

THE SICE

NOVEMBER 2009 MUSICINCMAG.COM

Debra Perez of Valley Keyboards Creates Her Own Economy by Preaching Recreational Music Making

PRACTICE REQUIRED

How five retailers profit by hosting no-stress, play-for-fun music programs

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- Cable-Green reverse polarity cable with 2.5 internal diameter spring-loaded jack.
- Cable-Green/R reverse polarity cable with springloaded right-angle jack.
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46 RMM IN ACTION

The term "recreational music making" (RMM) doesn't roll off the tongue, but for the five featured music retailers, it has translated into a boost in store traffic, lesson enrollment and product sales.



Music retailers pick their top-selling accessories and reveal strategies for quick turns and massive margins.

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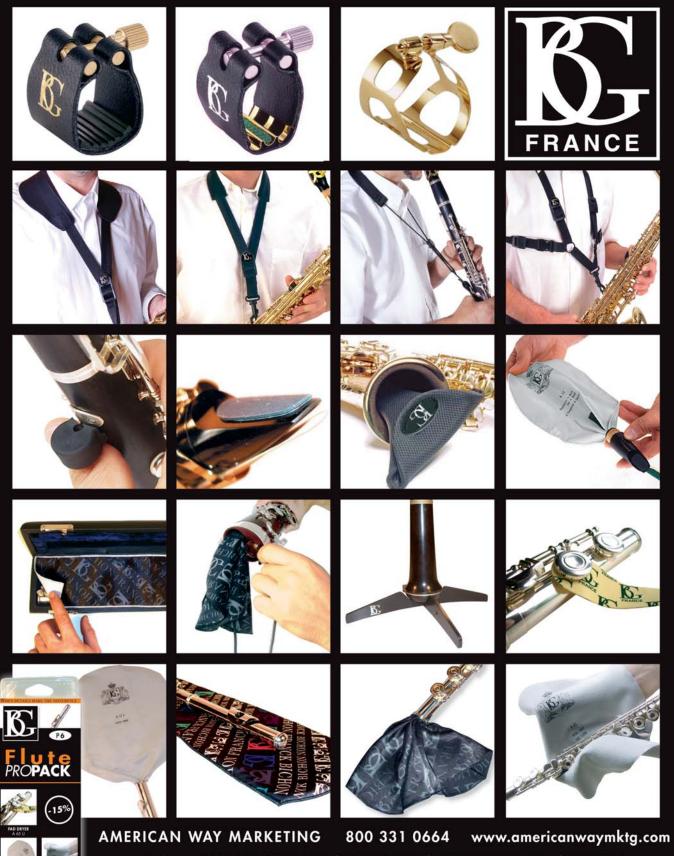
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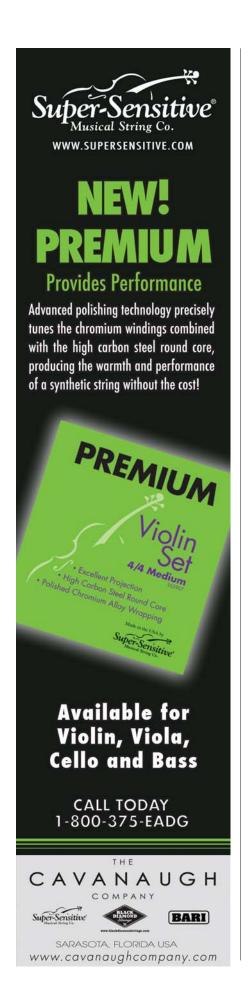
Cover photo by Stephen Gutierrez

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE I BY ZACH PHILLIPS

FACTORS BEYOND OUR CONTROL

f all the ridiculous, frivolous, laughable lawsuits to grace the music products industry, the recent class action suit against NAMM and several other musical products companies ranks pretty darn high.

Not that any of the accused parties are laughing. A couple of law



firms stand to make a bundle in legal fees if they're successful while the music products industry gets sucked dry of precious resources — as was the case with the Federal Trade Commission's investigation of NAMM and other industry companies over the past two years.

Among the accusations, the suit claims these companies unlawfully restrained trade, attempted to create a monopoly and promoted unfair competition. (See page 29.) Perhaps the suit's most absurd aspect is one plaintiff's claim that he overpaid for musical instruments due to the defendants' actions. As music industry lawyer Ron Bienstock of Bienstock & Michael commented, "My question is: What did the plaintiff buy, and how much did he pay for it? Compared to what we have seen in the past, many guitars today are less-expensive and offer higher quality at present price points."

The suit is another reminder that business conditions are often beyond our control. While it plays out, it's the music industry's job to keep promoting music making to an eager public, which needs it more than ever. It's all we can control, and it's a noble pursuit.

TAKING BACK CONTROL

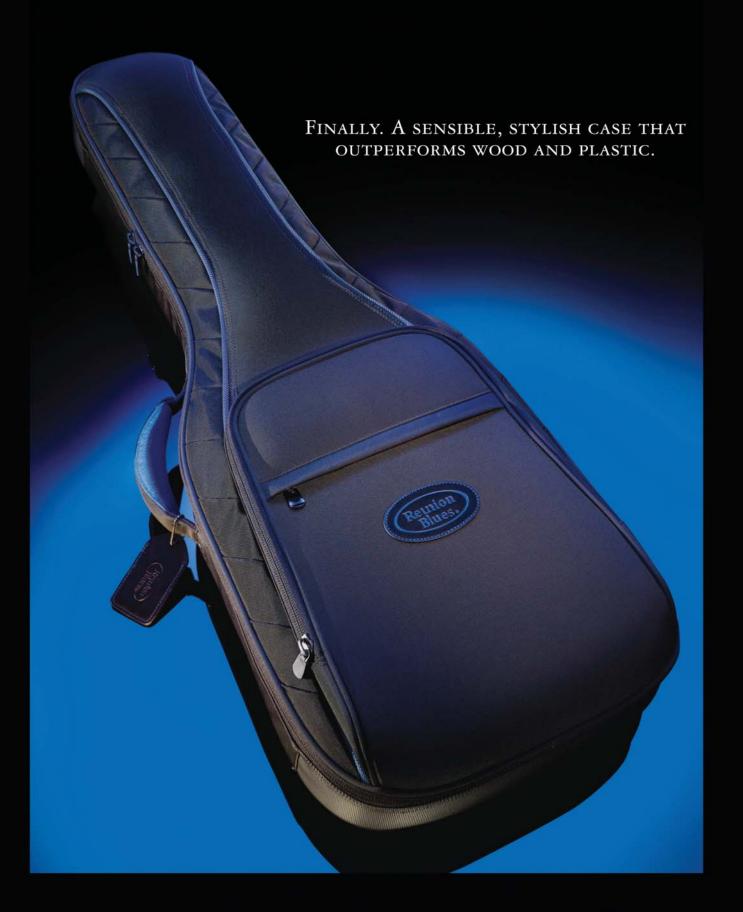
Chool budget cuts and the economy are two more headaches often beyond our control. That said, a few school music dealers featured in this month's issue have taken matters into their own hands.

