

THE B&O MARKET: RETAILERS FIND REFUGE IN RENTALS **PAGE 38**

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

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MARCH/APRIL 2009 | MUSICINCMAG.COM

INVESTING IN **TOMORROW**

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Frank
Pampenella of
PM Music
Center

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Frank Pampenella

30 | STAYING LEAN

Frank and Julie Pampenella of PM Music Center have achieved steady sales growth for the past decade by running a tight ship expense-wise while going overboard on customer service.

38 | B&O HOLDS ITS OWN

School music dealers find refuge from the recession with instrument rentals, repairs and small goods.



THE NAMM SHOW 2009

This year's convention in Anaheim, Calif., attracted a surprisingly strong turnout despite the rocky economy. We've broken out the biggest news, products and ideas from the show for your convenience.

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NAMM
BEST
SHOW

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

WHEN TO AUTOMATE

Without fail, I always forget to return my movie rentals. And without fail, I get a call from Blockbuster, usually around dinnertime, in which a robotic voice tells me to get on it. I don't like the calls — no one does — except I always return my rentals the next morning.



Automated phone calls may be annoying, but they can save music product retailers a staggering amount of time and money. And, I argue, they can do certain jobs better and cheaper than a live person.

This month's cover subject, PM Music Center of Aurora, Ill., has turned cost-cutting into an art — and one that doesn't involve skimping on customer service and good employees. One of PM's cost-saving secrets has been to use Voiceshot. This service can make roughly 90 calls in 15 minutes, at 12 cents a call. To add a personal touch, Voiceshot lets customers talk to a live person at PM Music Center simply by pushing zero. Compare that to PM's old collections method: paying a temp \$120 a week to call a list it couldn't get through in a month. In this economic climate, the PM Music Center story is a must-read. (It begins on page 30.)

Several members of the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants have begun taking advantage of automated calling services as a promotional tool. Willis Music of Florence, Ky., used one such service, Premiere Global, to publicize its most recent warehouse sale.

Premiere Global called 40,000 customers, costing Willis Music less than \$3,000. Compare that to the company's previous direct-mail and newspaper ad campaigns, which set it back as much as \$15,000 each, according to Dan Herbert, Willis Music's vice president. And here's the kicker: During the sale, Willis had a greeter ask each customer how he or she found out about the event. Seventy-five percent cited the automated telephone call.

"The traditional way of advertising this event would have cost us about \$15,000," Herbert said. "This phone service basically saved us about \$12,000 in advertising costs. Not to mention we were able to get our message to our customers one day before the sale began, instead of a week in advance.

"Bottom line: We increased sales by more than 20-percent above last year's totals."

Herbert was one of 25 industry insiders who shared their top strategies during "25 Ideas to Improve Your Business — NOW!," a NAMM University session at the recent NAMM convention in Anaheim, Calif. For more profit-building ideas, check out our coverage of the session on page 90.

Consider these ideas. Try them. Now's not the time to leave any stone unturned. **MI**

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LETTERS

Cost-Cutting Comments

Music Inc. columnist Greg Billings' article "29 Ways to Cut Costs" (February 2009) generated a wave of phone calls and e-mails. Here are a few samples of what readers had to say.

The "29 Ways to Cut Costs" piece is the best, most honest and most concise business article I have seen. I want to give this article to as many of my friends in business as possible — inside and outside MI, retailer or supplier.

Wallace Marx Jr.
Marketing Consultant

The article Greg Billings just wrote, "29 Ways to Cut Costs," is unbelievably awesome and is what I am preaching every day to our clients. I am just happy to have the resource.

Daniel Jobe
Friedman, Kannenberg & Co.
Farmington, Conn.

I found it interesting that Greg Billings' "29 Ways to Cut Costs" suggested that we shop at Sam's [Club] and Costco for our supplies. As a small, local merchant, I try to always shop with locally owned businesses. I know it may cost a little more, but isn't that what we battle every day in our own stores?

Carole Jones
Music Doctors
Morristown, Tenn.

Have a cost-saving tip? We want to hear it.
E-mail: editor@musicincmag.com.

Shared Honor

Thanks so very much for featuring Memphis Drum Shop as *Music Inc.*'s Independent Retailer of the Year ("Main Street Will Prevail," December 2008). There are many retailers deserving of this award, and we are very humbled to have received this honor.

Jim Pettit
Memphis Drum Shop
Memphis, Tenn.

Life After Gibson

I just read the February 2009 letter by William Kennelly

from American Music concerning his adventures with Gibson Guitar.

We also dropped Gibson about four years ago after years of abuse at its hands. Gibson was the first major brand of instruments we carried back in 1972, and we put up with them for years before we just had enough.

It tried to lay on us the same requirements that Mr. Kennelly mentioned. And to make matters worse, we were coming off a year where we had major increases pretty much across the board, in some cases as much as 300 percent from the previous year.

I'm sorry to hear about the problems Mr. Kennelly had with Gibson, but it is good to know that we are not alone. I was starting to wonder if maybe it was just us being difficult to get along with.

One thing Mr. Kennelly



might like to know is that we have not missed Gibson for even a moment. In fact, dropping them may have been one of the smartest moves we've made in 38 years in this business. I definitely miss the product but certainly do not miss the company.

The bottom line is that there are profitable lines out there, and there are profitable lines from companies with which we enjoy doing business. Why deal with the others?

Rick Mock
Melodee Music
Leesburg, Va.



Correction

Music Inc. incorrectly labeled an image representing Ultimate Support's Custom Mic Stand Tops in *The 2009 Gear Guide* ("Mic Makeover," February 2009). The image pictured was not the 1960s-style shifter clutch Smell The Rubber model (pictured above, left) but, in fact, the Venom model (right). *Music Inc.* regrets the error.

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RETAIL

FULLER'S MUSIC | BY JEFF CAGLE

SAFETY IN RENTALS

When Wade Fuller graduated college in 1973 with a degree in wildlife biology, he hoped to get a job with the parks department. A slumping economy, however, reduced jobs in that sector. Living at home in New Bern, N.C., he began helping deliver pianos for his father and uncle, who ran the family music store started by their father, George Fuller Sr., in 1905.

At the time, Fuller's Music was located in the same building Wade's grandfather had bought in 1924. It primarily sold pianos and rented 25–50 band instruments a year. Nowadays, the store is still in New Bern, but it has expanded into a full-line operation in a 10,000-square-foot building.

Since moving to the new location in 2001, the company's rental program has tripled from 300 units per year to more than 900 during the 2008 back-to-school season, its best ever. Its market consists of 27 middle schools and 17 high schools across five counties, and Fuller said rentals now account for 40–50 percent of his business.

"We've had to expand certain things because of the new store," he said. "With 8,000



more square feet comes a much bigger debt load.

"We saw the need to expand the school music base because we knew we weren't really going to see an increase in walk-in traffic in the combo area."

Still, the rental business wasn't an immediate gold mine. "For about a year and a half, we were knocking on doors trying to get our foot into the [school music] market, but they were tied up with larger companies," Fuller said. "Finally, a band director who was a first-year teacher came in and gave us the opportunity. His [father] had bought his horn from us when he was

a student here and came to us about helping him host a parent night meeting."

BUCKING A RECESSION

Fuller doesn't expect business to get as rough as it did for his grandfather during the Great Depression. (At that time, Fuller's Music carried radiators, refrigerators and television sets.) The current economic downturn has hit his store, but it hasn't caused a steep dive in his bottom line.

"Customers were still coming to the store and buying things, but the invoices just didn't have as many big-ticket items as previous years' invoices," he said of 2008. "But

it was encouraging that customers were still coming into the store and shopping, even if it wasn't the same spending as before. We were off by less than 10 percent [last year]."

In fact, he credited the uptick in rentals in 2008 to the slumping economy. "Parents who may have gone to the Internet for a band or stringed instrument are asking if they really want to throw the credit card down and spend a few hundred dollars on something they likely can't return," he said. "Many people are taking the easy way out and spending \$25 or \$30 on a monthly rental payment just to make sure."

Lately, traffic has slowed on the sales floor, but Fuller said he sees it as an opportunity to catch up on housekeeping.

"We're going to use this time to pay attention to merchandising," he said. "We're going to get the store shaped up better, do a better job on signage and our displays, and overhaul the Web site. We're keeping our expenses in check and making cuts wherever we can. I've restructured some of our loans to get our payments more in line and pay down debt as much as possible. But it's survival. You have to think outside the box and not leave any stone unturned." **MI**

GUITAR CENTER | CONTEST

FLOOD CROWNED DRUM-OFF CHAMP

Jermone Flood II, 22, was crowned the winner of the 20th Annual Guitar Center Drum-Off championships. Held on Jan. 10 at the historic Music Box at the Henry Fonda Theater in Los Angeles, Flood played before a panel of celebrity judges, including drummers Taylor Hawkins, Kenny Aronoff, The Rev, Danny Carey, Trevor Lawrence Jr., Drew Hester, Atom Willard, Alan White and Frank Zummo.

The event was co-sponsored by Monster Energy, Levi's, Converse, Drum Workshop, Pearl, Gretsch, Orange County Drum & Percussion, Tama, Pro-Mark, Vic Firth, Remo, Evans, Rhythm Tech, Roland, Zildjian, Sabian and *Modern Drummer* magazine.

The evening's competition



Jermone Flood II demonstrates his drum chops at GC's Drum-Off championships

was the culmination of months of local and regional competitions held at each of GC's 214 stores across the country — competitions that resulted in selecting the top six undiscovered

drummers in the nation from nearly 5,000 competitors. As GC's Drum-Off champion, Flood took home \$25,000 in cash, plus another \$20,000 in gear.

Originally from Rochester, N.Y., and now hailing from Atlanta, Flood received his first drum kit when he was two years old. This was the fifth year he entered GC's Drum-Off.

"I've still got a long way to go career-wise, but I'm ready, and I'm really thankful to Guitar Center for this opportunity because it's really changed my life," Flood said.

The evening was hosted by Jane's Addiction's Stephen Perkins. It also featured an awards ceremony honoring drummer Mitch Mitchell of The Jimi Hendrix Experience, along with Nicko McBrain of Iron Maiden and Carmine Appice, who has played with Vanilla Fudge. They were inducted into GC's Drum-Legends Hall of Fame.

BEST BUY | OPENINGS

Best Buy Hits MI Store Goal

Last summer, Best Buy executives announced plans to open as many as 85 music products dealerships within the company's existing stores. By year end, Best Buy reached that goal, opening a total of 83 music stores.

These roll-outs made Best Buy the second largest music retailer in the United States based on locations — after Guitar Center.

Justin Barber, a Best Buy spokesperson, said he could not comment on whether the company will open more music stores in 2009. Still, Best Buy announced a 50-percent reduction in capital spending for

The consumer electronics giant hits 83 music stores, tightens spending

this year due to the economic slump. The company's same-store sales also declined 6.5 percent for the fiscal month of December 2008, a period that ended on Jan. 3, 2009.

"We haven't announced any expansion plans for musical instruments beyond what



Best Buy's Downers Grove, Ill., music store

we said this fall," Barber said. "We're still really just focusing on continuing to perfect the

model and making sure that they're delivering a unique experience to customers."

J.W. PEPPER | DISTRIBUTION

PEPPER STREAMLINES DISTRIBUTION

J.W. Pepper plans to open two new distribution centers in Salt Lake City and Atlanta in March and May, respectively, to better serve the company's retail and print music operations.

Pepper has been distributing product through 15 locations. The new distribution centers will consolidate fulfillment and allow remaining locations to focus on regional marketing. Glenn

Burch, president of J.W. Pepper, said that "these new facilities will make use of current best fulfillment practices, taking advantage of advancements in today's warehousing and shipping technology."

All existing Pepper locations will remain open except for the Detroit branch, which will be absorbed by the Grand Rapids, Mich., location.



Beacock Music's display

PRINT MUSIC RETAILERS | DISPLAY

Print Promoters

Print music publisher Hal Leonard celebrated the release of the "High School Musical 3: Senior Year" movie by sponsoring a contest among its retail base. Dealers competed for the most creative display of Hal Leonard's *High School Musical 3* songbook.

Bookmark Music in Pacific Grove, Calif., put together a storefront window with Hal Leonard products and "High School Musical" movie memorabilia. Beacock Music in Vancouver, Wash., created a colorful display featuring references to the Wildcats, the mascot in "High School Musical."

Rieman Music in Urbandale, Iowa, made separate displays for each of the three "High School Musical" movies and also

hosted a "High School Musical" karaoke contest. These three winning retailers received a Disney gift card.

"Since the first movie aired on the Disney Channel, ["High School Musical"] mania has gripped the world," said David Jahnke, Hal Leonard's vice president of national sales. "This contest encouraged our retailers to exploit the power of printed music. Showcasing our eye-catching songbooks drove fans of this beloved brand into their stores. We hope our dealers had as much fun putting these displays together as we did selecting the winning entries."



Bookmark Music's window display

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KORG USA DEALERS | AWARDS

Korg Recognizes Music Retail Excellence

Korg USA recently honored six of its retailers with Key Note Awards at The NAMM Show 2009.

These included: Musician's Advocate in Henderson, Nev., for Best New Dealer; Metal

Shop Music in Tarpon Springs, Fla., for Overall Growth; Hugo Helmer Music in Burlington, Wash., for Overall Commitment to Excellence; Sweetwater Sound in Fort Wayne, Ind., for

Customer Relations; Zone Music in Cotati, Calif., for Marketing and Promotions; and American Guitar & Band in Maple Grove, Minn., for Merchandising.

"Korg USA is proud to rec-

ognize those retailers that have exemplified excellence this past year, as well as shown exceptional loyalty to Korg USA's brands and products," said Ken Fuente, Korg USA's vice president of sales.



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APPOINTMENTS

Goodwin to Head FDW-Worldwide

FDW-Worldwide — the distribution division of Madison, Wis.-based audio retailer Full Compass — has appointed Buzz Goodwin to the newly created position of president. He will be responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations of the business, along with managing worldwide sales and marketing strategies, artist relations, and product development for all FDW-Worldwide brands. Goodwin has more than 20 years of industry experience.



"Goodwin's appointment is the next step in solidifying the worldwide growth of FDW-Worldwide," said Jonathan Lipp, owner of FDW. "Buzz's strong sales and marketing skills, years of industry experience, and team-oriented leadership style offers a strong foundation for the expansion of the FDW-Worldwide network of dealers and artists."

Rich Named GC VP

Phil Rich has been named vice president of merchandise and guitars and amplifiers for Guitar Center. An 11-year GC veteran, he will be responsible for overseeing the purchasing and merchandising of all stringed instruments and amplifiers. Rich began as a salesperson at GC's Seattle store. In 2003, he became the district sales manager for nine stores in Washington and Oregon, and in 2004, he was promoted to director of sales for guitars and amplifiers. Two years later, he was named director of merchandise for electric guitars.





From left: Dennis Chambers, Jim Riley, Marco Minnemann and Johnny Rabb



Dennis Chambers

CASCIO INTERSTATE MUSIC | EVENT

STAR-STUDDED FEST

Cascio Interstate Music's DrumFest 2008 featured top-notch talent, including Dennis Chambers, Marco Minnemann, Jim Riley and Johnny Rabb. Held on Nov. 15, 2008, the all-day event brought in more than 1,000 attendees. It was co-sponsored by Pearl, Sabian, Zildjian, Roland, Ludwig and Gibraltar.

Rabb opened the show, displaying his patented sticking techniques on Roland electronic drums. Riley, who plays with Rascal Flatts, showed his skills in styles from jazz to hard rock. Minnemann offered a lightning-fast display on his drum setup, which included multiple foot pedals, a gong bass drum and stacked cymbals. Chambers closed the show with a 75-minute set.

The day ended with an all-star jam and autograph signings with the clinicians.

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NAMM[®] News

MARCH 2009

"We're Going After the Freeway..."

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Wanna Play? New Customers Do!

NAMM is planning for our second annual *Wanna Play Music Week* to drive more customers to your store! This year's event features the Music Monday performance throughout North America, a new lesson locator to help prospective music students find you, the *Wanna Play? Film Contest*, the debut of the *So You Wanna Play Music Hotline* and ongoing media efforts to broadcast our message online, on TV, in print and by word of mouth. The message is clear: Everyone can make music!

Note from Joe

I've told this story before, so please forgive me for repeating myself, but I think that growing the market and creating more active music makers is perhaps more important now than ever before.

