015 coinciding with that location's product turnaround. The 2,000-square-foot store features a wide variety of stringed instruments, amps and B&O, alongside greeting cards, music boxes, and educational toys, games, and puzzles. Here's a glance at the showroom:

TOY & GAME TABLE

The centrally located toy and game table features a lot of the products Mozart, Einstein & Me sells, open and ready for children to play with. "Now, we have more moms hanging at the store, sitting here playing a game with one child, while the other one is taking a lesson. Kids are tugging at their moms asking, 'Can we please go into the store?"



ACOUSTIC WALL

The store's guitar selection is located on the main wall to the right of the front door. The retailer stocks Yamaha, Cordoba, Ventura and LÂG guitars along with Blackstar amps and a wide selection of ukuleles and guitar straps.





THE WUPPERS

These small, wooden puppets designed in Germany, bounce up and down in the window grabbing passer-by attention. They are connected to a motor that keeps them continually moving.



LESSON ROOMS

The Livermore location features 10 lesson rooms for instruction on everthing from guitar to French horn to voice. "When we remodeled we created more lesson rooms and shrunk the retail floor a little bit, but it created a more intimate setting," Stan said.

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LAST-MINUTE STOCKING GUIDE

Yamaha GCT1 Guitar Tuner

By Baxter Barrowcliff



Mantova's Two Street Music Eureka, California

"The number one, most important product in our store is the **Yamaha GCT1 tuner**. I actually told Yamaha, 'If you guys ever stop making this, let me know because I'll buy every single one.' People love them. There's plenty of options at the \$30 price point, but the GCT1 tuner just cuts through and presents a better, easier to use product than the others. I pay half the year's rent with this Yamaha tuner. It's the most important product they make. Whenever I sell it, if I had the flexibility, I'd do somersaults. I sell at least 1–3 a day."

ROBERT CHRISTIE, PRESIDENT

A&G Central Music

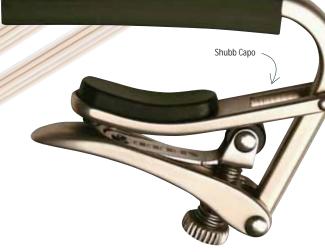
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"Pro Mark's Cool Rods are a great gift for any drummer. When it comes to creating a different sound, or a quieter practice option, Cool Rods are perfect. And, you can never have enough pairs.

Promark C-RODS

"Capos – we like Kyser and Shubb. Every holiday singalong means quick key changes, and what's quicker than a capo? It's an essential accessory in every guitar case.

"Mollard Conducting Batons and baton cases are fast movers at holiday time. Parents and students buy them for their band directors, choir directors and each other. Stock some unusual looking ones, they seem to sell the fastest!"



RETAILERS SHARE THEIR MUST-STOCK GEAR FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

KEVIN CROSSETT, OWNER

Guitar Sam Vermont Montpelier, Vermont

"Effect pedals are a great item that literally fit in stockings. The new lines of mini pedals – a lot of them being in the \$100 range – are really exciting. As far as minis go, TC Electronics has a great series of those, as well as the full-sized effect pedals. Many of their mini pedals are right around the \$99 range. They're great quality. They are a must have, must-stock type of item. [The] Ditto Looper hasn't even come close to slowing down in popularity.

"One brand that we stock as much as we can is **Legacy Straps**. They're based in Pennsylvania, and the straps are all U.S. made. They do a lot of 2-inch cotton straps that are tie-dyed. They also do a lot of the solid colored straps. Nice quality strap, nice quality end. They also have some with metal studs on them, plus a number of different designer types of straps, including cowboy and the religious themes. They options are endlesss. They do a great job. [They have] a wide catalog of different design options and pretty reasonably priced considering that they are made in the United States."