When a recent budget crisis threatened local elementary music programs, Eugene Monnig, owner of Cadenza Music in St. Paul, Minn., offered up his store as a communication hub for music advocates. Their efforts helped save the St. Paul programs for the 2009–'10 school year, despite a few teacher layoffs. (See the full story on page 15.)

And to cope with the inhospitable California economy, Nick Rail, president of Nick Rail Music in Santa Barbara, began working with his team in late June to refine their sales pitches for the fall season. "We rehearsed our spiel and did a lot of role-acting to polish our presentation," Rail said.

The good news is that this year's instrument rental season indicates a return to business as usual. I spoke with 10 school music dealers across the country in early October, and the majority said business has been up or at least flat compared to last year — a record year for many. (Remember, the economy didn't tank until late September 2008, the end of the rental season.)

Here's hoping it's the first sign of better times. MI



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LETTERS

Code of Ethics

Terry Lewis' version of what went wrong with the piano business ("What Went Wrong With the Piano Industry: An Alternate View," September 2009) had at least one factual error. He credited Piano Manufacturers Association International (PMAI) with creating the Piano Dealers Code of Ethics. The code was actually written by the Milwaukee Area Piano Dealers in 1993, at which time I served as president.

The Code of Ethics (COE) was created during more than a year of arduous meetings. We were asked to present it to PMAI at a Summer NAMM show. We reported that the real benefit we achieved was not just in having the COE, but rather in the process of creating it, we came to better understand and respect each other. That was what really changed the tenor of our competition, at least for a while.

We advised PMAI that imposing a COE from above was useless and suggested they encourage local dealer groups to get together and write their own COEs. (This is the same model used by the medical community, where each graduating class of young physicians writes its own Hippocratic Oath.)

Of course, PMAI ignored our advice and distributed our COE as its own with just a few minor modifications. It was quickly forgotten, except here in Milwaukee.

Ironically, Greg Billings, the very person Terry assails in his article, served as secretary of our group at the time and did most of the actual writing of the Code Of Ethics that PMAI claims today, and he was the person who presented it at the



meeting. In fairness, I believe this was before Terry was a member of PMAI.

It is very interesting for me to see my two old friends, Terry and Greg, presenting contrasting views of how to move our industry forward, but then again, they always did see the world differently — Greg from the dealer's perspective and Terry from the manufacturer's.

Steve Datz President Netzow's Pianos Wauwatosa, Wis.

Fair and Balanced

Thanks for publishing Terry Lewis' thorough and wellgrounded alternative view of the piano industry ("What Went Wrong With the Piano Industry: An Alternate View"). The article helped

readers get the facts straight and brought balance to a lopsided discourse.

It also provided a more accurate view of PMAI from someone who, by virtue of his many years of involvement and leadership in the association, is well-qualified to provide an informed perspective.

Thanks, Terry, for a solid article, and thanks to *Music Inc.* for being fair and balanced.

Brian Chung Senior Vice President Kawai America

Perspective Shift

have been closely following the discussion of the current state of the United States piano industry in the trades. It is particularly interesting to me because many of the writers are either my former

employees or people with whom I served on PMAI. Even though I consider him a good friend, I am having a little trouble with Terry Lewis' math. How did he come to the conclusion that pianos are priced beyond the reach of the average American family?

When I owned a retail piano store back in the early 1960s, a nice spinet piano sold for \$695 and a new Chevrolet Impala sold for \$2,500. Today, the equivalent upright sells for five times the 1960s price, and the Chevrolet sells for 10 times the 1960s price. The auto industry has increased its market penetration, while the piano business has nearly disappeared. Piano historians will tell you that the tremendous increase in pianos sales back in the early 20th century took place when the player piano was invented. Pianos are difficult to play. It takes talent, time and dedication, and most students never learn to play really well. The drop-out rate is huge. One reason organs and digital pianos were and are popular is that, for the average consumer, they are easier to play. Beginners are rewarded with music very quickly, and it's fun.

Terry is seeing the issue from his former employer's perspective. [Yamaha] uprights are expensive, and it has a solid line of digital pianos and keyboards. He makes the kind of judgments you would expect from that point of view. Dealers of other brands see a different landscape and are unlikely to give up on acoustic upright pianos.

His comments about closing Thomaston are also interesting. Why did the Japanese try to build their lower-cost models in



the United States and still build most of their more-expensive pianos in Asia? That seems backwards to me. What if they had decided to build their professional-grade pianos in the United States and the lessexpensive units in Asia (a business model that has worked well for Steinway and Sons)?

I disagree that digital pianos have significantly affected the acoustic piano business. There is a bigger picture to consider. If you combine the sales of digital and acoustic pianos and compare them to the unit sales of electronic organs and pianos in the late 1970s, you see that total sales of keyboard instruments that require talent and training to play have declined very significantly.