Led Zeppelin's famed manager Peter Grant was angrily condemning a promoter, even after selling out five shows in a row.

The promoter responded by saying, "Look, the stadium is full." Grant responded that he knew they already had those people. He pointed to a crowded freeway outside the stadium packed with people heading home from work and said, "I want those people!" He understood very clearly the power of "going after the freeway."

NAMM's efforts have been focused on growing the market by supporting programs that get more people playing and becoming lifelong music makers. Historically, we have been blessed with steady consumer demand, but we want more. We want the "people on the freeway." In fact, a recent Gallup Poll found that of the current population that does not play a musical instrument, a whopping 82 percent wish they did.

One of the ways we're going after the freeway is with *Wanna Play?* This public service campaign is designed to get consumers into our Members' stores and discover what music can do to make their lives—and the lives of their families—so much better. There are many ways to get involved, and your association is eager to work side by side with you to create more music makers and bring more customers through your door. Call us or go to namm.org to learn all about it.

There are really only two ways for us to grow this industry: to get more people started playing music and to have fewer people quit playing music. Let's work together on both to fulfill the potential that we know is out there.

Joe Lamond
NAMM President/CEO



Music Monday Kicks Off a Week of Events

On May 4, music will be performed simultaneously across North America, as Americans and Canadians join together to celebrate Music Monday. From there, we will highlight a different "NAMM band" each day of the week that could appear on national morning news and in local media, including bands with children, Weekend Warriors, grandparents and grandchildren performing together, seniors and corporate rockers.

Promote Free Lessons for New Students—Let NAMM's Lesson Locator Lead the Way

We encourage NAMM Members to take advantage of this publicity opportunity by offering free music lessons during the week to new students. NAMM will be seeking reporters, columnists and bloggers who've never played music and coordinating a free 15-minute "get started" music lesson. A new lesson locator featuring the most comprehensive database of music educators on the Web from NAMM Member stores, MTNA (Music Teachers National Association), TakeLessons.com and LookingforLessons.com will also be launched. This tool will connect prospective players with a teacher. More players equals a stronger music products industry!

So You Wanna Play Music Hotline

During *Wanna Play Music Week*, NAMM is paving the way for a special music hotline, staffed with celebrity musicians and music store representatives, to talk with consumers about how to select the best instrument and get past the most common challenges or fears. This effort will encourage people to take the next step in learning to play, and all callers will be directed to get in touch with their local NAMM Retail Member music store (which can be found on wannaplaymusic.com in the NAMM Dealer Locator).



Ongoing Media Relations

NAMM will promote *Wanna Play Music Week* in a series of Webcam broadcasts on wannaplaymusic.com from schools across the country and at a national event based in a New York City school with mentions on local television morning shows and radio stations. We're also working to coordinate print and broadcast interviews with participating celebrities talking about how learning to play music impacted their lives.

NAMM's *Wanna Play?* Film Contest



NAMM has launched the very first installment of the *Wanna Play?* Film Contest—reaching out to more than 500,000 music and film enthusiasts and asking them to create short films that highlight the positive aspects of making music. The contest will run through May 2009. The winner will fly to Nashville for an industry world film premiere at the 2009 Summer NAMM Pre-Show Party at The Hang.

Get Your FREE *Wanna Play?* Resources!

NAMM's *Wanna Play?* program features collateral for Members to use as in-store merchandising, including posters, window decals, brochures and buttons, to raise awareness that music making is for everyone. Send an e-mail to info@namm.org

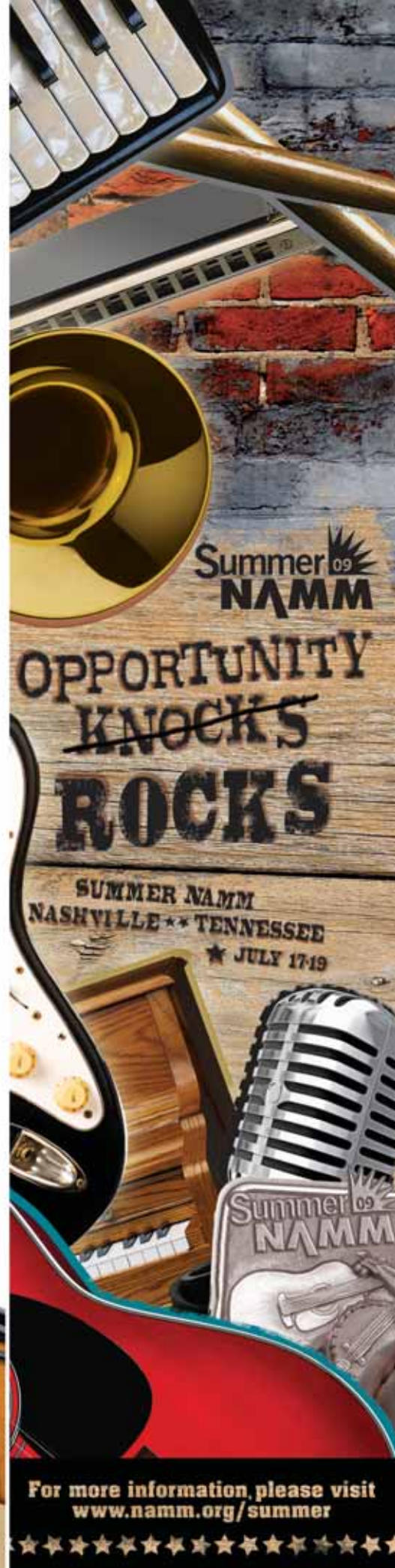
to obtain materials. Also, the *Wanna Play?* Web site houses information on the campaign with regular updates to news, local events, musician spotlights and a NAMM Dealer Locator.

Find out how you can bring *Wanna Play?* to your store during *Wanna Play Music Week*—and throughout the year! Check wannaplaymusic.com and stay tuned for more details.



NAME NAMM News No. March 2009

NAMM News is published by NAMM. To keep up-to-date on the latest breaking industry news, sign up for our *PLAYback Digital* e-newsletter at playbackdigital@namm.org.



For more information, please visit www.namm.org/summer





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SUPPLY

TRAF GROUP | BY SARA FARR

TIME TO COLLECT

As the consumer credit market tightens and unemployment rises, music product retailers face a growing list of past-due payments and delinquent accounts. Many are turning to Traf Group to collect.

"Most businesses' accounts receivable departments take a reactive approach to managing their receivables," said Mike Farrell, national director of business development for Traf Group, an accounts receivable management solutions firm. "They start working their past-due receivables each month and try to work their way to the more current delinquencies."

Traf Group contacts customers early in the delinquency stage in an effort to increase retention. Early revenue cycle management is key to healthy cash flow, according to Farrell. "With our service, an extremely high percentage of customers pay the dealer directly, which increases cash flow," he said. "In this economic climate, it is imperative that retailers are aggressively managing their accounts receivable."

Farrell added that Traf Group's retailer fees can be added onto the total past-due balance, making its services essentially free.



Mike Farrell

LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN

Dealers can get started with Traf Group by importing their data into a spread sheet and uploading it using a portal on Traf's Web site. Retailers using TriTech software can also opt to upload their accounts receivable data directly. At that point, Traf customizes a letter to send to the dealer's customers with delinquent accounts.

"The letters are designed to facilitate the individual needs of clients," Farrell said. "All correspondence has the retailer's

store or business office phone number in the text of the letter, so the customer can contact the dealer directly to rectify any billing discrepancies, make restitution, make payment arrangements or return the instrument to the store."

These letters can be further tailored for customers who use auto pay or have coupon books. Farrell said five letters is the maximum contact his organization will have with a customer before considering the account closed. At that point, dealers can decide

whether to turn it over to Traf Group's A-1 Collection Service division, which markets traditional contingency collection services, bulk skip tracing, credit reporting and litigation.

HIGH RECOVERY RATE

Farrell said Traf's account representatives are diplomatic throughout the process and will work with customers to get their accounts current. "It's like that old adage: You get more bees with honey than vinegar," he added.

Traf Group currently serves more than 100 music retailers. "We're recovering around 70-95 percent of the past-due receivables," Farrell said. "And when I say that, I mean [the customer] pays to become current and stays in the rental program, which is really important to the retailer."

Peter Sides of Robert M Sides Family Music in Williamsport, Pa., said that with Traf's services his business achieved a 70-percent reduction in the number of customers receiving past-due letters; retained 93 percent of its past-due rental customers; recovered 160 percent of the dollar amount submitted to Traf; and decreased the average dollar amount owed by an account by 16 percent. **MI**

ANNIVERSARY

LM Celebrates 30th

This year marks LM Products' 30th anniversary. Founded by Larry Mechem in 1979, the company started with only one employee, a few hides of leather and a sewing machine. LM has maintained consistent growth with a simple philosophy of high quality at competitive prices and a commitment to personalized customer service. lmproducts.com

AGREEMENT

Jam to Handle D&M

D&M Professional, the owner of Marantz, Denon and Denon DJ, has named Jam Industries' Erikson Pro division as its exclusive distributor in Canada. The announcement was made by Paul Mathis (pictured, left), senior vice president of D&M Professional. Gerry Zegarra (pictured, right), formerly of D&M Professional Canada, will serve as the main contact, working for Erikson Pro. d-mpro.com



DISTRIBUTION

AM&S to Distribute Nord

Clavia DMI AB has appointed American Music & Sound as the exclusive distributor of Nord products in the United States. American Music & Sound plans to commence operations on or around April 1. Nord will kick off



the new distribution arrangement with the introduction of the Nord Electro 3. The Electro 3 features a new organ section, piano section and effects, and it can use any sample from the Nord Wave library. americanmusicandsound.com; nordkeyboards.com

PRICING

No Grover Price Increase

Grover Pro Percussion has announced that it will not increase prices for its Grover line of concert percussion products in 2009. "I know that our retail partners and customers are feeling the pinch," said Neil Grover, president and founder of Grover Pro Percussion. "We've made the investment in efficiency improvements that allow us to hold 2008 pricing." groverpro.com



Taylor Guitars' Bob Taylor (left) and Kurt Listug

TAYLOR | PRODUCTION

TAYLOR HITS RECORD NUMBERS IN '08

Taylor Guitars ended 2008 as a year of record growth, producing 80,000 guitars.

"We are humbled to have experienced such a successful year," said Kurt Listug, Taylor's co-founder and CEO. "We recognize that economic times are uncertain and people everywhere are suffering from an increase in prices on day-to-day goods and services, but their loyalty and passion for guitar playing continues to fuel our desire to build the best guitars we can."

In 2008, Taylor set out to offer new products and expand its global

reach. The company launched the SolidBody Custom, the SolidBody Standard and the SolidBody Classic. Later in the year, Taylor released the SolidBody Classic SC model, featuring a noiseless single-coil pickup. In the middle of the year, it released the limited-edition Liberty Tree T5.

Last year, Taylor also announced an expansion of its international reach to Europe and the Middle East through a distribution partnership with Fender. In October, a new distribution agreement was formed with Yamano Music in Japan.

taylorguitars.com

STEINWAY | FINANCIAL

2008 Q4 Review

Steinway's preliminary fourth quarter results showed several sales dips. Here are the figures for the period ending Dec. 31, as compared to the prior year period.

27%	Decline in band sales
25%	Decline in piano sales
30%	Domestic decline
20%	Europe & Asia decline
6%	Total sales decline for the full year over the prior year
FLAT	Europe & Asia sales for the full year

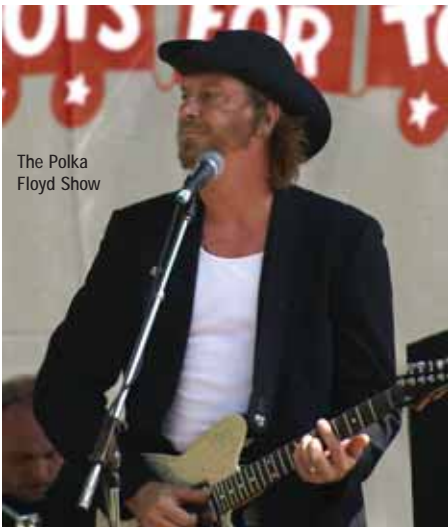
MIAC | BOARD

Kowalenko Steps Down

The Board of Directors of the Music Industries Association of Canada (MIAC) has announced that Al Kowalenko will be stepping down from his position as MIAC executive director, effective Aug. 31, after 30

years of service.

The board also confirmed that Kowalenko will be offered a role on a consulting basis to assist MIAC in its transition to new management. miac.net



The Polka Floyd Show

REVEREND | CHARITY

GUITARS FOR TOTS

Reverend Guitars sponsored a Toys for Tots benefit concert on Dec. 19, 2008, in Toledo, Ohio. The event was held at Mickey Finn's Pub and was co-sponsored by Durdell's Music and The Polka Floyd Show. It included live performances by The Polka Floyd Show, Zimmerman Twins, Mojoe Boes & His Noble Jones and Larry Love. The U.S. Marine Corps Toys' for Tots collected new toys at the door in lieu of a cover charge.

"It was a huge success, and I'm sure it made a difference to hundreds of kids during the holiday season," said Joe Naylor, Reverend's president. (reverend.com)

GUITAR SUPPLIERS | LEGAL

Coalition Fights Counterfeiters

Fender, Gretsch, Ibanez and Paul Reed Smith joined forces last March, forming the Electric Guitar Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition, to petition government authorities to enforce their intellectual property laws against counterfeiting.

Complaints were lodged with the Xuanwu District Public Security Bureau (PSB) in Beijing regarding the activities of two Chinese suppliers, Musoland and Payless Guitar.

Following months of investigations, PSB launched raids against both companies on Nov. 26, 2008. PSB seized more than 1,200 counterfeit guitars and other musical instruments.

Raids uncover 1,200 fraudulent guitars, music products

Missing 15%?



During difficult economic times, accessory sales are critical to maintaining or growing your business. Denis Wick brass sales grew over 15% in the U.S. and Canada last year alone. It's the kind of growth that makes a difference to your bottom line.

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SHOWS

Musikmesse Turns 30

The 30th Musikmesse show will be held at Frankfurt am Main in Frankfurt, Germany, from April 1–4. Prolight + Sound will also be held in conjunction with Musikmesse. With 78,500 visitors, last March's convention set a new attendance record. {musikmesse.com}

EVENTS

Aguilar Hosts Free Master Class

Aguilar Amplification will hold an artist series master class on March 7 with endorsing artist Gerald Veasley. The clinic, "Improvisation for Everybody," is free to the public and will be held at Aguilar's New York City showroom. Attendees will tour the Aguilar factory and be able to try out its products. {aguilaramp.com}



REBATE

Sennheiser Wireless Rebate

Sennheiser has introduced a rebate program in preparation for the Federal Communications Commission's ruling on the restricted use of wireless mics operating in the 700 MHz band. To receive a rebate, users must purchase new Sennheiser systems and components in an alternate range and trade in an equal number of old wireless systems or components, including non-Sennheiser brands, that currently operate in frequencies between 698–806 MHz. The 12-month program includes tiered rebates of up to \$1,400 or a simple flat rebate. {sennheiserusa.com}

VENUES

Eastwest Opens Studio

Eastwest held the grand opening of Eastwest Studios on Jan. 17.



Formerly Cello Studios and Western Recorders, Eastwest Studios is located in Los Angeles and will serve as the new headquarters for the company and as a recording complex.

The studio will offer, recording, editing, software development, marketing and distribution under one roof. {soundsonline.com}

APPOINTMENTS

The Cavanaugh Co. Names COO

The Cavanaugh Co. has appointed Ron Van Ostenbridge as chief operating officer. Van Ostenbridge will oversee all three Cavanaugh divisions. He has been director of operations at The Cavanaugh Co. since 2005.

"I am blessed to have such extremely talented people and educated management, such as Ron, assisting me and taking on greater responsibilities," said The Cavanaugh Co. President Jim Cavanaugh.



Ron Van Ostenbridge

Alfred has appointed keyboard arranger Carol Tornquist as the company's keyboard editor.

Crown Audio has named Guillermo Sanchez as the business developer for Central and South America.

The Harman Music Group has appointed Jay Woolley as marketing director for portable sound. Also, Harman Professional has appointed Alexander Rojas to the newly created



>>> Alexander Rojas

position of director of sales, intercontinental South.

Shure has named Mark Humrichouser as the general manager of its U.S. business unit. Jim Schanz has also been promoted to director of U.S. field sales.

