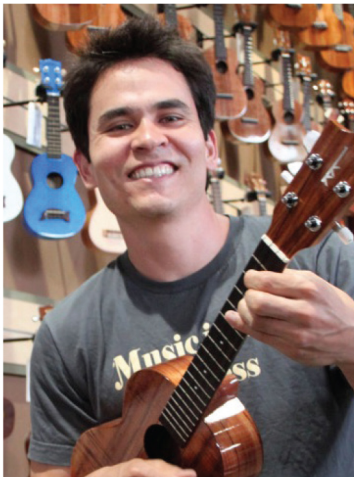


ECONOMIC RHYTHMS | BY PETER DODS

Music for the Masses

I'm obsessed with playing the electric guitar. When I bought my business, I couldn't play any instruments at all. I had some skills in studio production, but that's about it. I've developed more musicality in the last eight years than I ever dreamed possible. I'm not awesome by any means, but I can jam with others and have been told that my solo improv isn't half bad anymore. I'm the walking poster boy for my own product.



I've taken lessons at my store, all of my gear is from my store, and my first experience of performing in front of an audience was on our very own sound stage during our first Thursday Jam Session that we hold every month. I have little to no natural ability, which leads me to espouse the idea that anyone can become a musician.

Learning an instrument is progressive. Too many people don't get that. They see a guy like Paul Gilbert play guitar and want to play guitar like that, too. They take a few lessons and realize there is a steep learning curve.

A lot of people quit at that point. People have a tendency to stay in their comfort zone, not realizing if they have a decent teacher, or even if they keep plugging away on their own with a few videos, that you just get better over time. To make matters worse, the theory behind music seems so abstract at first.

The language created to describe music theory seems like it was made to be complicated on purpose. The whole idea of flats, sharps, 1-4-5 chord combinations, and even musical notation, seems convoluted. Shoot ... there are 12 notes in a chromatic scale, the relationship between those notes in intervals is what sound

is about. Why complicate it? Why not call them 1-12?

SPREAD THE WORD

Music theory is an old language used to describe things guild type musicians didn't want common people to learn. I have no historical basis for this opinion — it's just a hunch. I still have

a ton to learn, but now that I understand music theory better, I feel like the language used to describe it is ridiculous.

Maybe it's the former high school teacher in me? I feel the same way about economics. It's another subject people get brainwashed into believing that it's hard to understand. I used to tell my AP Econ class, yelling at the top of my lungs and shaking a chair over my head, "This stuff is easy! It's just a silly language used to describe simple relationships that you probably already know!" As a teacher, I felt my chief duty was to reveal this simple truth and show them the way.

It's our job, as purveyors of musical equipment and education, to try to spread the word that learning how to play music is attainable by anyone at any age. We need to make it clear that while it isn't easy, it is progressive, and like anything in life worth doing, it takes commitment.

I've seen Cornel Hrisca-Munn, a drummer with no arms, killing it and a guitarist playing like a virtuoso with just his feet. If they can do it, anyone can. Let the cat out of the bag and tell the world that anyone can learn to play. **MI**

Peter Dods is the owner of Honolulu-based Easy Music Center.

Spread the word that making music can be fun, no matter the experience level