Digital pianos are to acoustic pianos what motorcycles are to automobiles. They have similar goals, but the modes are different. Digital pianos make pianolike sounds and the sounds of many other instruments, but they cannot duplicate the tremendous variety and nuances coming from a real piano. That is not necessarily negative; it's just that they are different instruments. So the problem is bigger than just the relative mix of digital and acoustic pianos. It is a systematic decline of massive proportions.

From 1945-1975, the number of music retailers exploded. In 1960, there were a dozen or more U.S. piano makers and a dozen electronic organ makers. Each of them had 300-500 retail dealers promoting and selling their instruments. Today, the organ business is practically gone, and there are only two American piano makers building less than 5,000 pianos a year for fewer than 500 piano retailers. This smaller number of dealers can never accomplish the market | ing, market creation and | itive event, experience or |

penetration that thousands of dealers did.

At this point, in fairness and full disclosure, I must point out that I do consulting for ORS and Story and Clark. The reason I am still involved with the acoustic piano, and QRS in particular, is that I believe the player device is still a very viable tool in increasing the sales and profitability of acoustic pianos.

QRS has also gone one step further and included a device that allows the acoustic piano to "talk to" digital devices. When couple you PNOmation player system with the PNOscan USB keyboard sensing device, you can present an acoustic piano that can do many of the exciting things that most digital pianos cannot do - record and playback your playing on a player piano and interface with a USB port or MIDI connection to a laptop or the Internet.

I sincerely believe we need to embrace the new digital technologies, but we can address them through the multigenerational and timeless, classic acoustic piano.

> **Robert Jones QRS** Consultant

Piano Exposure

erry Lewis' article in your September issue, "What Went Wrong With the Piano Industry: An Alternative View," was a comprehensive and constructive assessment of the recent decline of the acoustic piano market. I also commend him for acknowledging some of the people who have labored in support of this industry segment and music making in general.

I have spent the better part of my life studying and conducting research into marketbuying processes. A lot of my work has been in the music industry and much has focused on the piano and keyboard segments. From my perspective, I believe there are two key factors that should be considered by anyone with a major stake in these segments of the industry.

First, the acoustic piano is an incredible tool for making music. It was, for many years, the state-of-the-art in musical instruments. But I agree with Terry Lewis' suggestion that we need to redefine "piano." He offers it as a suggestion, however, and I say it is imperative. Digital pianos are not just an acceptable alternative to acoustics - they are the preferred alternative for many hobbyists, educators and professional music makers. While I believe the market for kevboards (acoustic pianos and digital keyboards, collectively) has the potential for significant growth, I do not believe acoustic pianos will rebound to previous per capital sales levels — ever.

Don't misunderstand: There will always be a market for acoustic pianos, and I believe it will be a valuable segment, especially for those producers and retailers who know how to cultivate the market, but it will not be the dominant component of the musical instrument market.

Secondly, social and lifestyle influences have a profound effect on market creation. For a market to grow, there must be an increasing number of people with an interest in and desire to own the product, as well as the means to purchase it. A person's initial interest in something like a piano generally occurs as a result of some posexposure to the product. For that interest to develop into a desire to own, that interest must be nurtured through repeated exposure and some level of participation and encouragement.

A hundred, even 50 years ago, playing piano was a highly valued activity. Many, if not most, parents encouraged their children to learn to play. Almost everyone had an interest and desire to play. That interest was constantly nurtured through exposure to pianos being played at churches, schools, in homes and virtually every other place people congregated for social purposes.

Contrast that with today. How many times do you suppose the average person actually sees a piano (much less one being played) in a month or a year? Consider all the other things they are exposed to on a daily basis.

Sustaining or growing a market sometimes requires the collaborative efforts of retailers, manufacturers and others within the industry. The keyboard market (acoustic and digital) is one of those markets. To build or sustain interest will require increased exposure of the products to potential buyers in a positive environment. In short, the more often they see the products in a positive light and have the opportunity to try them, the more likely they will be to want to own them.

For years, most people in this country lived in an environment where they were naturally exposed to pianos on a regular basis and where playing piano was seriously considered and encouraged. That is simply not the case today.

Piano producers and retailers cannot rely on the present environment for market recov-



ery or creation. They must do it themselves. Terry Lewis' 10 suggestions are a good foundation for such an initiative.

Bill Hinely Industry Consultant

Healthy Dialogue

Thanks for publishing the follow-up article by Terry Lewis on "What Went Wrong With the Piano Industry." I wholeheartedly agree with this alternate viewpoint and with his 10-point action plan. As Terry states, we need to create more music makers and reach the vast majority of the country who wishes that they could play.

What name this approach is given is immaterial. People want to play the piano, and if the traditional methods can't appeal to everyone, then it's up to us as an industry to develop and implement programs that will reach them. Bravo to PMAI for supporting the recreational music making (RMM) initiative.

Likewise, Terry is right on the money when he points out that we need to adapt to the current culture's viewpoint of what a piano is. We can't expect the culture to adjust its thinking to fit our definitions. Clearly, if we create more users, we will sell more of all piano categories.

Finally, Terry reminds us that we need to reach more customers through our marketing efforts. We can't sit in our stores and expect to grow sales. Those who reach out to customers through outside events and networking will be the ones who survive and prosper.

Also, the vast majority of customers start their shopping experience on the Web. We need to reach them on their grounds. We must embrace the Internet and develop meaningful sites that provide the con-

tent customers are seeking which, in turn, will drive them to our retail locations.

Thank you for publishing all of the response letters and articles. The open dialogue and debate is very healthy for our industry.

Paul Calvin VP/GM Keyboard Division Yamaha Corp. of America

Two Sides of the Story

After reading the "Disgruntled Dealer" letter in the July issue of Music Inc., it reminded me of a situation that occurred when I was working for Fender in the Dark Ages, circa 1983, when Fender was still with CBS. These were not Fender's best years.