Tri-Technical Systems has appointed three key executives, including Paul Acton as president, Pat Murphy as executive vice president of technology and Greg Cox as executive vice president of operations.

"The recent growth and ongoing success of Tri-Tech can be attributed to the leadership of these three individuals," said David Cox, Tri-Tech's founder and CEO.

HAL LEONARD | DISTRIBUTION

HAL SIGNS DRUMFUN

Hal Leonard Senior Vice President of Sales Doug Lady and DrumFun President Spencer

Strand reached an exclusive agreement for Hal Leonard to distribute DrumFun's Turn It Up & Lay It Down line of play-along CDs for drummers. The deal went into effect on Jan. 1 and covers all trades worldwide. DrumFun, a Nashville, Tenn.-based company, had previously self-distributed its products. {halleonard.com}



DrumFun play-along CDs



CONN-SELMER | ARTIST APPROVED

KING IN ATLANTA

The Atlanta CorpsVets drum and bugle corps has started using Conn-Selmer's King Ultimate Marching Brass for the 2009 season.

"We are extremely happy to have this relationship with Conn-Selmer," said Dr. David Stollberg, CorpsVets executive director, about the purchase. "We look forward to our production of Southern Suite using King Ultimate Marching Brass multi-key horns. Our membership is ecstatic to be performing on these exceptional instruments."

{conn-selmer.com}

LAB.GRUPPEN | ACQUISITION

Lab.gruppen Acquires Lake

Lab.gruppen has acquired Dolby Laboratories' Lake trademarks and the exclusive rights for use of Dolby Lake Processor (DLP) technology for both touring and permanent sound reinforcement markets.

The technology currently referred to as DLP technology — used in Lab.gruppen's PLM series — will be called Lake technology or Lake Processing. The Dolby Lake Controller PLM edition software will be called Lake

Controller software, as new versions of the software are expected to be compatible with both the stand-alone DLPs and the PLM series products.

{tcgroup-americas.com}

Lab.gruppen takes on new trademark, makes name changes

PLAYINTIME PRODUCTIONS, SANDY FELDSTEIN MUSIC | APPOINTMENT

DAVID FELDSTEIN TO HEAD PLAYINTIME

Playintime Productions and Sandy Feldstein Music have appointed David Feldstein as president. He has been running day-to-day operations since his father, Sandy, the previous company head, passed away in 2007.

"I am so proud to be carrying on Dad's legacy of publishing great educational music products," Feldstein said.

In related news, C.L. Barnhouse became the exclusive distributor of the Playintime Productions and Sandy Feldstein Music catalogs on Jan. 5. The Music For All National Percussion Festival has also been renamed the Sandy Feldstein National Percussion Festival. It will be held on March 20 in Indianapolis. {playintime.com}

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MERGER

SurgeX Joins Forces With ESP

SurgeX — a manufacturer of AC surge elimination and power conditioning products for the pro audio, broadcast and multimedia industries — has merged its North American operations with Electronic Systems Protection (ESP), an equipment manufacturer of power protection technology.



“SurgeX’s product offerings along with its position in the Pro AV market make it an ideal fit for our company,” said Steve Cole, president of ESP. (He is pictured above, right, with Surge X’s Michael McCook.)

The merger will extend ESP’s product line capabilities and will enable SurgeX to expand within existing markets with ESP’s resources and expanded distribution. {surge.com; realpowerprotection.com}

SHURE | VENUES

Theater Honors Shure

Shure recently celebrated the opening of the S.N. Shure Theater at the company’s corporate headquarters in Niles, Ill. Shure Chairman Rose Shure and President and CEO Sandy LaMantia were part of the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The facility honors the company’s founder, Sidney Shure.

Designed by Krueck + Sexton Architects, construction began in March 2008 on the 4,000-square-foot, 143-seat theater, which was designed as a state-of-the-art venue for audio and video presentations, product demonstrations, and live music performances. {shure.com}



The S.N. Shure Theater interior and exterior (inset)



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◀◀ **TRIBUTE**

Thank you for your contributions to the music industry. You will be missed.

⊕ **Don Randall**

Don Randall was the sales and marketing force behind guitar designer Leo Fender during his company's first two decades. Randall died on Dec. 23, 2008. He was 91.

Randall played a key role at Fender, coining the names of the company's iconic designs: the Telecaster and Stratocaster.

He met Leo Fender before World War II when both men worked in radio repair. After the war, they decided to form a business together that would let Leo focus on developing a guitar line.

Randall went on to have an equally important role in the design of the solid-state amplifier when he opened Randall Corp. in 1970. The company introduced several major products before Randall sold the business in 1987.



ing the Gulbransen line of electronic church and theater organs. That work gradually evolved into the first solid-state control systems for real pipe organs. His problem-solving skills also led to the creation of instrument strobe tuners. During his career, he was awarded more than 70 patents.

Peterson Electro-Musical Products remains a family owned and operated business with Peterson's son, Scott, as company president.

Memorial donations in Peterson's name may be made to the American Guild of Organists. {agohq.org}

⊕ **Manuel Rodriguez Sr.**

Manuel Rodriguez Sr., the patriarch of Rodriguez & Sons Guitars, passed away on Dec. 25, 2008. He was 82.

Rodriguez was born in Spain, where he developed his skills as a luthier before arriving in the United States in the 1960s. As a custom classical guitar builder in Los Angeles, he developed a reputation for using traditional classical guitar-building techniques and incorporating modern technology. NAMM has posted a video from Rodriguez's 2003 oral history interview on its Web site.



⊕ **Richard Peterson**

Peterson Electro-Musical Products' founder Richard Peterson passed away on Jan. 29. He was 83.

In 1948, Peterson co-founded the Haygren Church Organ company in Chicago and later founded Peterson Electro-Musical Products, currently in Alsip, Ill. For nearly 20 years, much of Peterson's time was devoted to developing and improv-

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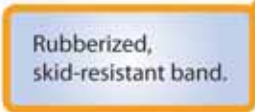
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in

by Jenny Domine

tomorrow

Frank and Julie Pampenella of PM Music Center keep overhead tight so they can splurge on customer service. The result is a decade of steady growth

Worldwide recession, declining sales and rising unemployment. Sound familiar? No, not really, said Frank Pampenella, who started PM Music Center in Aurora, Ill., in 1982 when headlines reported similar gloom with the added kicker of double-digit inflation.

"It was bad," Pampenella said, recalling the early '80s when he turned his wedding consulting business and basement music studio into a school music dealership. And he added that it was not an entirely smart move at the time.

"I got into the business because I didn't know what I was doing," he said with a smile. "Music programs were being cut, not just shrinking but actually being cut. People were telling me, 'Don't do this. You're not going to make it.'"

Perhaps that rocky start helped make Pampenella more sensitive to the bottom line. Today, PM Music Center is a lean business operation that has bucked current economic trends. While most retailers are looking at flat sales or worse, Pampenella saw 12-percent growth in 2008. His secret? Carefully streamlining overhead without skimping on customer service.

OPERATING LEAN

Pampenella pays close attention to overhead and uses Tri-Technical Systems' AIMSI to manage inventory effectively. He admitted that his business should be housed in

7,000–8,000 square feet of space, but he has found it more cost effective to keep his operation tight. He houses lessons for 400 students, a minimalist retail space, a repair shop and rental storage in 4,200 square feet. PM Music Center also maintains an off-site warehouse down the road for additional instrument rental storage.

The company's 22 employees are expected to work hard and wear many hats. This includes Pampenella himself. He takes customer calls daily and sweeps the showroom floor when necessary.

Pampenella also encourages his employees to lead and actively seeks their feedback and ideas. In December 2008, Pampenella passed out questionnaires to all of his employees asking them how PM Music Center could increase market share, grow the business and cut expenses. The results sur-

prised him. The exercise brought out the experience and unexpected talents of employees in all areas of his business.

"The interesting thing was we got a lot of great information from unlikely people," he said. "For example, somebody in the warehouse had a great idea of how to do something online that could benefit our business."

Despite his cost-cutting measures, Pampenella said there's no reason to scrimp. PM Music Center's in-house repair shop, for instance, has a crew of three full-time technicians. Pampenella said repairs give a big advantage to a small-scale operation even if they don't serve as a profit center. He said it is a necessary ingredient for comprehensive customer service.

"We'll turn around a repair in three days, where some of the competition will take three weeks," he said.

DEFINING EXTREME SERVICE

Still, Pampenella doesn't define customer service as offering repairs, lessons and knowledgeable employees. To him, service is driving 45 minutes to deliver a single violin string. Service is fueling up the van a second or third time to run a trumpet out to a high school band. Service is Pampenella personally venturing through a blizzard to bring a replacement bass to a distraught mother the night of her son's concert. (He has.) And Pampenella does not put a price tag on any of it.

"One of the great things about this business is the relationships," said Pampenella, who still manages one school account. "We don't mind spending a tank of gas to drive

somewhere to make a director happy because that's really what it's about."

His wife and business partner, Julie Pampenella, defines service simply: "If you say you're going to do something, make sure it gets done." As a leader, Frank Pampenella said he loves new ideas and staying hands-on in his business, but he encourages his staff to take individual responsibility providing customer service with honesty and care.

"[Customers get] to know the owner and get to know people here that don't turn over very often," Pampenella said. "When somebody calls in, they know we'll respond to them."

KEEPING UP WITH COMPETITION

Pampenella said PM Music Center has to provide such extreme service because it faces competition both online and from seven other music stores within a five-mile radius, including Guitar Center, Music & Arts Center, Brookdale Music, Hix Bros. Music, Quinlan & Fabish, Modern Music and Best Buy.

"This is a great community for music," said Pampenella, whose business covers 200 individual schools ranging from 50 miles north of Aurora to the Indiana border. Not that the economy hasn't affected business. School music dealerships face different pressures than, say, combo and piano retailers. "The biggest challenge facing rental programs is the declining numbers of students in school music programs," he said. "It's all about music, but at the same time, you have that teenager who wants to be a rock 'n' roll star. You spend a couple hundred bucks on a guitar, and he plays it for two or three weeks, and

+ TAKING IT TO THE BANK

Pampenella has established a strong relationship with his bank, but he warns fellow school music dealers that banks are under tighter regulation and require more financial information than ever before.

"It used to be a handshake, and they'd set it all up," Pampenella said. "This year, because of everything that has been going on with that industry, [bankers] had to jump through a whole bunch of hoops, and so did we." Here's how Pampenella maintains his bank relationship:

- "We're great about paying our bills on time." According to Pampenella, a dependable track record is key. Banks look at records from the past three to five years, so document everything.
- "Say what you're going to do, and then do it." In other words, don't make promises to banks that you can't keep.
- If you make a mistake, call the bank and tell them. "Don't make up an excuse," he said. "They might be mad at you, but at least you're honest."
- Paying bills on time also makes you popular with vendors. Pampenella added that banks need references, so it's important to have vendors on your side.

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Julie and Frank Pampenella

+ BUSINESS RELATIONS

Husband/wife teams are not uncommon in music retail. But when high school sweethearts Frank and Julie Pampenella exchanged “I dos” in 1980, Frank was a gigging drummer, and a business career was not in Julie’s plans.

“I was not very involved with the wedding consulting or PM Studios,” Julie said of Frank’s early business ventures. “I was just a visitor.”

Today, Julie is vice president and co-owner of PM Music Center. She manages accounts payable and oversees all aspects of the business, including answering phones and taking care of customers.

“My growth in this business has been hands-on,” she said. “I am much more confident in what I do.”

In this partnership, Julie said her husband is the idea generator and futurist for the company, while she describes herself as “the doer” — the person who helps bring Frank’s goals to fruition in a practical way.

The Pampenellas often hear people comment on how difficult working with a spouse must be, but they said the benefits far outweigh the challenges.

“When things are good, we celebrate those victories together,” Julie said. “When things are not so good, we help each other get through it.”

Both PM Music Center owners are humble in their shared leadership roles.

“I used to always give total credit to Frank for the success of the business,” Julie said. “I have realized in the past five years or so that I have been a big part of it, as well. Frank tells me that all the time. He has told me that from the beginning.”

it is something he isn’t very serious about.”

Pampenella cited his company’s low rental prices as a major factor in helping parents keep their children in music during an economic downturn. “I think parents are still going ahead and saying, ‘I want my child to have this experience. I want them to know what it is like to be in a band. The education makes you a well-rounded person.’”

“When parents don’t want to spend the money, hopefully, they will come to us and see rental prices that aren’t going to strap them, and that makes a big difference.”

A deep selection is important, too. Pampenella said his business is large enough to provide all the major brands but small enough to give personalized service.

“They can pick the brand, they can pick the accessories that they want, but we’re small enough to be able to customize our service and our program to fit the individual director’s needs,” he said. “So if they want us to come out and test the kids on the instruments, if they want a wooden clarinet as opposed to a plastic clarinet, whatever they may want us to do, we go ahead and do for them.”

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Three years ago, Pampenella decided to invest in a general manager who would keep a closer eye on the numbers. This way, Pampenella had more time to work *on* his business, as opposed to *in* his business.

“I love ideas,” Pampenella said. “I’m always coming up with ideas, but we just didn’t have the time to implement them or, in some cases, didn’t have the knowledge.”

Pampenella met Michael

Schaner at a Yamaha seminar. At the time, Schaner was doing product management and marketing for the supplier. “I remember coming back from that and telling Julie, ‘Boy, there’s a guy I’d like to hire,’” Pampenella said.

Fortunately for Pampenella, Schaner was looking for a reason to move back to the Midwest. When he joined PM Music Center in April 2005 as its general manager, Pampenella had a flow chart ready for him with goals for the store. They haven’t accomplished all of them, but many have come to fruition, including more efficient collections management and launching online rentals.

INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

PM Music Center uses Tri-Technical Systems’ AIMSi software to manage accounting, inventory and point-of-sales. According to Schaner, this investment has made a big difference in managing rentals.

“It was clear when I arrived that AIMSi wasn’t being utilized as fully as it could be,” Schaner said. “By implementing more of the program, we increased efficiencies in accounting. They were using Quickbooks and Excel to duplicate things that AIMSi could do.”

Schaner also began using AIMSi to handle procedures and reports that had been done previously by hand. This saved the company time by eliminating duplication and errors.

In 2007, Pampenella invested in Voiceshot, an automated calling service, to contact customers for collections. The service accomplishes in a matter of minutes what previously took a hired temp hours.

“We have it set up to make about 90 calls in about 15 minutes,” Schaner said.



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The new system, however, doesn't detract from PM Music Center's human contact. Once the automated message is delivered, the customer pushes zero to connect with a person at the store. At 12 cents a call, this process has produced more accurate, cost-effective collection results because the calls arrive on time, every week. (With the old process, which cost \$120 a week, it was impossible to call the whole collections list in a month.)

"It allows us to concentrate on what we do best," Schaner said. "We can concentrate more on the customer by outsourcing some of the superfluous tasks."

Pampenella had also been dreaming up ways to make online rentals a reality for years, but most Web solutions

were expensive and tough to navigate. Ultimately, Schaner found an independent Web developer that worked with them to create a solution, which brought in 200 online rentals in the first year. The staff updates and maintains the online store, thus eliminating the cost of a full-time Web developer.

The rest of PM Music Center's Web site functions as a second storefront, giving potential customers an overview of the company and its music lesson and rental programs.

"Someone will come in and talk to you about lessons and say, 'I saw this teacher [biography] on your Web site, so I'll go with them,'" Julie said. "[Customers have] already done their homework."

Pampenella hands time-consuming tasks over to technology, so his staff can focus on customer service

PM Music Center extends its service on the Web site through a frequently-asked-questions page and live support online. In an effort to test the potential of online networking, PM Music Center's

"About PM Music" Web page features a yelp link. Yelp is a free, online city guide where locals can review services in their community. Schaner said the yelp link helps extend word-of-mouth buzz about the store online and provides a new way for customers to give feedback.

"More and more customers are doing independent research online," Schaner said. "They are better informed."