LESLIE FALTIN, CO-OWNER Instrumental Music Center Tuscon, Arizona

"We just picked up **TC Electronic's PolyTune Clip-on Tuner**. It's really cool. It's just like the Poly Tune Pedal, but it is a clip-on tuner now. You can strum all of your strings, and it will tell you which strings are flat and sharp. Then you can focus on just one string, and it knows to focus on that string and give you a normal, chromatic tuner read out. It's really smart.

"We've been getting some of the **pTrumpets** in from Conn-Selmer. They're really great. It's a fun thing to get a band kid. They have white, blue, red, black – all kinds of colors available and they're pretty awesome.

"Probably our best selling amp this year is the **ID Core 10 series from Blackstar**. They street for like \$99. The series has innovative features and big tone. It has big speaker separation sound even though it's this little practice amp. It's really cool – we've sold tons of them."



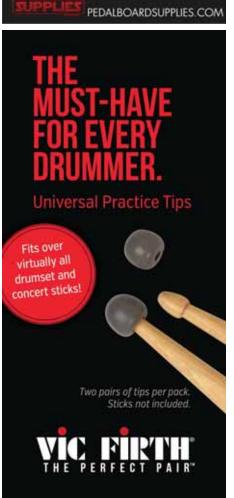
KEVIN DAMM, OWNER Damm Music Center Wichita, Kansas.

"We are still riding the uke wave, and the **Amahi UK120S Soprano Ukulele** has the bang for your buck my customers are looking for. It's what I call a win/win/win. A win for my customers, my store and the supplier."

























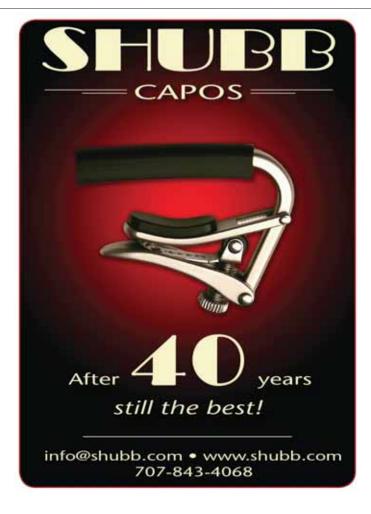
WARWICK

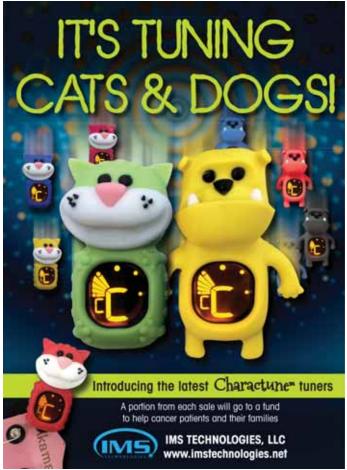
LWA 500 'LITTLE BIG AMP'

Warwick has introduced the LWA 500 "Little Big Amp." The LWA 500 combines versatile tone-shaping with state-of-the-art lightweight design. Weighing in at just under 2½ pounds with 500 clean watts at 4 Ohms (250 watts at 8 Ohms), the LWA 500 is a relatively light 500-watt amp, packaged in a half-rack sized rugged aluminum chassis that fits comfortably in just about any gig bag pocket or backpack. {warwick.de}







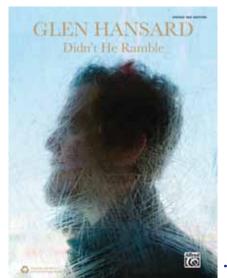






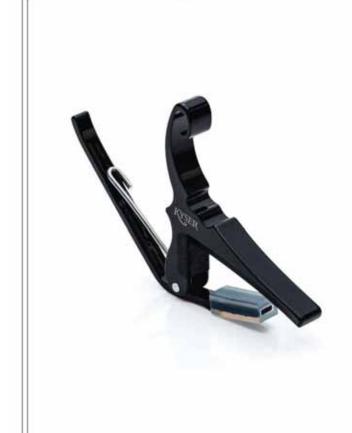
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ALFRED GLEN HANSARD TAB SONGBOOK