I was in Alberta, Canada, visiting a dealer and found that this particular guy was only carrying Fender guitars — no amps. I suggested that it would be a good idea to have some Fender amps to go along with those Strats and Teles. This way, the customer would be able to hear that Fender guitar through a Fender amp. The dealer flatly said no. He said that he sold Fender guitars and Peavey amps — in his view, the best of both worlds.

I suggested that if he felt that way, maybe I should open up a dealer down the street to carry my Fender amps. He said that was perfectly fine. When I suggested that I would probably have to give this new dealer access to Fender guitars, too, the dealer was all up in arms. He said I was welcome to take the amps, but because he was a longtime Fender dealer, I had no right to open up another guitar dealer in town.

My point is simple: There are always two sides to every story. From the dealer's perspective, he had been supporting a brand for a long time and did not understand why the

'There will always be a market for acoustic pianos ... but it will not be the dominant component of the instrument market.'

- Bill Hinely

brand could be taken away. On the other hand, speaking for myself, I had no place in town where someone could go and try a Fender amp. I had to make a move because the dealer was not supporting the line.

I am now enjoying my 33rd year of being in this business and have been a dealer, rep, product manager and now manufacturer. The politics of the business are probably the thing I hate the most but such is life. We all must learn to navigate these political waters. In my view, it is simple: Support goes both ways.

Peter Janis President Radial Engineering

Newsletter Fan

am a big fan of your e-mailed *Headlines*. Your whole presentation is polished and professional — exactly what the industry needs. If your industry insight continues to evolve the way it has, you will certainly be a force to be reckoned with in the world of MI trade magazines.

Zach Frederick President Frederick Export

Seeking Advice

have an issue at my store, and I'm wondering if any

other small music stores have encountered the same problem.

In my county, you are not allowed to go into the school system and offer any type of tutoring for money, whether it's math, dance or music. However, the school system is allowing the band booster organization to set up and run a non-profit organization that allows private, after-school lessons in the band room.

I don't think this is fair. They charge less, pay the teachers more (because they have no overhead) and cut the legs out from under me. I'm all for freedom of competition, but when I have to pay rent and utilities, and then I have to pay taxes for [the school's] rent and utilities, I don't think it's right.

But who is going to complain? It's good for the kids, and I'm all for music education. But when I'm here trying to support the local band and orchestra programs with instruments, supplies and lessons, and then they basically conduct a business on school grounds, it makes me ill to think about. I have a music store with 400 lessons a week and hardly any of them are band instrument lessons.

I am wondering if there are any other music stores out there that have successfully battled this? How do you go about it without all the band directors hating and bad-mouthing you? Would I even have legal grounds to combat it?

- Anonymous

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CADENZA MUSIC I BY KATIE KAILUS & JENNY DOMINE

THE LOCAL ADVOCATE

adenza Music will celebrate its 35th anniversary on Oct. 25, but instead of hosting a typical customer-appreciation bash, the St. Paul, Minn.-based retailer will be throwing a benefit for local school music programs.

This past summer, budget cuts nearly wiped out St. Paul public school elementary-level music programs. Eugene Monnig, Cadenza Music's owner, attended school board meetings and even offered his dealership for six months as an informal communication center for community music advocates.

"We didn't win 100 percent, but the program still exists," Monnig said. "Some teachers got laid off, and [the schools] have managed to refine their scheduling systems to try to reach the same amount of kids with fewer teachers. It isn't ideal, but it sure beats killing the program altogether."

Given this development, Monnig decided that saving music programs would be a perfect focus for Cadenza's anniversary celebration.

"We are going to be passing the hat and asking people to contribute, so hopefully, by the end of the party, we will have a nice chunk of change



Cadenza Music celebrates its 35th birthday by saving the music

for the music foundation," Monnig said.

MAKING WAVES

adenza Music recently sent out 2,400 invitations to its customers, as well as former employees and music teachers.

It also invited St. Paul public school educators and current school board members, along with mayoral and school board candidates for the upcoming, local elections on Nov. 3.

"I am really hoping that by getting all these people in there together, we will find out who is really supporting music," Monnig said. "If that gets in the newspaper before election day, that wouldn't be a bad thing."

According to Nancy Vernon, Cadenza's marketing director, the company has already landed stories in St. Paul-area newspapers. "There will be more publicity as it gets closer to the event," Vernon said.

The bash will feature performances by Cadenza Music's teachers, students and patrons. Jazz saxophonist Irv Williams and guitarist Steve Blons will headline. Several manufacturers, including D'Addario, have also donated gear, which will be given away as door prizes.

THE ADVOCACY MODEL

adenza's status as a fullline, full-service music dealership makes it a natural school music advocate. Its music lessons program draws approximately 350 students per week and offers guitar, bass, piano, drum, and band and stringed instrument instruction.

"Lesson are huge," Monnig said. "Especially in a down economy, they are an extra leg on your stool." He added that Cadenza's repair services have provided extra stability.

And despite the difficult business climate, Monnig said the St. Paul public schools' crisis has been the biggest challenge of his career.

"We can't stop making waves," Vernon said. "We can't stop advocating for music education. The whole industry is in this together. We have to think more long-term." MI



CHARITY

Strat Gifted

Sweetwater customer John Narramore recently donated a new Fender Mexican Stratocaster to the Fort Wayne, Ind., retailer's

charity program. GearGift. The program collects customers' unplayed or unused instruments. Sweetwater then refurbishes the instruments



and pays to have them shipped to people, such as foster children and military personnel, who want to play music but don't have access to gear. Narramore's Strat went to Visually Impaired Persons of Southwest Florida in North Fort Myers, Fla., for its music class.