The investment in the right technology and people has come back to PM Music Center with steady growth over the past 10 years. The company is poised to weather a more uncertain future, and Pampenella is not resting. "We've got to work a lot harder now to make it happen." **MI**

— Photos by Karen Solem

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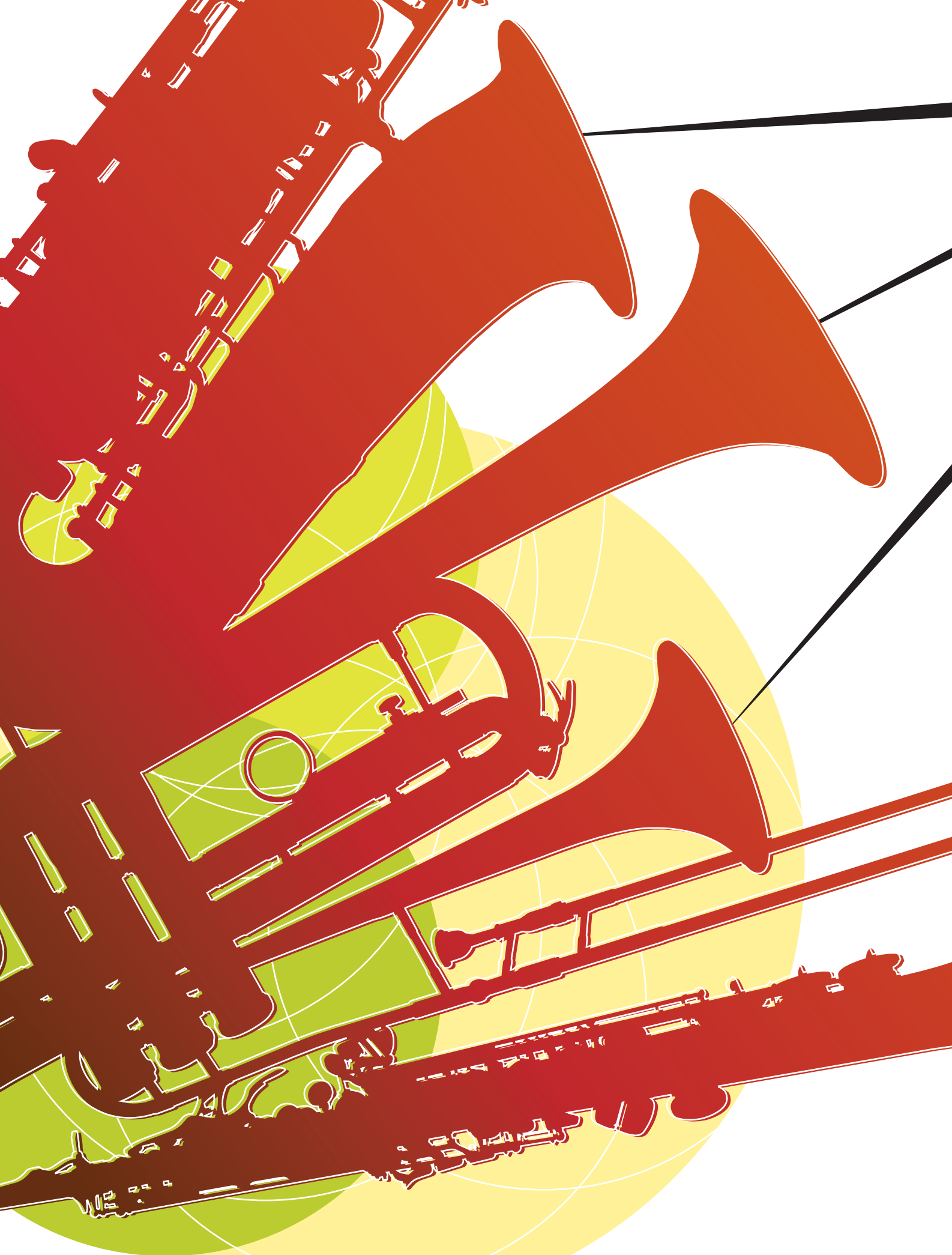
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The Band Plays ON

BY JASON KORANSKY

The school music market is far from recession-proof, but retailers are finding refuge in rentals and services

Don't tell Leslie Faltin of Instrumental Music Center in Tucson, Ariz., that the economic downturn has only recently descended upon the band and orchestra market. Hard times are old news for her.

"My sales were down about 30 percent over the past year," Faltin said. "I feel like I've been weathering the storm for a full year."

Thing is, Faltin doesn't have an overly pessimistic view of the market. She just came off of what she called a "great rental season" that yielded a 10-percent increase in business, and she's developing strategies to boost her sales during the recession.

"In this market, you have to be smart about what you're doing," she said. "I'm buying less, moving my old inventory, taking out what doesn't work."

Of course, many manufacturers at the recent NAMM show were competing for the business of stores such as Instrumental Music Center. While the band and orchestra exhibit aisles at the Anaheim Convention Center felt less crowded than usual, a cautious optimism resonated through the hall. So did ideas — from exploiting the school market to boosting accessory sales — about how to best reach music

buyers in a slumping economy.

Some NAMM attendees also suggested that a buffer exists between the B&O industry and the malaise of the general economy. For pro musicians, instruments are the tools with which they practice their trade — if they need a new horn, they will purchase it. But the student market is dependent on new players entering the musical fray.

“The band and educational side of this business is not going to go away,” said Randy Huey, director of sales and operations at Antigua Winds. “People understand the value of music. People start playing in school bands, develop a love and interest in it. Then, they need to buy instruments.”

RENT ME

Every retailer contacted for this article agreed that rentals are up and could provide a lifeline for struggling stores.

“The bottom line is that the beginning band and orchestra rental business is somewhat recession-resistant,” said Scott Summerhays of Summerhays Music in Murray, Utah. “Not recession-proof but resistant. Also, why not rent intermediate and semi-professional instruments, as well?”

Joel Menchey of Menchey Music Service in Hanover, Pa., echoed Summerhays’ sentiments. “In a recession, parents are more likely to rent a student instrument than they are to buy a lower-priced student instrument, as there’s not as

much of a commitment with the rental,” he said.

Finding the right instrument lines to stock in a rental program is crucial when money is tight.

“Demand for affordable, high-quality, low-risk rental options for beginning students will remain strong in 2009 in spite of the challenging economic conditions,” said Mark Goff of Paige’s Music in Indianapolis. “Demand may increase as parents have less disposable income to risk on purchasing unknown products from non-traditional sources.”

The health of a city’s school music programs can serve as a barometer of a store’s rental program. Budgets for the 2009 school year were set in 2008, before state, county and city budgets were facing the full impact of the recession. Music programs may face steeper cuts in 2010, when budgets reflect the affects of the deepening economic crisis.

“If the schools are supported by a solid tax base, then the rental programs will continue on given that the teachers are still employed and the programs are running,” said Peter LaPlaca, president of PJLA Music.

Faltin explained that the health of the school system also affects purchases made by schools themselves. “In terms of school financing, I think, how much worse can it be?” she said. “Still, I have a P.O. on my desk for \$107,000 for a school in Phoenix. People are still buying big capital items. I don’t bet the farm on school orders coming in. I can’t plan on it, especially with small margins.

“The status of band directors also affects our business. We have a high turnover rate in Tucson. At one school, I did

\$5,000 in repairs over the summer. They have a new director. I don’t know who they’re doing repairs with now.”

UPGRADE & REPAIR TIME

With the economic downturn, more customers are scouring their closets and dusting off old, creaky instruments, then looking for stores to perform rehabilitation magic on them.

“We have definitely seen an increase in people bringing in older instruments for upgrades or repairs,” said Cory Lake of American Guitar & Band in Maple Grove, Minn. “We get e-mails every day on this, and as much as possible, we do repairs on-site.”

Summerhays confirmed Lake’s assessment of the repair market. “We have definitely noticed more requests for repairs of older instruments in the last 12 weeks,” he said.

On the upgrade side, manufacturers touted new saxophone mouthpieces as potential larger accessory purchases. JJ Babbitt President and COO Rocco Giglio used the company’s new Otto Link Vintage metal and hard rubber mouthpieces as an example of a product that a dealer could use to improve an emerging (or established) saxophonist’s sound.

“We sell this for \$389,” he said. “If a player can’t afford a new saxophone, they can get a new mouthpiece to make the saxophone they have sound better.”

ACCESSORIZE

Players will always need new strings and reeds, products that can offer retailers good margins. “We’re the razor blades of the music product industry,” said D’Addario Vice President John D’Addario, Jr.

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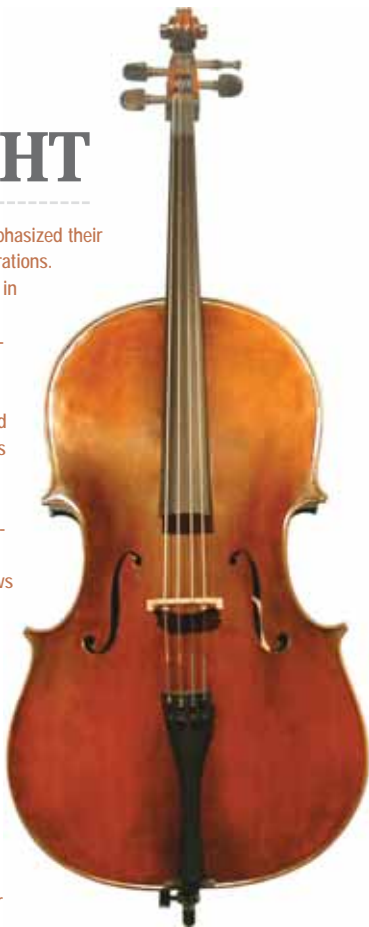
Manufacturers exhibiting at NAMM emphasized their increasing oversight in their China operations.

Eastman, for instance, owns its factory in China. “We have one-on-one ability to make adjustments, to listen to the marketplace,” said Sandra Ragusa, Eastman’s director of marketing, who specified the Amadeus flutes’ machined key cups as an example of the factory’s capabilities. “We can be very flexible.”

Last year, Reuben Allen introduced his new line of Kenny G signature saxophones. This year, his Golden Sound Distributors unveiled a new Ronnie Laws signature line. All of the instruments are made in China — a process that the former Los Angeles resident personally oversees.

“Kenny and I own a factory in China,” Allen said. “Everything is made in our factory. I have control.

“The quality has gone up in leaps and bounds. The Chinese are so interested in doing things right, that they’re willing to do anything. Plus, there’s a focus on improved labor quality.” —J.K.



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on their laurels to meet customers' accessory needs. "We keep a wall stocked with accessories for all horns and string instruments, and we constantly ask our clients what they need," Lake said. "Because we have almost 400 students taking lessons each week, we have a built-in, consistent clientele to serve, and we focus on their needs and our instruc-

tors' preferences for certain lines."

Vandoren introduced new individually wrapped Flow Packs at NAMM to cater to dealers' accessory needs. The packs will be available for all alto saxophone and clarinet reeds in the spring. They come in a self-selling display box that will hold 50 reeds.

"This addresses the economic fears of parents who need to be careful with their

discretionary dollars," said Dansr President Michael Skinner, the exclusive U.S. importer of Vandoren reeds. "Parents may ask, 'Can I afford to buy one or two boxes of reeds?' They'll be more willing to buy one, two or three reeds, and make that trip two or three times. The school music dealers who are fearful of what parents will say in '09 will have an ability to sell at a higher margin because singles are closer to retail."

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Retailers report an uptick in their repair businesses, as consumers with tighter pocketbooks bring in older instruments for rehabilitation

Accessories go beyond reeds and strings, of course. "Even little items, like a new metronome you wear on your wrist from Yamaha, little items like that can get people excited," Faltin said. "We look for items to service the school area."

PLAN AHEAD

As the economy continues its path toward the unknown, several suppliers at NAMM mentioned the importance of their partnerships with dealers.

"We work hard with our dealers to partner with them, rather than to throw product at them," said Eastman Music Director of Marketing Sandra Ragusa. "That puts us in the position to be flexible. That's going to be important for us in this economy. You have to work with dealers, providing value and creating good margins. We're hoping that this will carry us through these bad times."

"Dealers are being more cautious, waiting longer to make purchases," said Craig Denny, Conn-Selmer's marketing director for saxophones. "Bottom line is that dealers have to be smart about what they buy and make sure they're getting exactly what they need." MI

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SHOWS



NAMM STATS

3% The decrease in overall attendance from last year's show, with a total of 85,799 registrants.

3.5% The decrease in exhibitors from last year's show, with a total of 1,505.

11.4% The increase in attendance at NAMM University Breakfast Sessions from last year's show, with 3,652 total Breakfast Session attendees.



THE NAMM SHOW 2009 | BY ZACH PHILLIPS, JENNY DOMINE, AARON COHEN & MARY WILCOP

CHARGING AHEAD

A week before The NAMM Show, Joe Lamond, the organization's president and CEO, announced that pre-registration numbers were down 1 percent from last year's meeting — a show with record-breaking attendance. Which raised the question: With a recession in effect, how many of those people would actually show up?

Quite a few, it turned out.

NAMM draws surprisingly robust attendance despite the recession

The 2009 NAMM convention, held from Jan. 15–18 at the Anaheim Convention Center

in Anaheim, Calif., ended with final attendance of 85,799 registrants, a 3-percent drop from last year. It also attracted 1,505 exhibitors. When the doors opened on Thursday morning, the show floor bustled, and that energy continued through Saturday afternoon. Many exhibitors noted a severe slowdown in traffic on Sunday, the last day of the show, but still reported strong overall attendance.

1. Contemporary Music's Jason DiMambro (left) and Menzie Pittman; 2. Rockley Music's Liane and Tobin Rockley; 3. Daisy Rock's Tish Ciravolo with Gene Simmons; 4. David Benoit performs at the Roland booth; 5. From left: Yamaha's Motoki Takahashi and Tom Sumner, Alicia Keys, and Yamaha's Mitsuru Umemura and Rick Young; 6. Chicago Music Exchange's Scott Silver; 7. From left: Owensboro Music's Gordy Wilcher, Tech 21's Dale Krevens and NAMM's Joe Lamond; 8. Peter Erskine performs at Samson's party; 9. Dolphin Music's Jason Tavaría; 10. Marky Ramone; 11. The Jägermeister Girls at the Peavey booth; 12. DBZ Guitars' Dean Zelinsky (center) with the DBZ Girls; 13. Doyle Dykes performs at the Taylor booth; 14. Kerry King shreds at the Marshall breakfast; 15. NAMM's Chip Averwater (left) and Joe Lamond



"I thought it was worth the expenditure, the time, the effort, the sweat, the tears — I'm sure there was some blood in there, too," said Mike Belitz, CEO of Ultimate Support Systems, with a laugh.

First-time exhibitor DBZ Guitars, led by guitar industry veteran Dean Zelinsky, mentioned visiting with quality attendees. "It's still Friday, but we've been busy," he said halfway through the show. "And more importantly, we've seen very important [attendees]. It seems the international community came out in droves — Germany, the U.K., Australia, South America."

Music retailers seeking ways to survive in the tough market hit the NAMM University sessions in full force. The NAMM U. Breakfast Sessions boasted an 11.4-percent increase in total attendance from last year.

"Our members once again demonstrated their determination and persistence as the best and brightest from around the world gathered to experience four days of new products, NAMM University

1. Shure's Chad Wiggins; 2. Allen & Heath's Michael Palmer; 3. Roland's Eric Klein (left) and Michael Barrett; 4. beyerdynamic's Paul (left) and Dana Froula; 5. Blue Microphones' Blake Jarsky; 6. Solid State Logic's Damien Egan; 7. Core One Creative's Ted and Kimmy McCann; 8. TC Electronic's Uffe Kjems Hansen (left) and John Maier; 9. Stage Ninja's Brent Eskew; 10. From left: Jensen's Brian Campanella, Noreen Cravener and Orin Portnoy; 11. From left: Harman's Paul Faby, Randy Garrett and Michael MacDonald; 12. IK Multimedia's Enrico Iori; 13. Loud's Pyotr Belov (left) and John Boudrea; 14. Essential Sound Products' Joseph Webb, Tony Smith, Michael Griffin and Vuyani Wakaba; 15. Ultrason's Paul Taylor; 16. Waves' Shachar Gilad (left) and mixing engineer Tony Maserati; 17. Samson's Mark Wilder; 18. From left: Steinberg's Sam Varma, Kyle Painter, Matt Schuler, Jeff Davis and Matt Hepworth; 19. Olympus' Ray Acevedo and Amy Leslie; 20. From left: Musiccorp's George King, Scott Reutenauer and Eric Miller; 21. Auralex's David Paxton (left) and Tim Martin; 22. American Audio's Tom Freret; 23. Sennheiser's Ben Escobedo; 24. From left: Audix's Lofty Whitaker, Desiree Gregg, Cindy Bighel and Cliff Castle

1. NAMM U's 'Design Your Retail Store on a Dime' panels; 2. Alesis' Gregg Stein (left) and artist Mike Phillips; 3. Audio Technica's David Marsh (left) and Jeff Simcox; 4. Kaman's Paul Damiano (left) and Heid Music's Paul Heid; 5. From left: George L's Sandy Richter, Susie Merritt and Leesa Gifford; 6. Behringer's Michael Deeb (left) and Uli Behringer; 7. Avant Electronics' Ken Avant; 8. Gem Sound's George Dertinger (left) and Ronald Stewart; 9. Dave Mustaine; 10. Sabine's Joe Nguyen; 11. Peterson's Pat Bovenizer; 12. Hercules' Winn Keaten; 13. From left: Korg's Jerry Kovarsky and Seiki Kato with Herbie Hancock; 14. Yamaha's Hirofumi Osawa; 15. From left: Music Sales' Joey Lyons, Phil Smith and Steve Wilson; 16. From left: Hal Leonard's Larry Morton, David Jahnke, Doug Lady and Mike Hansen; 17. From left: Winfall Music's Ed Nervi, Cindy Kane and Art Rudder; 18. Marlo Plastic's Becky (left) and Art Livingston; 19. Sher's Michael Aragon (left) and Chuck Sher; 20. Kjos' Karl Kjos (left) and David Gereghy; 21. The Dean Girls

courses, networking and great live music," Lamond said.