Alfred Music has debuted the official album-matching guitar TAB songbook to coincide with the release of Hansard's second solo effort, *Didn't He Ramble*. Expanding on Hansard's brand of rootsy, vulnerable, but incisive songwriting, *Didn't He Ramble* includes sheet music for all 10 songs on the record, in guitar TAB transcriptions, plus a lyric-only bonus section. {alfred.com}





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Yamaha's DXS18 powered subwoofer delivers the highest output level of the DXS series as well as the lowest frequency range capability. The DXS18 offers improved cabinet construction, DSP processing, protection functions and crossover control. Powered by a 1020 Watt Class-D amplifier, the DXS18 houses an 18-inch woofer with a durable 4-inch voice coil in a sturdy plywood enclosure. {yamaha.com}

AUDIO-TECHNICA

AT2020USBI

Audio-Technica has released the AT2020USBi cardioid condenser USB microphone featuring iOS compatibility. Modeled after the AT2020, this digital output mic features an A/D converter to deliver high-resolution articulation and intelligibility that's ideal for home studio recording, field recording, podcasting and voiceover use. {audio-technica.com}















analog 3.5-millimeter inputs, as well as offering a USB port allowing smartphones and tablets to be charged during use.









OVERTONE LABS

64 I MUSIC INC. I NOVEMBER 2015

TUNE-BOT GIG

Overtone Labs has introduced the Tune-Bot Gig, a fast and easy way to tune acoustic drums. A simplified version of the original Tune-Bot, the Tune-Bot Gig features a single button that lets players toggle through the modes while matching lug pitch or tuning a note. The Gig features a large LCD display and is optimized for ease of use. {pearldrum.com}



tune-bot

VIC FIRTH GADD PADD

To celebrate Steve Gadd's 70th birthday, Vic Firth has released the limited edition Gadd Padd. The Gadd Padd features a 3/16-inch thick black silicone rubber pad, mounted to a round 8-inch sturdy wooden base. This single-sided pad features a non-skid rubber base and is decorated with the special commemorative 70th birthday logo. Built to Steve's desired specifications, this pad travels easily for the player on the go. {vicfirth.com}



AIRTURN TAP BT-1

AirTurn's TAP BT-1 pairs AirTurn's TAP Bluetooth wireless transceiver with the Roland BT-1 Bar Trigger Pad for a reliable interface to tablets and computers. With the tap of a drumstick, drummers and other active percussionists can manage drum tabs, lyrics and set lists, queue a metronome, or start and stop backing tracks.

{airturn.com}



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STRAVARI

MINI ROSINS

Stravari has launched its Mini Rosin line, which use the same premium quality rosins and functional packaging as Stravari's traditional size, now in a smaller package. Stravari's Old Master and Artista rosins are handmade with premium ingredients, but the Mini Rosins now make these top-shelf products available at a more affordable price point than that of the traditional size. {stravari.com}









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- National Piano Foundation promoting the benefits of music education through the piano and RMM!
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- Major market statistics
- Partnership with Music Teachers National Association and RMM Outreach
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GESTUREBEAM 400

Marq's GestureBeam 400 projects a crisp, tight beam for precise aerial effects and also offers a searchlight feature with stand alone skyscanning mode. Four slave modes create complex auto programs without a DMX controller and the full color menu conveys all the essential information quickly and clearly. {marqlighting.com}



ADD-ON SPOTLIGHT



{numark.com}

PIONEER DJ HDJ-1500

Pioneer DJ has added a gold model to its HDJ-1500 series headphones. The HDJ-1500 series headphones' 50-millimeter drivers deliver deep bass notes and clear mid to low frequencies. The HDJ-1500 series also feature low-resilience urethane memory foam ear pads and a replaceable cable, plus a lightweight magnesium alloy headband and hinges. {pioneeredj.com}