RESOURCES

Piano Buyer's Guide

arry Fine, author of The Piano Book: Buying And Owning A New Or Used Piano, has released Acoustic & Digital Piano Buyer. This advertisingsponsored publica-



tion will take the place of the annual supplements to Fine's 1987 Piano Book. It will be published twice a year and will consist of brief, informative articles and tips on basic piano-buying issues. Acoustic & Digital Piano Buyer will be available free at pianobuyer.com and as a print publication for \$24.95. {pianobuyer.com}

CATALOGS

Everything WD

MD Music Products now offers its new, 80-page counter catalog for retailers. The four-color

publication features illustrations, descriptions and retail prices for the company's inventory.

"This new catalog will be an important sales tool for dealers, and we feel it is the best we've ever done," said Larry

Davis, WD's vice president. "While the Internet has an undeniable presence, there is still a significant need for printed material in brick and mortar stores."

{wdmusic.com}

PERCUSSION MARKETING COUNCIL I BY KATIE KAILUS

re the EXT BONHAM

he Percussion Marketing Council's (PMC) 14th annual International Drum Month campaign this November caters to anyone who has ever dreamt of being the next John Bonham or Travis Barker but didn't know where to start.

PMC is posting a downloadable certificate for one free drum starter package on its Web site, playdrums.com. The pack includes drumsticks, donated by PMC manufacturer members, and a drum tip sheet, donated by Hal Leonard.

People interested in learning to play drums can download the certificate, bring it to their local drum retailer to be validated and receive their free drum starter package, which will arrive in the mail.

"The whole gist of International Drum Month this year is to really incorporate the dealers and not go straight to the end-user," said PMC Marketing and Promotions Director Billy Cuthrell, who runs Raleigh, N.C.-based Progressive Music Center.

"We are hoping we can get both players and retailers involved, which is why we started the free drumstick offer as a way to drive new players into a store that may not have otherwise walked in there."

Customers are required to fill out their contact information when they go to drum retailers to validate their certificates. Cuthrell said PMC aims to use that information not only to contact future drummers but also to give to music retailers for their mailing lists, so they can keep customers informed about their store events and music lesson programs.



For this year's **International Drum Month.** PMC aims to get hopefuls drumming while driving new traffic into music stores

dealer doesn't get a kid coming in with a free coupon to get some sticks," Cuthrell said. "The hope is that the kid might see some cymbals or a drum seat or even a drum set that he or she wants. The [drum starter] package can be used to drive new customers into the store."

Cuthrell said he hopes the campaign will also generate renewed dealer interest in PMC's Web site.

"The whole campaign is multiprong, so that it can create some new interest in the end-user, but we also want to see if we can get the dealer back up on the [PMC] Web site, so they can use some of the materials that are always up there for them to use. We are working for both our dealers and for our members."

PMC's International Drum "Really, the hope is that the | Month takes place annually. MI

Great new products



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APPOINTMENTS

ZEAGLER NAMED NASMD HEAD

Grayson Zeagler of Zeagler Music in Monroe, La., has been elected president of the National Association of School Music Dealers (NASMD). The association,



celebrating its 47th year, represents more than 200 band and orchestra retailers and manufacturers throughout North America.

Zeagler has served on a number of boards, including the Twin City Concert Band, Monroe Symphony Orchestra and the NFIB Louisiana Leadership Council. He has also served as the vice president and CEO of Zeagler Music for the last 26 years.

During his two-year term as NASMD president, Zeager will take an active role in programming the association's annual convention.

Musician's Friend (MF) has named Charles Hunsinger executive vice president of information technology and Jeff Roberson vice president of information technology.

Hunsinger brings more than 20 years of experience in large-scale systems consulting and corporate IT leadership to MF. Roberson has more than 19 years of comprehensive information systems experience. Previously, he served as vice president of information technology for The Woodwind & Brasswind, a division of Musician's Friend in South Bend, Ind.

West Music recently promoted Chris Wood to director of percussion sales. This newly created assignment will combine the roles of two division managers into a



single, cohesive position.

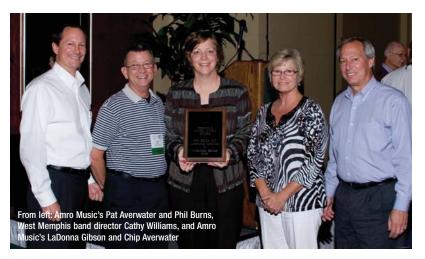
"Chris Wood is a uniquely qualified percussion expert who brings considerable product knowledge and inventory management ability to this new assignment," said Robin Walenta, president and CEO of West Music.



est In Music of Orem, Utah, celebrated its 20th anniversary in September with a party that drew roughly 500 attendees. Chris Cannella, Jackson's product manager and artist relations head, came out to host a metal master class, and Fender artist Jeff Kollman also offered a clinic. The event included instru-

ment sales, live music and drawings for more than 20 different prizes.

"We feel very grateful to have reached this milestone," said Ruby Beeston, owner of Best In Music. "We emphasized not how much we sell but, more importantly, how satisfied the customers are with our selection and service. That is our top priority."



AMRO MUSIC I AWARDS

Top Arkansas Band Supporter

Amro Music of Memphis, Tenn., received the Arkansas Band Supporter of the Year award on July 31. The honor, given by Phi Beta Mu, the International Band Masters fraternity, awards an organization for its assistance in developing better musicians in schools throughout the world. It was presented at the annual convention of the Arkansas Bandmasters Association in Little Rock, Ark.

West Memphis, Ark., band director Cathy Williams presented the plaque

to Amro President Pat Averwater and CEO Chip Averwater.

"We were totally surprised by the award," Pat Averwater said. "We've got a great staff that truly enjoys helping build better bands. We were simply doing what we enjoy."

"It's an honor to be recognized by your customers and partners in music," said CJ Averwater, Amro's general manager. "It's also a great reminder that ultimately we both share a common goal and passion for music education."

Rail Opens in Bakersfield

ick Rail Music, a California-based school music dealer, held a grand-opening celebration for its new Bakersfield store on Aug. 29. The event featured Mento Buru, an eight-piece, Latin-jazz-ska-salsa band.