Some exhibitors scaled back to take a more cautious approach to the show. Yamaha held off on its annual dealer concert, opting instead to host a jam-packed press conference with Alicia Keys to introduce its new AvantGrand digital piano. Press conferences also quieted down by the third day of the show. Still, there were some product innovations, including Yamaha's AvantGrand and Roland's new V-Piano.

"I thought that in light of the current economic doom and gloom portrayed by the media that The NAMM Show was remarkably upbeat, particularly the school music sector," said George Quinlan, president of Quinlan & Fabish in Burr Ridge, Ill. "Times like this make the survivors stronger."

AMPED UP

Crowds filled the aisles around Paul Reed Smith's tented booth on the second day of the show. Famous axe-wielders, such as Adrian Belew and Mark Tremonti, stood alongside Smith himself, but the crowd wasn't there for celeb sightings. They wanted to be





the first to glimpse PRS's new tube amps and acoustic guitars.

Designed in collaboration with amp builder Doug Sewell, PRS's tube amps pay homage to classic American and British sounds. Including the Dallas, Blue Sierra and Original Sewell models, they're decidedly high-end pieces, with MSRPs beginning around \$3,500.

"Doug Sewell has developed what I think is an extraordinary-sounding amplifier, and it's what I am currently using," Smith said. "The move isn't so much about diversifying into a new segment as it is about offering musicians a beautiful-sounding amp with a different kind of sound."

The acoustics, the Angelus Cutaway and Tonare Grand models, are also boutique items, with MSRPs hovering around \$5,300. German spruce tops and rare Peruvian mahogany necks come standard.

PRS wasn't the only company to expand into new territory at NAMM. Audio and recording supplier TC Electronic showed its first bass amplifier offering with the RebelHead450 head (MSRP: \$1,395), RebelStack cabinets

1. Alfred's Doug Fraser (left) and Antonio Ferranti; 2. Gator's Mark Stone; 3. From left: Carl Fischer's Rachelle Gayer, Steve's Music's Norm Zimmerman, and Carl Fischer's Anne Sobel and Heidi Vanderlee; 4. Boss's Paul Youngblood; 5. Mel Bay's Chuck Phillips (left) and Bryndon Bay; 6. From left: D'Addario's John and Peter D'Addario, Brian Vance, and Rob D'Addario; 7. Markbass' Peter Murray (left) and Marco de Virgiliis; 8. Couch Guitar Straps' Dan Perkins; 9. From left: Major Music Supply's Jim Bruno, Mike Mulqueen and Travis Woodland; 10. Ibanez's Paul Specht (left) and Mac Muranaka; 11. Peavey's Frederick Poole (left) and Tim Jauernig; 12. From left: John Pizzarelli with JazzKat's Vincent Giardina, Don Lawrence and Marty Abbate; 13. Kaman's Lloyd Stark; 14. Rep Marc Ingber; 15. WattGrinder's Darryl Ford; 16. Rockano's Mike Hrano (left) and Neil Harris; 17. Ricky Skaggs (left) with PRS's Paul Reed Smith; 18. Saga's Lilliana Urosevic; 19. Voyage-Air's Harvey Leach (left) and Adrian Bagale; 20. Sparrow Guitars' Billy Bones (left) and Jordan Eshpeter; 21. The Music Link's Levi Oliphant (left) and Aaron Chaiclin

(MSRP: 210, \$695; 212, \$845) and RebelControl (MSRP: \$195). Each piece combines to form a versatile bass rig.

“When we started looking at combining our technologies in processing, amplification and speakers into instrument amplification, bass amps seemed a natural fit,” said John Maier, CEO of TC Electronic. “It’s also a smaller, more focused market and customer base that we felt we could get our arms around and really create something new.”

Guitar and bass amps, in fact, proved to be the focus of several major NAMM events. Marshall kicked off the show with a meeting dubbed “the loudest breakfast of your life.” There, Slayer’s Kerry King and Whitesnake’s Doug Aldrich

demoed the company’s new MG4 series amplifiers. These solid-state amps represent Marshall’s entry-level and feature seven new combos and a 100-watt head. They range in power from 10–100 watts.

Soon after Marshall’s meeting, Markbass hosted a press conference at its booth to launch several new wares. Among them was the MoMark Tester bass amp system. It lets players choose their power amp and pre-amp, EQ, and master modules, along with a range of other options.

1. Hamer’s Frank Rindone; 2. Colorado Case’s Andrew Amalfitano (left) and Steve Simmons; 3. Kustom’s Mark Hunter; 4. Yamaha’s Rick Young (left) and Kurt Witt; 5. From left: Levy’s Leathers’ Harvey and Nikki Levy and Heid Music’s Todd Heid; 6. Basson’s Victor Basson (left) and Sean McAnally; 7. From left: David Gage’s Sam Finlay, David Gage and Judy Epstein Gage



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SHOWS |



Peavey's JSX 50 guitar amp head served as a centerpiece of the company's booth. A collaboration with guitarist Joe Satriani, the head has been created to be the "definitive 50-watt amplifier," according to Jim Beaugez, Peavey's communications manager. "Joe loves the old, 50-watt amps from the '60s, but his problem with them is that they're just not very personal. So a modern player who's doing three sets a night playing a wide variety of music needs something that allows them to get more sounds."

This is achieved with an array of gain possibilities, a boost switch on the crunch channel and a six-way attack selector that adjusts the bass response. The JSX 50 has an MSRP of \$1,499.

SOFTWARE EVOLUTION

Large crowds also gathered around laptops and flat-screen TVs in Hall A to check out the latest software innovations from audio, recording and DJ suppliers. Ableton was at the forefront with its Live 8 software. Live 8 enables remote collaboration via the Web with a special feature that streamlines the sharing process.

1. D'Addario's David Luce; 2. Antigua's Randy Huey; 3. Hamilton Stands' Bill Carpenter; 4. Connolly's Gary Byers; 5. International Woodwind's Laksar Reese; 6. Artist Mike Smith and Sonaré Winds' Maryann Zschau; 7. JJ Babbitt's Rocco Giglio (left) and Bill Reglein; 8. From left: Dan Greenberg, Pete Olstad, James Carter and Roger Greenberg at P.Mauriat's booth; 9. Ja Musik's Marcus Borchert; 10. Getzen's Thomas Getzen; 11. Ralph Bowen (left) and Dansr's Michael Skinner; 12. Oleg Products' Oleg Garbuzov (left) with Eric Marienthal

"You can basically share your Live project with anyone anywhere in the world," said Antje Hübner, public relations manager for Ableton.

Akai Professional partnered with Ableton to produce the Akai APC40 as an Ableton Live control surface. "My controller gives me feedback with LEDs and color-controlled lighting to read information from the control surface, as well as the software on the screen," said Eric McGregor, Akai product specialist, during an APC40 demonstration.

Steinberg and Waves both expanded their software into new applications. Steinberg released Cubase 5 and Cubase Studio 5. It also developed a Cubase 5 app for the Apple iPhone and iPod touch.

Waves Audio formed the Waves Live division to meet the live sound market's needs. Waves' D-Show Enabler will make



more than 50 Waves TDM plug-ins compatible for live environments.

Trinity Audio Group's Indamixx portable studio exemplified the integration of computers and music. It's a hand-held, mini laptop hardware/software music making solution under \$500.

"Mobile music making is the future," said Trinity Audio Group's Creative Director Ronald Stewart. "We already see this making headway in the market."

Several audio hardware suppliers aimed to help sound engineers adapt to new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations that will reduce white space for pro audio use. AKG offered a host of new products that comply with FCC regulations, including the WMS40 Pro wireless system and the System Architect HUB 4000 Q plug-in with one-click setup.

Sabine also expanded the range of its DTV/license-free wireless microphone systems. The new SWM 6000 can use 34 simultaneous channels and, combined with Sabine's SWM 7000 wireless system, can reach 104 simultaneous channels.

"There will be many changes in how we, as an industry, use wireless communications systems with the upcoming DTV switch-over," said Joe Nguyen, director of sales for Sabine. "Sabine is proud to offer another wireless solution that will not be affected by the DTV switch-over."

Several audio companies have branched out to appeal to a wider consumer base. Tascam's DR-100 portable recorder includes a wireless remote control and audio editing features, while Olympus introduced new wind jammer accessories for its \$399 Linear PCM recorder. Edirol by Roland's R-09 HR includes pyro Audio Creator LE software from Cakewalk for easy audio-file editing.

Samson improved on the Zoom H4 with the Zoom H4n. With a \$349 street price, it records four channels simultaneously. Samson execs also announced the Zoom Q3 Quick Cam Recorder, which records audio and video, further connecting audio products to a larger consumer base.

FIGHTING THE STORM

Drum manufacturers at NAMM were not immune to the economic realities of shrinking demand. At the Percussion Marketing Council's meeting on the third

day of the show, attendees discussed the issue of money drying up for school music programs that turn students into musicians. Still, it didn't keep percussion suppliers from releasing new products or stifle their awareness of where markets are growing.

Larry Nelson, product manager for Sonor Drums, said he has noticed more drummers going to four-piece kits, as opposed to five-piece kits. While tight pocketbooks may be a contributing factor, he said the trend may have more to do with drummers wanting to play in the pocket. "The four-piece sets are less busy, so drummers don't have to carry around as much," Nelson said. "This makes for a deeper groove."

Pearl also emphasized a four-piece configuration with its Forum Ready-Set-Go! package. Other companies focused on five-piece kits as higher-end items. Drum Workshop's Collector's series, in particular, not only features the larger number of drums but also an array of pristine finishes, such as olive ash and Macassar ebony.

Meanwhile, technological advances amped up virtual percussive products, such as Roland's DT-HD1 Drum Tutor. This software connects a laptop to a small electronic drum set, and its notation guides users toward making the right hits.

Many drum companies at NAMM also looked to the international market, or at least globally minded players, for their new products. Toca Percussion unveiled West African Freestyle djembes in antique gold and silver. Chalo Eduardo, Remo's international products manager, demonstrated the company's new line of Middle Eastern doumbeks, South Indian Kanjira drums and Caribbean-inspired Mondo Tunable Nesting hand drums.

"We're manufacturing in the United States but making products for the world," Eduardo said.

Some companies went for more retro looks and sounds. Ludwig is celebrating its centennial this year with Liverpool 4, a kit modeled after the one used by Ringo Starr at the height of Beatlemania. Timbales player Ralph Irizarry has also signed on with Tycoon Percussion for a signature line, which he said is built to recapture the feeling of Tito Puente playing mambo in clubs 60 years ago. He

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INNOVATIONS BUILT TO SELL

Last year's rocky economic finale did little to delay the release of some of this century's most innovative piano products. Piano and keyboard industry stalwarts used NAMM to pair breakthrough products with imaginative marketing strategies to help retailers get the items to new audiences in the coming year.

Yamaha introduced the AvantGrand digital piano at the beginning of the show and its Customer-Centric Yamaha program the following day. The AvantGrand, designed with multi-channel speakers and a soundboard resonator, uses the Tactile Response System to emulate digitally not only the sound but also the physical experience of playing a high-end acoustic piano.

The company's new sales programs also aimed to help dealers tap into a younger generation of online multitaskers. "Sixty-seven percent [of consumers] buying an item are going online to find information about that item," said Tom Sumner, Yamaha Corp. of America's senior vice president. In response, a recent click-through e-mail campaign, part of the new program, recorded

1. Roland's Clint Short; 2. Mapex's Joe Hibbs; 3. Remo's Mark Branson; 4. Zildjian's Paul Francis; 5. Remo's Chalo Eduardo; 6. America Sejung's Lourie Tindungan (left) and Dirk Zwiebel; 7. Baldwin's Barnabas Fekete; 8. Trevor Lawrence Jr.; 9. Ralph Irizarry; 10. Young Chang's Vincent Choi (left) and Jeff Dunmire; 11. Organist Ed Alstrom; 12. Pearl's Raymond Massey; 13. ePiano's Charles Johnson; 14. Sonor's Larry Nelson; 15. Suzuki's Phil Dolganov; 16. Organist Scott May; 17. Lowrey's Dennis Awe; 18. Sabian's Robert Mason; 19. Yamaha's Jim Haler; 20. Kawai's Tom Love; 21. From left: Mason & Hamlin's Gary Burgett, Allen Guyot and Tom Lagomarsino; 22. From left: Korg's Richard Formidoni, Ken Fuente, Mike Bradley and James Sajeve; 23. Pro-Mark's Mark Petrocelli

the locations of consumers who browsed products on Yamaha's Web site, which will be passed on to dealers as new leads. The company will also begin offering enhanced sales guides for its new products online.

Roland debuted the V-Piano, the most lavish of this year's piano and keyboard offerings. The company's founder Ikutaro Kakehashi introduced the instrument in the spirit of President Obama's election. "For 100 years, pianos didn't change," he said. "I think today we need a change."

The instrument is the first to use digitally modeled notes rather than sampled sounds from other acoustics, letting players virtually create both classic piano sounds and more futuristic hybrids — like that of a physically impossible silver-string-wound piano.

Other companies outfitted products with online and iPhone hookups to target X- and Y-generation users. QRS incorporated MIDI technology into an entire line of its Story & Clark acoustics. And Baldwin received a "Best In Show" nod for its My First Baldwin, a children's piano that converts into a desk and iPhone-controllable stereo.

As a final piece of advice to Roland dealers on the first night of the show, Kakehashi addressed financial stresses with a firm warning. "Don't join the price war," he said. "People have upset the industry [by doing that] in the past. Enjoy your business. This is the time to harvest."

NEW DELIVERY SYSTEMS

As printed music moves from page to CD to USB, publishers began offering new products and solutions to help dealers stay with the times.

Several publishers men-

tioned growing sales in books packaged with play-along CDs and DVDs. Hal Leonard recently signed on to distribute DrumFun's expansive Turn It Up & Lay It Down play-along drum series, and Carl Fischer executives named the company's *Creating And Performing Drum Loops* DVD and companion book/CD as one of its recent best sellers.

Still, with the growth of downloadable sheet music as a cost-saving alternative to print, some publishers decided to wait out what they see as a short-lived CD storm. Kjos' David Gerehty said his company is moving away from packaging books with CDs. "Instead of worrying about the production costs of CDs, users will just download [music and lessons] to their iPods," he said, adding that he sees the thumb-sized USB flash drive as a more portable, efficient alternative to the compact disc.

FreeHand Systems now provides such smaller solutions. Its Sheet Music On A Stick line offers piano sheet music of popular selections on a USB memory stick. The files, which come 25 per drive for about \$24.95, are interactive, letting players transpose songs into any key and change the playback instrumentation. "We want to make [sheet music] cool, hip and interactive," said FreeHand Vice President Sarah Shreve.

Reaching out to dealers and Generation X and Y users, Alfred's new Total Sheet Music

program offers a growing number of downloadable sheet and guitar tablature titles from its Web site. Dealers can sign up for the site's Affiliate Partner Program, so customers can access Total Sheet Music's online database on in-store computers. Or, customers can link through a store's Web site. Partnering dealers receive an 8-percent commission on sales.