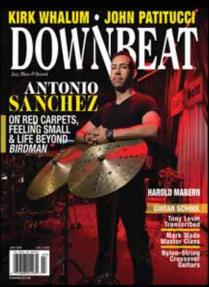


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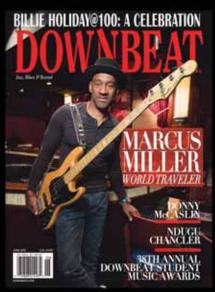
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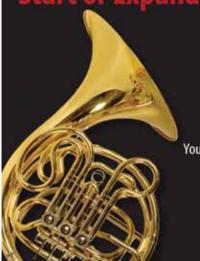
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Bob Saied

Saied Music

Tulsa, Oklahoma

host dinner at my home for the employees and their spouses. I'll host anywhere from 40 to 50 people. We sometimes have part of it catered, and sometimes I fix part of it. There's a tradition that we have cabbage rolls because I'm Lebanese, but I don't make those. We have them brought in from a local restaurant, and we've done that for 20-plus years. That's always one of our specials that we have every Christmas.

Then we have a talent show and are always amazed to hear one of our fellow employees sing or play the piano or saxophone. Sometimes we have people singing, and sometimes we have people play piano and guitar. Some of them are good, some are funny, and some are surprising. It's always amazing what we see. We rarely get to witness that during busy time at the store, so it's fun to see it in a relaxed casual atmosphere.

We also started a personalized Christmas tree in our headquarters store. Each year each employee signs their name and dates an ornament. It is fun to look back over the years by reading the different ornaments.



Pete Ellman

Ellman's Music Naperville, Illinois

Yamaha does a "Step Up To Yamaha Sale," and we'll participate in that. We've done similar things with Conn-Selmer. And that's a seasonal sale that happens to be around the holidays. We also get a bunch of Christmas stuff from Hal Leonard.

As far as in-store stuff, we have a bunch of posters that are musical in them, but we wrap them with paper for the holidays.

There's a Grinch promotion we do that's through IndieBound-Naperville [a local organization of independent merchants in Naperville, Illinois]. We'll have a little cardboard image of the Grinch, and kids have to come find him in our store. Usually they have to find 12, and they get a certificate saying that they found the Grinch at such-and-such store. And then they turn them in at [the local bookstore] and qualify for a grand prize. It's a cross-promotion with other independent stores in the area.



How does your store celebrate the holiday season?

y mom, who was the previous owner, she loved Christmas. It was her absolute favortite. She passed away on Christmas morning. So, now we kind of make it more of a big deal to not just honor Christmas, but honor her as well.

We decorate the store to the nines, and also we have done a giving tree. We work with a couple different local non-profits and charities that have music programs for the children with families in less-fortunate financial situations. We have a giving tree where folks can donate, or they take an ornament off of it, which might be a violin rental for a month, or a pair of maracas.

Sometimes when I go to Target, they'll say, "Would you like to donate a dollar to St. Jude?" This is kind of our version of that. One is an El Sistema program, which is worldwide, and the other one is the city mission, which started a string program several years ago that we were an integral part of. So, when people are checking out, we ask, "Would you like to donate anything to the city mission music program; Or, do you want to grab an item off of the tree?"

There were eight ornaments we made, and on each one it will say, "\$5 buys them a metronome," and "\$20 buys them a private lesson," and "\$100 buys them a violin." People

are able to choose based on different price points. And some people will just say, "Oh yeah, round up my purchase," so it's \$0.97, but other people have donated up to \$250. It's really neat because they're already in the store, and they're buying something for a musician in their family or a friend, but they're also sharing that gift with another musician who's less fortunate than them.

That's what the holidays are all about. And I think we're all very blessed, and we have more than we could ever need, but not everybody does. And if we can give that joy through music somehow, that's what I want us to do at Christmastime. MI

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