More than 25 local band directors showed up, along with customers and manufacturer reps from D'Addario, Yamaha, Eastman, Gemstone, P. Mauriat, Buffet Crampon and Conn-Selmer.

The 1,200-square-foot retail space includes a soundproof try-out room, fully stocked step-up room, large repair facility in the back and five soundproof teaching studios.

"Bakersfield has a wonderful sense of community, and it's a community that takes its music seri-



ously," said Nick Rail, owner of Nick Rail Music. "We've been sending reps to the area for close to 20 years, so while we're new to town in the brick-and-mortar sense, we're already a known entity to the teachers and schools."





PROFESSIONAL DRUM SHOP I ACQUISITION

PETERS BOUGHT BY PRO DRUM

Professional Drum Shop of Los Angeles recently purchased Mitchell Peters Publications. Peters is known for his mallet pieces and method books and currently serves as a professor at University of California, Los Angeles.

"The acquisition of Mitchell Peters Publications doubles the size of Try Publications, a division of Professional Drum Shop, and adds a boost to the percussion side of the already famous Lennie Niehaus saxophone and percussion books of Try Publications," said Tom Yeager, co-owner of Professional Drum Shop.





THE PERCUSSION CENTER I AWARDS

Speedy Growth Recognized

The Percussion Center of Houston was recently named one of the Top 50 Fastest-Growing Woman-Owned Businesses

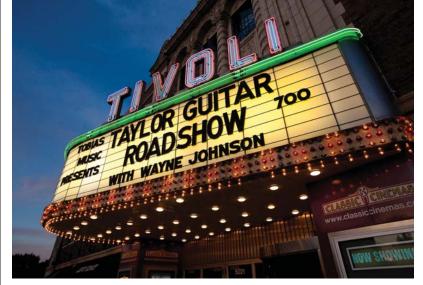
in Houston.



Donna Fisher, president of The Percussion Center, accepted the award at a luncheon sponsored by *Houston Business Journal*,

Omni Bank, Aetna, National Association of Women Business Owners and the Women's Business Enterprise Alliance.

According to a statement from The Percussion Center, the company has experienced 156-percent growth since 2002 and 20.6-percent growth from 2007–2008.



TOBIAS MUSIC I EVENT

TOBIAS HOSTS TAYLOR SHOW, RACKS UP SALES

Tobias Music of Downers Grove, Ill., hosted the 2009 Taylor Guitars Road Show on Sept. 22. The event, which brought in approximately 525 people, took place at the historic Tivoli Theater in downtown Downers Grove. It featured a performance by Grammy-winning guitarist Wayne Johnson and a discussion with Taylor clinicians and factory experts. One-of-a-kind guitars were

also on display, and many were available for sale.

"The Road Show was a complete success," said Paul Tobias, owner of Tobias Music. "We did some very brisk sales at the show. It was our best one-day total ever."

The Taylor Guitars Road Show is an annual event hosted by Taylor that gives attendees the chance to learn and test different Taylor models.

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NAMM® News



Note from Joe

Promoting the Industry, **Promoting Music Making**

Why would someone buy a musical instrument for themselves or their family? I think it's an important question, especially during this holiday shopping season, when consumers are still reeling from the toughest economy in memory.

The good news is we are blessed with a passionate segment of the population that will choose to make music despite virtually any barrier. Many of us fit this description. My desire to be a drummer continues to this day, and I will be a good industry customer until I go to that big drummer's reunion in the sky. We should continue to nurture this core base of life-long music makers and continue to come up with new and innovative programs and products that keep them coming back into NAMM Member stores.

Perhaps even more critical to future industry growth is the much larger group of potential music makers: the greater general public. Their fascination with the concept of music making is evidenced by advertisers who continually use musical instruments to market their own, less glamorous products, Gallup Polls showing that the vast majority of those

who don't play wish they did, and most recently, the sale of over 35 million copies of Guitar Hero and Rock Band games.

This large group of music lovers and potential customers obviously has the desire to play, if only given the right reason and the right opportunity. They are a diverse group and one message won't fit all, which is why NAMM has created campaigns and programs for every segment, providing you with tools to target and grow your market. NAMM's Wanna Play? campaign is aimed squarely at these folks: people who have the means and desire to play a musical instrument but just haven't tried it yet, or those who want to return to music making after many years.

So far, in 2009, NAMM has generated more than 2 billion media impressions, worth an estimated \$39 million, according to leading independent media measurement firm Burrelles/Luce. Additionally, NAMM's public service announcements communicating the value of music making, through the Wanna Play? and Americans for the Arts campaigns, have generated nearly \$10 million in donated TV, radio, print and online media value. These powerful messages are aimed at converting those with a desire to play into active players—and customers!

Promoting the industry, promoting music making. This is one of the most important functions of your trade association and a key part of our mission. Please check out NAMM's www.wannaplaymusic.com to find out how you and your business can increase sales and tap into the Wanna Play? national campaign.

Joe Lamond • NAMM President/CEO

Je Ferral

Music making has been scientifically proven to...

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- Boost your self-esteem and self-discipline
- Help you connect with other people
- Exercise the brain and keep your mind active
- Fight off memory loss
- Reduce your stress
- Lower your blood pressure
- Decrease depression
- Increase levels of human growth hormone
- And it's fun too!

Who wouldn't want to play a musical instrument! These facts and many more are available at www.wannaplaymusic.com. Use this information to grow your customer base and create more music makers.

Member Quote

\$39 million

in promotional

this year!

"We're a family-oriented retailer and we use all of the Wanna Play? materials in our store. We have the posters in our window and keep the brochures and buttons at the point of purchase. They're great conversation starters and help to encourage people on the fringe to start making music just for the fun of it!" ad value generated

> MO PALMATEER MO'S FULLERTON MUSIC CENTER FULLERTON, CALIF.

NAMM News

November 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.