From the other end of the Internet, Mel Bay has found

that bloggers have helped generate sales for its niche products. Mel Bay President Bryndon Bay said that Ted Eschliman's *Getting Into Jazz Mandolin* and Tony Trischka's *Fiddle Tunes For Banjo* received buzz on blogs before they were released to the public.

"When [a product] comes out, there's already a market for it," Bay said. **MI**

Coverage of band and orchestra trends at NAMM begins on page 38.



1. Kelly Thomas at the Buffet Crampon booth; 2. Gemstone's Carolyn Manley and Richard Barth; 3. PJLA Music's Peter LaPlaca; 4. Schilke's Andrew Naumann (left) and Phil Baughman; 5. Conn-Selmer's Jeff Christiana; 6. Golden Sound's Rick Izumi (left) and Rheuben Allen; 7. Jupiter's Brent Rosborough (left) and Derek Craig; 8. LP's Jim Greiner; 9. RS Berkeley's Al Pantalone; 10. From left: Yamaha's Hirofumi Osawa, Mark Anderson, Rick Young and Paul Calvin; 11. Tama's Jason Rank

LOUD | Q&A

LOUD EXPANDS SUPPLY CHAIN, DISPELS BANKRUPTCY RUMORS

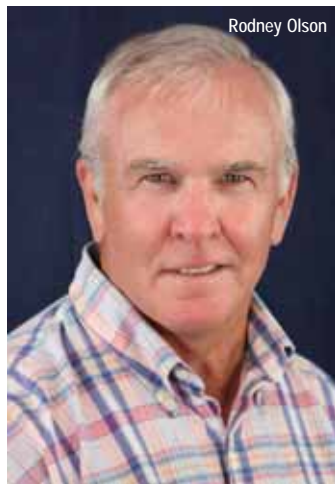
Loud Technologies recently announced two new contract manufacturing (CM) partners and the reallocation of production for certain EAW and Mackie products across its supply chain.

The expansion helps replace capacity lost when the prior CM for those products discontinued operations in December 2008.

In related news, *Music Inc.* Publisher Frank Alkyer interviewed Loud CEO Rodney Olson at NAMM to address rumors of Loud's alleged bankruptcy filing.

Highlights:

Frank Alkyer: There are rumors at the show regarding Loud Technologies' financial issues. What is the status of the



Rodney Olson

company right now?

Rodney Olson: The rumors about Loud are just that — rumors. Like everyone in today's uncertain economy, we have examined our organizational and cost structures and

made reductions to position us well for the current downturn.

Alkyer: You decided to delist yourself from the NASDAQ. Why did you do so?

Olson: The costs of being a public company far outweigh the benefits. In fact, we spend close to \$1 million per year on legal fees and other activities that we believe are better invested in the business. By voluntarily delisting, we will be able to redirect these dollars into building our supply chain and the products our customers want.

Alkyer: There was a report at the show that Loud would be seeking bankruptcy protection. Is there any truth to that?

Olson: Unfortunately, this report was totally unsubstantiated and painted the wrong pic-

ture of our situation. The truth is Loud has an envied senior management team, supportive ownership in Sun Capital and a solid plan for success. Loud's top priority is reallocating production of some Mackie and EAW products lost when one of our contract manufacturers stopped production in late 2008.

Alkyer: In November, you announced your decision to sell the SLM Marketplace, Knilling and Austin brands to U.S. Band & Orchestra. How will that sale affect the company?

Olson: It allows Loud to focus and invest in its core markets and brands, MI and pro, and ensures the customers for those businesses continue to receive the high levels of service they need.



The new NAMM board nominees with Chip Averwater, NAMM chairman (far left), and Joe Lamond, NAMM CEO (far right)

NAMM | PERSONNEL

NAMM'S NEW FACES

NAMM's voting members elected new nominees to the association's board of directors at its annual meeting on Jan. 16. They included:

Dick Boak, director of artist and public relations and an archivist for C.F. Martin; Jeff Falglen, V.P. for Keyboard Concepts; Gary Forkum, owner of Fork's Drum Closet; Kurt

Listug, Taylor Guitars' co-founder and CEO; Phil Rich, Guitar Center's vice president of merchandise and guitars and amplifiers; Ray van Straten, director of entertainer solutions at QSC Audio Products; Christopher White, president and CEO of White House of Music; and Rick Young, senior V.P. for Yamaha Corp. of America.

PMC | MEETING

PMC Preps for '09

At the Percussion Marketing Council (PMC) meeting, held on Jan. 17, Executive Director Karl Dustman emphasized realistic goals and optimism.

"The bad news is that schools' money is drying up, and that's affecting concerts and facilitators' fees," Dustman said. "The good news is that retailers can become involved in the mix."

PMC members discussed aggressive 2008 marketing campaigns that reached thousands of young drummers and the Hands On With Zig fall tour, eight concerts that reached more than 3,300 elementary and middle school students. PMC's Roots of Rhythm program has also added a chapter on Iraqi Kurdish daf frame drums.



PMC board members

PARTNERSHIPS & DEAL MAKERS

WANAMAKER, JOHN GEER, CFOUR TEAM UP

Jay Wanamaker recently teamed up with equity professional John Geer and cFour Partners to provide equity financing resources to MI vendors. Specifically, they will offer equity financing for a variety of vendor needs, including buyouts, growth financing and recapitalizations. In a recapitalization, some shareholders can sell stock, while others retain their ownership and continue to manage the business.



Jay Wanamaker (left) and John Geer



Loud's Dan Gallagher (center) shakes hands with Onkyo Tokki's CEO and President Katsutarō Tsuji. They are surrounded by other Onkyo Tokki and Loud staff.

LOUD IN JAPAN

On Jan. 15., Loud Technologies appointed Tokyo-based Onkyo Tokki as the exclusive Japanese distributor for its Mackie and Tapco brands. Onkyo Tokki already distributes Loud's EAW brand in Japan. In a related move, on Jan. 30, Loud announced the closing of its Tokyo office and the transfer of all four former Loud staff members to the Onkyo Tokki team.

GODIN GETS EQUIPPED WITH N-TUNE

Zero Crossing, maker of the N-Tune on-board chromatic guitar and bass tuner, has formed a new OEM partnership with Godin Guitars. N-Tune will be offered as standard equipment on the majority of Godin's Performance series guitar models.

FENDER ROCKS WITH LITTLE KIDS

Fender has created a long-term strategic partnership with Little Kids Rock, a non-profit that provides free lessons and instruments. The goal of the partnership is to transform children's lives by restoring music programs in U.S. public schools.

"We have been big fans of Little Kids Rock for several years and are very impressed with the services and resources that they have developed," said Richard McDonald, senior vice president of global marketing for Fender. "Kids need and deserve help with direct access to making music now more than ever."



Little Kids Rock student

SOUND IMAGE GETS CROWNED

Sound Image President David Shadoan met with Crown Audio President Mark Graham at Crown's booth to celebrate the completion of a mutual agreement. Sound Image will purchase a large battery of Crown's new I-Tech HD series amplifiers for its tour sound business.

GAMA | TRENDS

E-TAILERS SPEAK OUT

Harvey Levy, chairman of the Guitar and Accessories Marketing Association (GAMA), mentioned the concept of paradigm shifts as he called the organization's annual pre-NAMM meeting to order on Jan. 14.

As if to crystallize his point, GAMA hosted a panel discussion with the heads of three major online music retailers: Noah Herschman, director of home electronics for Amazon.com; Craig Johnson, CEO of Musician's Friend; and Jim Hovey, CEO of American Music Supply.

All three panelists agreed that the Internet continues to expand the overall market for musical products. "You capture a swath of people who might never go into a [music store]," Herschman said.

He offered a statistic that suggested the market is tipped in favor of brick-and-mortar stores. "Sixty-nine percent of people who searched online bought at a bricks-and-mortar store," he said. "Only 39 percent of people who went to a bricks-and-mortar store [then] bought online."

Herschman added that only a small percentage of Amazon.com's roughly 100,000 musical instrument SKUs come from the company's own warehouse. The rest come from music retail partners that sell through the Web site.



Amazon.com's Noah Herschman

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CELEBRITY SAYINGS

Famous faces at NAMM weigh in on new products and give retail advice

"One of my main goals with this piano is that people will be able to have access to a beautiful sound that will inspire them. In the meantime, before you can get Alicia's Keys, I would recommend [playing] anything you can, in your school or even — what I liked to do — go to piano stores. People there really want to encourage people to play."

— Alicia Keys promoting her digital sound, Alicia's Keys, and Yamaha's AvantGrand Piano at Yamaha's booth



Alicia Keys

"Without much tweaking, this is a pretty heavy little rig we've got here."

— Kerry King after playing Marshall's MG4 series amps at Marshall's "The Loudest Breakfast of Your Life."



"I never thought I'd have the opportunity to work with a company like [Carvin]. One thing I've always admired about this company is it's very family run, very boutiquey. They are capable of making very high-quality equipment at a very affordable price."

— Steve Vai unveiling the Carvin Steve Vai Legacy II amplifier



Gene Simmons (left) and NAMM's Joe Lamond

"Outreach. Get your soft, white asses out of your stores and go out there because there are so many people dying to give you their money, but they don't make the connection."

— Gene Simmons sharing retail wisdom at NAMM University's "Breakfast of Champions"



ELATION | DESIGN & DISPLAY

BOOTH BEAUTY

Elation's NAMM booth got as much attention as the products displayed within it. The booth's design made a statement about Elation's video wall and other lighting products, as well as the trusses from its sister company, Global Truss.

"The advances in technology

have been impressive," said Eric Loader, national director of Elation Professional. "There is so much more that our products can do in lighting applications now that will expand the list of things an LD can accomplish, while saving money and energy at the same time."

SENNHEISER | EVENT

Sennheiser Parties With Dealers

The eleventh annual Sennheiser Dealer Appreciation Party took place on Jan. 16 at the House of Blues in Anaheim, Calif. We the Kings, one of the breakout groups on last year's Vans Warped Tour, warmed up the crowd for headliner The Larry Braggs Project with the Tower of Power Horns.

Larry Braggs has been on the road, performing and touring for more than a decade, and has shared the stage with artists, including Al Green, James Brown, War, Sir Tom Jones, B.B. King, Incognito, Dave Koz, Tony Bennett, Al McKay and The Sons of Champlin.

The party's sound was provided by a stage full of Sennheiser microphones.



"The exhibits were, as always, fantastic. I could barely contain myself, hurrying from one booth to another."

— 2008 Midwest Clinic Attendee



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From left: Frank Alkyer, Victor Salazar, Zach Phillips, Greg Billings, Liane Rockley, Pete Gamber, Alan Friedman and Ted Eschliman

Seven industry insiders revealed their 'Best In Show' picks at the NAMM University session, held the morning of Jan. 18

PANELISTS

Zach Phillips, Music Inc.
Victor Salazar, The Drum Pad
Liane Rockley, Rockley Music
Greg Billings, Steinway Piano Gallery
Pete Gamber, Alta Loma Music
Ted Eschliman, Dietze Music
Alan Friedman, Friedman, Kannenberg & Co.

MODERATOR

Frank Alkyer, Music Inc.

+ SOMETHING SMALL

Phillips — Couch Guitar Straps: "These guys are the ultimate socially conscious, green, save-the-world-type company."

Salazar — HQ EcoPad From D'Addario: "The rubber playing surface is made from recycled tires, and the base is made of residual wood-waste. It feels great, no trees are being harmed and drummers need to practice."

Rockley — Mel Bay Lick Library DVD Line: "In this day and age when things are so tough, we have to focus on accessories and small things. People may not have enough money to buy a guitar, but they have enough money to buy these DVDs."

Billings — My First Baldwin Piano: "It is the cutest thing. It comes with an iPod dock mounted to the top, and it's about the same price as an average starter keyboard. There is a real problem in the piano business with entry-level and getting kids to play for the first time. This is a breakthrough product."

Gamber — Facelift Reusable Guitar Body Overlay: "You can have one guitar and 30 different looks!"

Eschliman — Mel Bay Children's Chord Books: "We need this sort of product as a bridge, as a catalyst to music explo-



ration, and reclaim our role as music stores as where you get your music education. This is the type of stuff that will do that.”

Friedman — Samson Go Mic: “This is a USB mic, no drivers required. You can use it for voice-over-Internet, podcasting and Web casting. It’s a great little product and high-quality.”



+ GOTTA STOCK IT

Phillips — Tonium Pacemaker Portable DJ Player: “It is like two turntables, a mixer and an entire record collection that fits into your pocket. This product does so much. I am pretty overwhelmed by it.”

Salazar — Alfred Todd Sucherman Methods & Mechanics DVD: “It’s a tremendous, inspiring, entertaining DVD. We had 24 [in our store] go in a week.”

Rockley — Hal Leonard Rock Band Guitar Method and Twilight, The Score: “One thing we cannot underestimate in this industry is going with the current trends and selling product on that. If you don’t have *Twilight* in your stores, you’re really missing the boat. This is a really big thing, especially in the teenage-girl market.”



Billings — Web Only Piano Player Piano CDs: “The only bright spot in the piano business is these player pianos, and the biggest problem with player pianos is that almost all the CDs have been produced by the manufacturers of the systems. If customers buy more music from this Web site later, they’ll pay you gross profit on the transaction.”

Gamber — Hal Leonard Rock Riffs Series and Kazoobie Humazoo and Electric Kazoo: “[With Rock Riffs], instead of sounding all band geeky and the guitar guys wanna give you a swirly, you can jam. Why do you think no kids want to play the trombone? Thank you, Hal Leonard, for putting horn licks in the guitar key. When you’re in seventh grade you can jam with your guitar friends.”

Eschlman — Latin Percussion Shakers: VariTone, Cyclone and Wah: “Drummers like bright, shiny things. You can never have enough toys. They come in nice point-of-purchase packaging and hang really nice [on your displays].”

Friedman — Hercules iStand From Kaman: “With travel and weight restrictions while traveling to gigs, it would be really cool to have a really portable guitar stand, and here it is.”

+ COMPANIES TO WATCH

Phillips — Voyage-Air Guitars for its quality line of travel guitars and innovation: “I am really impressed with its Songwriter series. These are travel-type guitars where the neck breaks down, but they play and feel like good, mid-priced guitars.”

Salazar — GMS Drum for its lower-cost, boutique drum models: “They’ve been around for over 20 years [as a company] that does high-end, custom drums. However, through the years, they’ve been expanding their lines so more people can buy a GMS kit. They are creating less-expensive lines, while still maintaining tremendous quality.”

Rockley — FreeHand for its Sheet Music On A Stick: “The really cool thing about this is that you plug them into your home computer and you can change the key on it or add a trumpet line. I’m really excited to see how they develop this product.”

Billings — QRS and Story & Clark for their new video player piano system and USB connections on all acoustic pianos: “On every piano they make — at no additional charge — they include a USB port. This is an amazing breakthrough that bridges that gap. There is some really good software for kids and learning programs, but if you have an acoustic piano, there’s a huge bridge [to get it from the computer to the piano].”



Gamber — EMD for its broad line of value-priced products: “This year, I’ve found so many niche products that they carry. This is what I would call your alternative music line. Everything is packaged — [and it’s] awesome — for your wall. If I were to open my retail store today, this is the company I would have dropped some money with.”

Eschlman — Roland for its HD-1 Drum Tutor: “I think it is important that we find things that bring us back into the public light again. We are where music starts. So we are looking for products that do that. So, here’s the drum tutorial software for the HD-1. I’m really excited about this.”



Friedman — Yamaha for its Financial Advantage Course: “This is a company that gives an awful lot back to this industry.”

+ BEST IN SHOW

Phillips — Paul Reed Smith Tube Amp Line: “I just thought the amps sounded phenomenal. It’s a major event for Paul Reed Smith dealers.”

Salazar — Pearl Eliminator Demon Drive Pedals: “It’s unbelievable what this pedal can do. Usually on a left pedal — no matter what you do — there is a little bit of a delay. It’s amazing how precise the left feels to the right on this pedal.”

Rockley — Roland Digital Harpsichord: “When my husband said he ordered a digital harpsichord, I said, ‘Are you nuts?’ But it is the coolest thing I’ve ever seen. Roland really got it right. We only had it in the store 48 hours before the Boulder [Colorado] Chamber Orchestra bought it.”



Billings — Roland V-Piano: “The first time I heard it I said it’s like sticking your head inside a Steinway D. If you thought the V-Drums revolutionized electronic drums or the V-Guitar [did for guitar], this is beyond.”

Gamber — Antigua TR3580BN Black Nickel Trumpet: “This is a killer horn. It has a versatile tone. This is something that will differentiate you from other people because this is not your band director’s trumpet.”

Eschliman — Stringnet MP3 Guitar, Mandolin and Ukulele Lines: “I think it’s a great idea, integrating the iPod or the MP3 player with an actual instrument. It’s a great look to the future.”

Friedman — Ernie Ball 25th Anniversary Guitar: “When it comes down to the last choice of ‘Best In Show,’ I want to give it to somebody I feel has really made a statement in our industry,

done something innovative for the good of the industry and comes out with great products that are of value. I’m using this guitar as the specific product, but I’m really nominating the whole company.”

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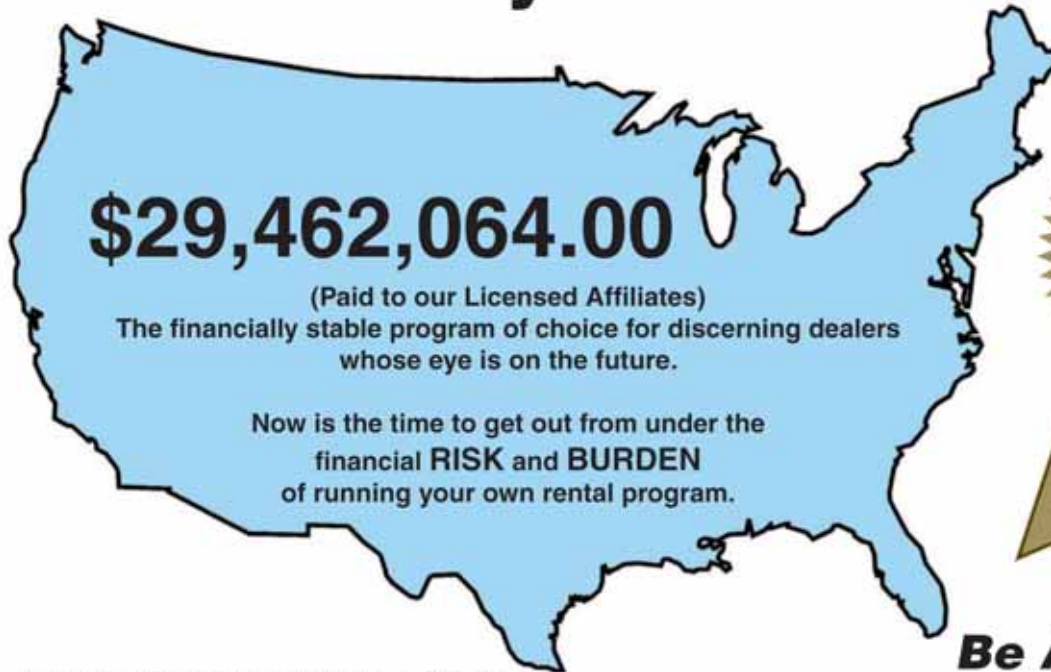
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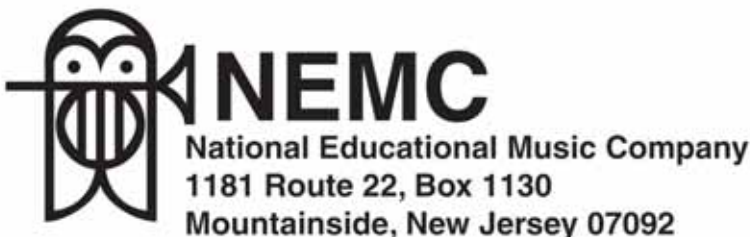
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- ♪ Business is promoted **into the Affiliate's retail store**, not onto the Internet. NEMC does not compete against its own Affiliates by renting 'On-Line'.
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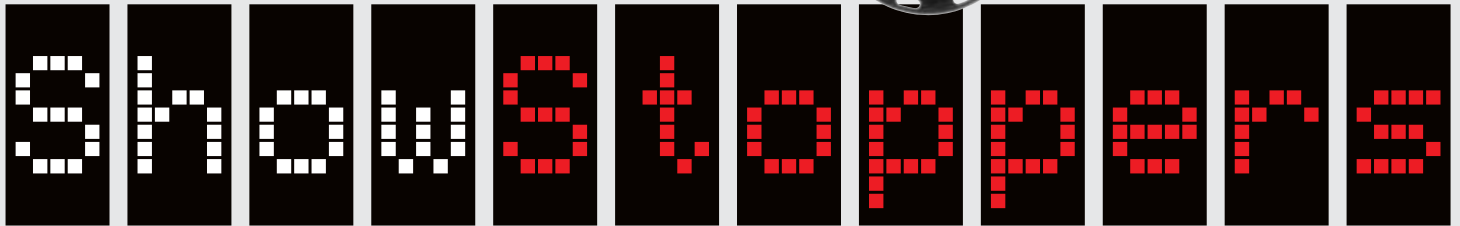
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50 PREMIER NAMM PRODUCTS

Digital pianos stole this year's NAMM show, with Roland and Yamaha featuring their biggest launches of the century. Other standout products were to be found, but tighter budgets and exhibitor cutbacks forced conventiongoers to look a little deeper than usual. The *Music Inc.* team searched all corners of the show floor to bring you the following 50 standouts. These products will give your customers an added incentive to come through the doors and buy.

*Edited by
Zach Phillips & Jenny Domine*

Audio Noisemakers



1 PEAVEY IPR SERIES
Peavey IPR power amplifiers weigh in at less than 7 pounds and are built for even the most tech-challenged user. The new line of power amps ships with program-specific EQ presets for common sound-reinforcement EQ treatments. They feature two channels with independent, 100 Hz crossovers and a variable-speed fan, as well as Peavey's DDT speaker protection with multi-point clip sampling. {peavey.com}

2 AKG GB 40 FLEXX GUITARBUG TRANSMITTER
The AKG GB 40 Flexx GuitarBug transmitter provides high audio quality and performance. Its frequency response is ideal for guitars and basses, but the unit can be used for any instrument with a jack plug. The patented FlexxJack-Plug is an additional feature that allows for more flexibility by matching all guitar outputs with an included long adapter jack. It operates with a single AAA battery. {akg.com}

3 FISHMAN SOLOAMP
A Summer NAMM launch that still has legs, SoloAmp remained a stand-out at Fishman's booth. (Also, several fellow exhibitors were using the mini P.A. system for their artist demos.) SoloAmp has a mini-line array design for wide dispersion and features two mic/instrument input channels, a three-band EQ, an effects loop and notch filters for feedback suppression. It weighs less than 25 pounds. MSRP: \$1,539.95. {fishman.com}

4 DA-CAPPO DA12
When it comes to single-ear microphones, one size often does not fit all. That's why the Da-Cappo DA12, distributed by Hosa Technology, has an adjustable earpiece and boom length for different face shapes and applications. The system package includes a lavalier-style mic clip, zippered leatherette microphone case, cable, cable clip and pop filter. A wireless adapter is sold separately. {hosatech.com}

AddOns



1

1 MUSIC SALES FIRST AID KITS

Music Sales' First Aid Kits can help rescue retailers looking to boost entry-level sales. Special trade pricing for volume purchases gives dealers up to 75-percent profit margins on these lunch box-style cases filled with essential start-up gear, a care and repair DVD, and a musical terms book for acoustic guitar, electric guitar or keyboard. {musicsales.com}



2

2 SKB PERCUSSION CASE

SKB has created a percussionist's toolbox. Measuring 19 by 14 by 8 inches, the Percussion Case features reinforced mallet/stick holsters specifically designed to stay open during a performance for quick access. A detachable mallet/stick holder can hang on a marimba, vibes or music stand. MSRP: \$179.99. {skbcases.com}



3

3 COUCH GUITAR STRAPS

Tucked in a 10 by 10 at the front of Hall E, Couch Guitar Straps stopped passersby with its product and its handwritten sign. Made from automotive upholstery, seat belts and couch fabric, the straps offer an offbeat, retro aesthetic readymade for a younger demographic. The recycled-materials angle is also a selling point. {couchguitarstraps.com}



4

4 GATOR VIPER BAGS

Gator's Viper gig bags are designed for guitarists who like to accessorize. A bag includes a reinforced headstock/bridge section and adjustable neck cradle. But that's just the beginning. The exterior of the bag has separate pockets for a laptop, sheet music, guitar pedals, cables and other accessories. MSRP: \$119.99. {gatorcases.com}



6

5 SCHILKE 30C2 MOUTHPIECE

Schilke Music's new French horn 30C2 mouthpiece offers quality response in both high- and low-range playing with a free-blowing feel. Recommended for both professional and developing players, the 30C2 is ideal for Kruspe wrap French horn models. {schilkemusic.com}

5

6 PLANET WAVES HEADSTOCK TUNER

Planet Waves' new headstock tuner is the ultimate clip-and-go gigging solution. It tunes by picking up an instrument's vibration without ambient room noise. Featuring digital needle graphics, the backlit display also turns red (out of tune) or green (in tune) for dark stages. MSRP: \$49.99. {planetwaves.com}

GigRigs



1 FENDER ROAD WORN GUITARS

For players who prefer an axe with a history, Fender debuted the Road Worn series of guitars and basses at NAMM. It consists of a 1950s Tele, '50s Strat, '60s Strat, '50s Precision Bass and '60s Jazz Bass. All feature distressed nitrocellulose lacquer-finished bodies and necks, as well as worn chrome hardware. They also include Tex Mex single-coil pickups and larger 6105 frets. {fender.com}

2 REVEREND PETE ANDERSON MODEL

Reverend pulled out the stops for its first full hollowbody guitar, the Pete Anderson signature model. Designed to evoke Anderson's favorite designs of the 1950s and '60s, it delivers with a satin finish, three-way pickup switch, 24 3/4-inch neck, rosewood fingerboard with 12-inch radius and two Reverend P-90 pickups. Add to that a Bigsby tremolo. MSRP: \$1,429. {reverendguitars.com}

3 PAUL REED SMITH TUBE AMPLIFIERS

Paul Reed Smith dealers now have a bonus to add to their product portfolio: an upscale guitar amp line. The Dallas, Blue Sierra and Original Sewell tube amp models pay homage to American and British amplifiers, and were created in collaboration with master amp designer Doug Sewell. Plus, they have beautiful paisley coverings. The must-hear amps of the show. {prsguitars.com}

4 TAYLOR BUILD TO ORDER PROGRAM

Building on consumers' hunger for customization (think Apple computers and Starbucks lattes), Taylor's Build to Order program makes the customer the craftsman — and involves the music product dealer from the beginning. Wedge materials, purfling, body shape and wood choice are all optional. Retailers take the order and receive a sales commission. {taylorguitars.com}

5 IBANEZ PRESTIGE ELECTRIC GUITARS

Responding to player requests, Ibanez has opted to produce all of its Prestige guitars exclusively in Japan. To celebrate, it debuted the RG3550MZ Prestige model. The guitar features the new, five-piece, titanium-reinforced Super Wizard neck with the original 1987 RG super-thin specs. It also has U.S.-made DiMarzio pickups and lists for \$1,999.99. {ibanez.com}



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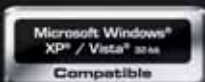
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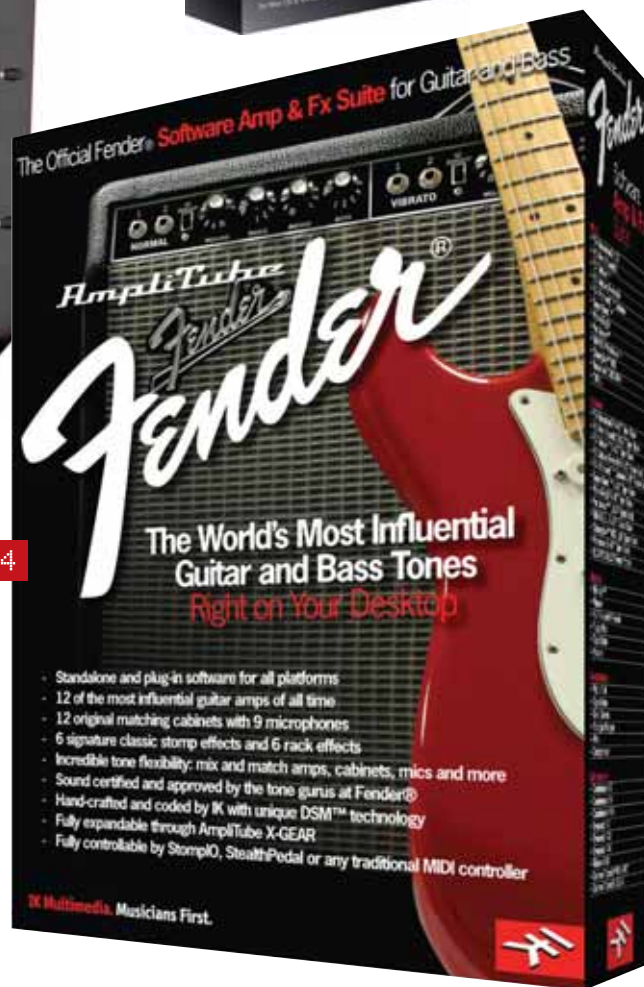
VirtualStudio



2



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4



3

1 AKAI APC40 CONTROLLER

Akai Professional partnered with Ableton to make the APC40 control surface. The controller communicates bidirectionally with Ableton Live, so it displays information from the software on its clip matrix, giving users an instant view of clip status. Live users will appreciate the ability to remap each control on the unit to suit their styles. {akaipro.com}

2 ABLETON LIVE 8

Picking up on the high-speed Internet evolution and consumers' desire for instant connection, Ableton's Live 8 audio software provides a new Share Live Sets feature. This option lets users manage their live sets on Ableton's server for fast online collaboration with bandmates and producers. {ableton.com}

3 WAVES SIGNATURE LINE

Waves' Tony Maserati Collection captures the multi-platinum mixing engineer's style. It provides six application-specific audio plug-ins, including the Maserati GTi Guitar Toner, VX1 Vocal Enhancer, DRM Drum Slammer, B72 Base Phattener, HMX Harmonics Generator and ACG Acoustic Guitar Designer. {waves.com}

4 AMPLITUBE FENDER

For \$99 or \$199 depending on the package, customers can get 12 classic Fender amps and 12 matching Fender cabinets in virtual form with IK Multimedia's AmpliTube Fender software suite. Bonus: the software also comes with six classic stomp boxes and six rack effects, along with SpeedTrainer and Riffworks T4 software. {amplitube.com}

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B&O Standouts

1 SONARÉ 700 SERIES

Sonaré added some sparkle to its flute line with the introduction of 14-karat rose gold-plated 700 series flutes. The 707 is the 705 model with a gold-plated lip plate and crown; the 708 features an entirely gold-plated body and headjoint, as well as silver-plated keys; and the 709 is rose gold plated. The flutes have bodies made with the Modern Powell Scale at Sonaré's Boston-area workshop and feature a hand-cut Powell headjoint. MSRP: starts at \$2,200. {sonarewinds.com}



2 REGINA CARTER VIOLIN

Regina Carter has won the *DownBeat* Critics Poll for the past 11 years. So when her name gets attached to a violin, players can be sure it will have playability outside the classical realm. That said, the Regina Carter violin collection from Erwin Otto Strings emulates Guarneri and Stradivari violin designs, giving them classical chops, as well. The four violins — the RC10, RC20, RC30 and RC40 — all are pro-level models. MSRP: \$3,495–\$7,695. {rsberkeley.com}



3 ANTIGUA TR3580BN

Antigua's TR3580BN intermediate Bb trumpet takes the company's popular silver-plated counterpart and adds a stylish black nickel finish. Designed to meet the needs of the educational community, it features a 0.462-inch bore and 4 3/4-inch, two-piece bell. Two sets of finger buttons — convex or concave — suit a player's preference, and stainless alloy pistons provide faster valve action. MSRP: \$1,199. {antiguawinds.com}

 An advertisement for Crafter USA's 37th Anniversary Model guitar. The image shows a light-colored acoustic guitar against a red background. Text includes "NEW for 2009" in a blue box, "37th Anniversary Model" in white script, and the Crafter USA logo at the bottom. Contact information for East and West Coast is provided.