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Moves headquarters to larger digs PAGE 27

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> Lace Music Teams up with Bill Lawrence PAGE 32

PLANET WAVES I BY JENNY DOMINE

EET THE BEATLES, AGA

he latest trends in popular culture have not been lost on Planet Waves. The brand, a division of D'Addario, has launched a collection of Beatles guitar picks and straps featuring iconic album cover art from With The Beatles, Help!, Abbey Road and Revolver, to name a few.

Planet Waves released these accessories to coincide with the September launches of The Beatles: Rock Band video game and the band's remastered albums.

COME TOGETHER

he debut of The Beatles: Rock Band was accompanied by a \$25 million media campaign that created millions of impressions just in time for the start of the holiday shopping season.

"The marketing behind EMI [The Beatles' record label] and Rock Band are such massive, large-scale launches compared to us," said Brian Vance, D'Addario's senior product manager. "They are already doing [the marketing] for music retailers."

To help dealers capitalize on this latest Beatles craze, Planet Waves partnered with Hal Leonard this fall to create custom, Beatles-branded POP displays; promotional specials;



and a dealer display contest.

"We pooled our resources and said, 'Let's encourage retailers to take advantage of the buzz that's out there," Vance said.

GETTING BETTER

Dlanet Waves' Joe Satriani line of picks and straps, launched in 2006, served as its first venture into licensing brands. And for Planet Waves, The Beatles licensing venture was an especially good fit.

"Anvone who knows me knows that I have been a devoted Beatles fan from the beginning," said D'Addario CEO Jim D'Addario. "I know what The Beatles meant to music and the industry."

In a similar fashion, Planet Waves has been celebrating Woodstock's 40th anniversary this year with a new collection of retro straps and picks featuring iconic Woodstock imagery.

"The Woodstock items were perfectly timed," Vance said. "If

you've gone into Barnes & Noble or Borders over the last few months, whole tables are set up with Woodstock books."

According to Vance, licensing big names like The Beatles or Woodstock is one part precise timing and one part luck.

"We started most of the Woodstock items last summer," Vance said. "The Beatles products got going around the end of last year."

What followed was a long process of contract negotiations, creating sample products and submitting designs to a rigid approval process.

"That's something we've had to get used to, but it's a fun process," Vance said.

HELP! I NEED SOMEBODY

vailable Planet Waves Beatles-branded dealer displays include a wall-mounted strap display; a pick assortment display; and a 4-foot, free-standing, pop-up sign.

Hal Leonard will also give away 16-pocket, corrugated Beatles displays to retailers who place an order for 48 or more Beatles songbooks.

The co-sponsored Best Beatles Display Contest, which ran in September, will reward \$1,000 worth of Hal Leonard and Planet Waves Beatles merchandise. The winners will be announced at the end of October. MI

BG FRANCE I BY JEFF CAGLE

BG'S U.S. VENTURE

G France is ramping up to celebrate its 25th year in business, and Franck Bichon, company president, has set his sights high on the U.S. market.

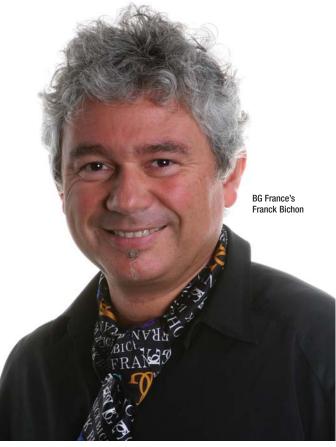
The French accessories maker recently poured a considerable amount of his budget into U.S. magazine ads and spent the past couple of years traveling abroad to present BG's wares at North American trade shows.

Based in Lyon, France, BG makes everything from comfort products (straps and harnesses) to maintenance products (care cloths and microfiber and silk cleaning swabs) to fabric and metal ligatures, all out of its factory in Lyon. Bichon said BG's French manufacturing sets it apart from a good portion of the competition, which outsources accessory lines to China, resulting what he believes to be lower quality. He related how, during a recent trip to China, he saw what appeared to be fakes of his company's straps and ligatures.

"[One manufacturer] tried to copy one of our strap concepts, and they got so many complaints about allergies due to use of poor-quality material that they stopped [producing them]," he said. "We care only about quality material and finishing with efficient and long-lasting products in mind. They cost less down the road, [as there is] no need to replace them frequently."

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

nstead of grandiose statements about manufacturing processes and fabrics used to make cer-



BG France aims for a larger piece of the U.S. market next year

tain products, Bichon said his best sales pitch is putting products into people's hands.

"To show is to sell," he said. "Every salesman can say he has the best product, but you need to prove it. The best ligature or mouthpiece is the one that fits the musician. They need to try and compare

by themselves to be convinced. When musicians ask about our swabs' absorbency, I do demos with a drop of water on BG and competitor swabs. We don't want to offer a me-too product. Musicians must feel proud and self-confident when using a BG product."

Most of Bichon's product displays have been confined to trade shows, but he's currently working on distributing them to music product retailers. This way, musicians can get the hands-on experience in-store to ensure they're making the right buying decisions. Bichon said BG France will offer some of its displays for free, while others will be distributed with a

minimal order investment.

"It is all linked to distributors being ready to invest themselves into a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship," he said. "My point of view is that distributors getting a decent margin should also be financially involved."

To further enhance BG's facing and visibility in the U.S. market, Bichon said he plans to change all of his product packaging by the end of the year, hoping to attract first-time buyers. "Musicians buy with their eyes," he said.

Bichon has also turned to Jessica Watts, a student at the University of North Texas, to create and manage a BG France Facebook page. "Because BG is an overseas company, customers sometimes feel detached compared to the personal service [they might receive] through a local company's presence," Watts said. "I provide [another] connection between the company and the customer."

BATTLING ECONOMICS

been off by roughly 10 percent through the end of June. He attributed the dip mainly to a change with his German distributor, but he has already seen an uptick in orders and anticipates a strong back-to-school season — usually his company's busiest time.