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DrumSplash



1



2



3



4

1 ZILDJIAN ARTIST STICKS
Zildjian showed plenty of noteworthy cymbals, but the company's latest additions to its drumstick line stopped showgoers, as well. The John Blackwell model features a beefy neck and short taper. The Ronnie Vannucci model gives players extra heft without extra weight and features Vannucci's hand-drawn artwork. zildjian.com

2 LP ANNIVERSARY CONGAS
LP has recaptured the playability of its mid-1960s congas for its 45th Anniversary models. They feature an anniversary engraving applied to a 30-inch-tall, kiln-dried ash wood shell. A thin layer of reinforcing fiberglass has been applied to the upper quadrant of the inner shell to tighten upper harmonics. The result is a resonant, rich conga. lpmusic.com

3 MAPEX MERIDIAN SERIES
Mapex rang in 2009 with its new Meridian Maple drum set series. The kits feature all-maple shells with newly designed lugs for lower mass, along with Mapex 2.3-mm steel powerhoops. They also boast new, low-profile bass drum claws that include rubber gaskets to protect the bass drum hoops. MSRP: \$1,539.99–\$1,929.99. mapexdrums.com

4 SABIAN ARTISAN CRASH
Tradition meets innovation with the Artisan Crash, Sabian's newest addition to the Vault Artisan range of professional cymbals. The Artisan Crash combines traditional, tonal darkness and complexity with modern projection. It's a thin/extra-thin model available in 16- and 18-inch sizes. sabian.com

Silent Salespeople



1 KORG USA TUNER DISPLAYS

Full-color packaging, at-a-glance feature icons, multi-lingual elements and streamlined product categories are all part of a redesign initiative by Korg USA, exclusive U.S. distributor of Korg, Marshall and Vox. In addition to the self-selling packaging for all three brands, custom-designed Korg tuner P.O.Ps were on display at NAMM. They will be available in three varieties and ship in March. {korg.com}

2 HEIL SOUND MIC TESTING STATION

The Comparator Testing Station from Heil Sound aims to make demoing mics as easy as choosing different guitar capos. The unit has eight inputs and holders for eight different microphones, so they can all be hooked up simultaneously. Each has a switch for selecting between inputs. The display also has headphone jacks with volume controls and an XLR output for plugging in a sound system. {heilsound.com}

Small Wonders

1 TONIUM PACEMAKER

The Tonium Pacemaker is a hand-held DJing powerhouse that gives users the means to make song mash-ups while waiting for an oil change. Essentially a digital dual turntable in a unit not much bigger than an iPod, it can auto beat match two songs, allowing for fast creation of DJ mixes. Comes with a 60 GB hard drive. MSRP: roughly \$550. {tonium.com}

2 NEUTRIK CONVERTCON

The Neutrik convertCON's small profile made it easy to miss at NAMM, but this unisex, three-pin XLR connector is big on innovation. By simply sliding the housing back and forth, it can be transformed from a male to a female connector. This way, users will never have to worry about a cable having the wrong XLR connector again. {neutrik.com}

3 KAZOOBIE ELECTRIC KAZOO

Ever play a kazoo through a guitar amp? Of course not, so try Kazoobie's Electric Kazoo. It's a pickup that goes into a kazoo, letting users blow through blistering renditions of "Smoke On The Water." Sell it at your counter — you'd be surprised how many people will want one. And you'll sell more kazooes. MSRP: \$19.99. {kazoos.com}

4 PEARL ELIMINATOR DEMON DRIVE

The Pearl Eliminator Demon Drive is designed to be the bass drum pedal for every drummer. It features the company's Duo-Deck, a convertible footboard that lets the Eliminator Demon Drive be adjusted from a traditional shortboard to a longboard pedal in seconds. It also boasts a two-position Beater Holder and two-position Direct Link Adjustment. MSRP: \$559. {pearldrums.com}

5 BLUE ICICLE

The Blue Microphones Icicle lets users connect an XLR mic directly to a computer with no fuss. An in-line USB converter and pre-amp, Icicle works with dynamic and condenser microphones and features a 44.1-kHz, 16-bit, CD-quality converter. MSRP: \$59.99. {bluemic.com}

6 D'ADDARIO VIOLIN APPLIQUÉ

D'Addario's latest accessory can take away the uncertainty of learning to play the violin. The Violin Fingerboard Appliqué is a decal with slightly raised "frets" that a user places on a violin's fingerboard. It lets the player feel the touch points for proper notes. MSRP: \$49.99. {daddario.com}





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PrintStandouts



1 ALFRED 10 FOR 10 SERIES

Alfred's 10 For 10 Sheet Music series makes it possible to learn 10 songs for just \$10. Titles include *Christmas Music*, *Classic Rock*, *Top Movie Hits*, *Pop & Rock Hits 2008 Edition*, *Country Hits 2008 Edition* and more in piano/vocal/chords. Several titles in the 10 For 10 series have also been released with tablature — *Classic '60s Guitar Tab* and *Modern Rock Guitar Tab* are among them. {alfred.com}

2 CARL FISCHER TROMBONE METHOD

Long regarded as a premier trombone method book, *Arban's Famous Method For Trombone* has received a facelift from Carl Fischer to celebrate more than 500,000 copies sold. *Arban's Famous Method For Trombone Platinum Edition* book/CD features comb binding for easier use, a new cover and a piano accompaniment CD for the 12 "Fantasies." MSRP: \$39.95. {carlfischer.com}

3 HAL LEONARD ROCK RIFFS SERIES

Playing B&O instruments is sexy again. Hal Leonard's Rock Riffs line teaches classic rock tunes to horn and string players in the *Guitar Hero* generation. The books feature the most recognizable parts to 30 hits, including "Back In Black," "Crazy Train," "I Feel Fine," "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "Smoke On The Water." The book/CD packs are available for flute, clarinet, trumpet, alto sax and violin. MSRP: \$19.95 each. {halleonard.com}

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1 HERCULES I STAND

Hercules' iStand is a compact, lightweight and durable guitar stand that will fit in most gig bag pockets. The unit sets up and tears down quickly and features a metal core to cradle a guitar or bass. MSRP: \$49.95. {herculesstands.com}

2 ULTIMATE SUPPORT APEX

Ultimate Support has improved its Apex stands with the Apex Next Generation column keyboard stands. The new Apex is redesigned with added accessories, including a telescoping mic boom and laptop shelf. {ultimatesupport.com}

FieldRecording



1



2

1 TASCAM DR-1

Tascam's DR-1, a standout in the portable digital recording market, has been surpassed by the company's second-generation DR-07. Priced under \$200, the DR-07 records to SD or SDHC card media, and a 2 GB SD card is included with the unit. A stereo pair of electret condenser mics captures performances as 24-bit WAV or MP3 files. New functions include the ability to loop and slow down playback without changing the pitch. A mic stand mounting hole and wind-screen add flexibility.

{tascam.com}

2 ZOOM H4N

Zoom's H4n, an update of its H4 handheld recorder, offers improved audio via a digitally controlled mic pre-amp and the new built-in X/Y stereo condenser microphones, which allow variable recording patterns at 90 or 120 degrees. Internal and external mics can be used simultaneously for four-channel recording. The H4n also features a more intuitive user interface. MSRP: \$609.99. {samsontech.com}

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2

1 ROLAND V-PIANO
 Roland's V-Piano stands among the largest digital piano launches in recent NAMM history. Using a proprietary technology — as opposed to loop-based sampling — Roland has created a digital instrument with super-realistic piano sounds. Players will hear the complex resonances of an acoustic piano and the subtle modulations created by touch. Everything's customizable. {roland.com}

2 VOYAGE-AIR SONGWRITER LINE
 Voyage-Air's Songwriter series includes mid-level acoustic guitars that can be collapsed in half for travel just by twisting the back strap peg. Featuring a dreadnought and an orchestra model, each guitar has a solid spruce top, hand-inlaid rosette and scalloped X bracing. MSRP: \$899 each. {voyageairguitar.com}



3

3 YAMAHA AVANTGRAND

The Yamaha AvantGrand was created to be the most realistic sounding and feeling digital grand piano on the market. String vibrations are transmitted through the keys to a player's hands. A four-channel, three-way speaker system mimics the points where the original grand piano samples were taken. And it requires no tuning. (yamaha.com)

4 WATTGRINDER TONEGRINDER

WattGrinder's Darryl Ford called the new ToneGrinder "tubes for the 21st century." ToneGrinder is a non-glass, non-vacuum, tube replacement device. The 16 models of the 12AX7 are designed to last for an amp's lifetime and, judging from demos, sound surprisingly warm and reactive. MSRP: \$139; custom models, \$219. (wattgrinder.com)



4

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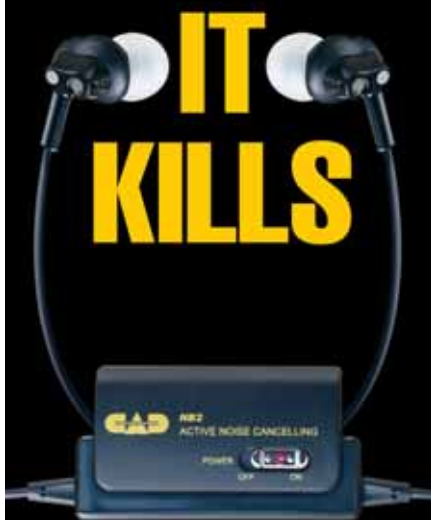
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1 JBL LSR2300 STUDIO MONITORS

JBL's LSR2300 series studio monitors deserve props for offering superior imaging and smooth frequency response at an affordable price. But they also feature sleek aesthetics usually reserved for monitors that cost twice as much. The line includes the LSR2328P bi-amplified, 160-watt, 8-inch studio monitor; the LSR2325P bi-amplified, 85-watt, 5-inch studio monitor; and the LSR2310SP powered, 180-watt, 10-inch studio subwoofer. MSRP: \$429–\$499. {jblpro.com}

2 MARSHALL MG4 SERIES

Marshall rolled out its solid-state MG4 series at NAMM with demos by Slayer's Kerry King and Whitesnake's Doug Aldrich, underscoring that these are the everything-for-everyone entry-level guitar amps. They feature a simple layout, and several models include digital effects and digital programmability. As Aldrich said, "The amp can get pretty much any tone, and the coolest thing is it's very easy to dial up." {marshallamps.com}



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1 TC VOICELIVE 2
TC-Helicon's VoiceLive 2 serves as a playground for vocalists who perform live or record. Up to eight harmony voices can be controlled from a guitar, keyboard or MP3 player. New reverbs, tap tempo delays, doubling, distortion and more have been added. The one-touch adaptive tone algorithm automatically controls compression, EQ and de-essing for effortless vocal sound. (tc-helicon.com)

2 EVENTIDE STOMPBOX
Eventide's PitchFactor Harmonizer stompbox bundles 10 of the company's Harmonizer pitch and delay effects, along with 1.5 seconds of stereo delay and simultaneous pitchshifting effects. PitchFactor also features 100 presets, instant program change, true bypass, three footswitches and MIDI. MSRP: \$599. (eventide.com)

3 MXR M-288
MXR Bass Innovations' M-288 Bass Octave Deluxe dual-voice octave pedal is a low-end, tone-shaping machine. It lets users mix their bass signals with the octave effect by turning the Dry knob. The Mid+ switch adds as much as 15 dB of low-mid punch or midrange snap. The Growl control produces throaty octave-below tone, and the Girth control produces deep octave-below tone. (jimdunlop.com)

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THE TOP 25 IDEAS

NAMM University hosted a crash-course in better retail on the morning of Jan. 17. Moderated by consultants Alan Friedman and Danny Rocks, "25 Ways to Improve Your Business — NOW!" featured profit-building ideas from industry insiders. A recap.

1. GREEN BAG SALE

Ted Eschliman; Dietze Music
Sell customers reusable, linen carrying bags branded with your store's logo. Charge \$15, and give customers a discount when they use them. It's environmentally responsible and gives customers a sense exclusivity.

2. RECITAL DVDS

Myrna Sislen; Middle C Music
Videotape student recitals, and give performers a DVD for free. Put your store's logo on each disc.

3. EVENT CLINICS

Ravi; Clinician
Host entertaining, inspiring events in-store that show your products and services. And promote them.

4. THE THANK YOU PARTY

Tristann Rieck; Brass Bell
Hold a thank you banquet for band and orchestra, choir, and general music directors serviced by your store. Invite new prospects, too.

5. PETTING ZOO

John and Nedra Pedersen; Pedersen's Band & Orchestra
Invite parents and kids into your store for an instrument petting zoo. Break it up by department. Have staff demo instruments and give kids mini-lessons.

6. NEW HORIZONS

Nick Rail; Nick Rail Music
Offer a concert band for the over-50 crowd.

7. FREE PRESS

Zach Phillips; Music Inc. magazine
Instead of relying solely on print advertising, pitch a newsworthy story about your store's charitable activities, youth outreach or music programs to the local press. It's free.

8. USE GMROI

Daniel Jobe; Friedman, Kannenberg & Co.
Improve your store's cash flow by increasing your inventory sell-through. Look to the Gross Margin Return on Investment (GMROI) calculation to get there.

9. WATCH YOUR CREDIT CARDS

Gerson Rosenbloom; Formerly of Medley Music
Don't become dependent on credit cards to pay vendors. It can spiral out of control.

10. RENEGOTIATE EXPENSES

Liane Rockley; Rockley Music
Call your banks, and try renegotiating lower interest rates. Also, try renegotiating core expenses, such as your Web site and e-mail hosting charges. They may go very low to keep your business.

11. GET MONEY SAVVY

Gary Winder; Yamaha B&O Division
Attend Yamaha's Financial Advantage program. It's essentially free to Yamaha dealers.

12. DRIVE PROFITS VIA I.T. SYSTEMS

Mark Goff; Paige's Music
Put management information systems in place to focus each department manager and staff on the daily activities that drive critical numbers, such as contribution margins and inventory levels. Measure the data each week, month and quarter.

13. YARD SALE

Leslie Faltin; Instrumental Music
Blow out stagnant inventory with a rummage sale. Put a tent in your parking lot with aging inventory.

14. OVERHAUL THE AD BUDGET

Greg Billings; Steinway Piano Gallery
Eliminate discretionary advertising, such as pens and magnets. Eliminate events with marginal return on investment. Replace classifieds with Craigslist ads. Increase home-grown, in-store events and talent shows.

15. AUTOMATED CALLING SERVICES

Dan Herbert; Willis Music
Pay an automated calling service to promote events and sales. It's accurate, and it saves time and money.

16. GET OPTIMIZED

Frank Pampenella; PM Music Center
Spend extra on a specialist who can get your store a high search engine ranking locally.

17. ELECTRONIC COUNTERS

George Hines; George's Music
Install door counters to monitor the number of people walking through your doors every day. Use this number to determine the effectiveness of promotions and to set sales goals.

18. ONLINE VIDEO

Tom and Mike Nessen; BoomBoom Percussion
Videotape a musician demonstrating and talking about products you sell, and post it on YouTube. It's an essentially free marketing tool.

19. CREDIT CHECKS

Joel Menchey; Menchey Music Service
Integrate a credit service in your point-of-sale system for quick credit checks.

20. DOWNSIZE

Mick Faulhaber; Ward-Brodt Music
Analyze profit centers and product segments and their related administrative costs. Capitalize on strengths. You can become more profitable when you get smaller.

21. SUPPORT MUSIC ADVOCACY

Mark Despotakis; Progressive Music
Join the SupportMusic coalition and offer advocacy services to teachers. It strengthens relationships with educators.

22. SHOP YOUR COMPETITORS

Ronald Bienstock; Bienstock & Michael
Visit a competitor's store to see how you're treated. Act like a customer without product knowledge. Have a non-musician secretly do the same at your store.

23. INTRODUCE NEW TEACHERS

Pete Gamber; Alta Loma Music
Introduce new music teachers in your lesson program to sales staff. Have the teacher play something. It will boost that teacher's sign-ups.

24. JOIN ASSOCIATIONS

Jessica Freehling-Kazzie; Art's Music Shop
Join industry associations and attend their conventions to learn how to improve your business.

25. DIFFERENTIATE

Bryan McCann; Instrumental Music
Start asking yourself, "Why my store?" Create customer loyalty through differentiation. Start by reviewing your company's points of customer contact.

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