"We accessories makers are the day-to-day business of any shop," he said. "We already see orders coming back every day, and I'm confident that by the end of this year [we'll] be back to normal and then increase again next year." MI



n Sept. 17, the most hopping party in Connecticut was at KMC Music's new headquarters.

More than 300 guests gathered to celebrate the facility, located within Bloomfield's Griffin Center business park — a two-and-a-halfmile jaunt from the company's previous building. The mix of attendees ranged from music industry personnel to KMC employees' families and friends to government officials, including Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Lt. Gov. Michael Fedele and Mayor Sidney Schulman, among others.

The building was abuzz with live music, hors d'oeuvres and, after the ribbon-cutting ceremony, video gamers anxious to play The Beatles: Rock Band before a giant projector screen.

"Moving within a couple of miles of our old residence was extremely important for us, as we didn't want to lose any of our dedicated employees," said KMC President Ed Miller.

Government dignitaries also praised KMC's decision to stay in Bloomfield.

"Once you're in Bloomfield, you never get out," Mayor Schulman joked after Miller's speech. He also kiddingly prodded KMC to convince its parent company, Fender Musical Instruments (FMIC), to move from Scottsdale, Ariz., to Bloomfield. "We'll be one happy family."

"Our move to Griffin Center from the Kaman campus has been overwhelming positive — a good change for us all in this trying economic environment," Miller said. "In a time



'Our move signified a fresh start and a show of confidence.'

Ed Miller

where many businesses are closing doors and struggling to keep afloat, KMC was presented with the unique opportunity to move to a larger facility with new furniture and workstations and move our staff intact. More importantly, our move signified a fresh start and show of confidence by our new parent company, FMIC, for KMC Music to continue as a standalone operation." MI



DISTRIBUTION

Music Link Carries

CruzTools

The Music Link is now distributing the CruzTools GrooveTech tool kits for both guitar and bass setups.



The guitar and bass GrooveTech kits are designed to help musicians become more comfortable doing their own basic setups. {themusiclink.net}

HONORS

Achievement in RMM

Yamaha Music and Wellness Institute recently honored Cincinnati resident Arlene de Silva, COO of the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio, with an outstanding achievement award for her work in developing a community-wide recreational music making coalition.

"The purpose of the coalition is to enable organizations to join together and support the people they serve through creative musical opportunities," de Silva said.

{yamahainstitute.org}

ARTIST APPROVED

Meinl Meets Zombie

Drummer

Meinl has added Tommy Clufetos, drummer for Rob Zombie, to its family of cymbal



"To play rock

'n' roll at its optimal, animalistic outrage levels, I need the ultimate instruments to do so," Clufetos said. "Meinl helps me complete my sound." {meinlcymbals.com}

VENTURE

Tour Supply Goes Wholesale

Tour Supply, an equipment supplier in the pro touring market, has formed TSI Distributing, a wholesale distribution company specializing in live performance products. The company has exclusive U.S. distribution agreements with 3rd Power Amplification, G-Lab, Palmer and Microphome for its initial product portfolio and has established a national network of rep firms to bring these products to retail. {tsidistributing.com}

MARKETING

Pioneer Gets New Look

Pioneer's professional sound and visual division has updated its DJ logo. For the last decade, Pioneer DJ has been identified by its Pro DJ logo wrapped in a black square.

Pioneer has changed the logo to "Pioneer DJ" in the company's signature red color. In line with the new logo launch, the Pioneer DJ division has revamped its Web site.

{pioneerdj.com}

BANKRUPTCY

Schimmel Reorganizes

Schimmel Piano, a German piano maker, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on July 31. The filing applied only to Braunschweig, Germanybased operations. Schimmel USA will continue to operate and will honor warranties on all Schimmel

Hannes Schimmel-Vogel, Schimmel CEO, noted that Schimmel's workers embraced the reorganization in an effort to reposition the company as quickly as

'We will continue to do business in the U.S. as before," Schimmel-Vogel said. "Our relations and obligations towards our customers in the U.S. are not affected by this."

{schimmel-piano.de}



Lennon Bus Star Power Helps Boys & Girls Club

In September, at the Bumbershoot Music and Arts Festival in Seattle, The Black Eyed Peas and the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus gave three kids from the Southwest Boys & Girls Club the chance to interview the group, play music and produce their own video project.

"Especially now in America, when a lot of money has been taken away from music in schools, the [Lennon Busl teaches music and helps fill the void of the lack of funds that are allocated for music and arts," said The Black Eyed Peas member will.i.am. {lennonbus.org}

APPOINTMENTS

Terry to Run New Yamaha Department

/amaha Corp. of America has hired sea-Y soned drum marketer Robert Terry as marketing manager of its Electronic Drum department, a new branch of Yamaha Drums, which oversees drum sets and accessories within the Pro Audio and Combo Division. He will report to Athan Billias, director of marketing for the PAC Division, regarding the sales and marketing of Yamaha's line of electronic drum kits and accessories.



"This is an area where we have identified the potential for significant growth," Billias said. "As we move to launch new products to complement our three lines of electronic drum kits, we're confident that Robert's skills will help us take on and sustain more mar-

Terry previously served as director of sales and director of marketing at Notion Music, a music notation, education and performance software company. He also gained extensive marketing experience at Line 6, serving as marketing communications and programs manager. {yamaha.com}

KHS America has named Richard Breske vice president of marketing.



Lowrey has appointed Joanie Manero eastern regional sales manager.

Seymour **Duncan** has tapped Evan

Skopp for OEM sales, mergers and acquisitions, and artist relations duties.

Zach Frederick has been elected as president of the National **Association of Young Music** Merchants (NAYMM).

TC Group Americas has named industry veteran Nigel Toates as its western regional sales manager.

Tycoon Percussion has appointed John Cathell national sales manager.

Women's Audio Mission has named Sarah Jones as its associate

« TRIBUTE

🔒 Lucien Wulsin III

ucien Wulsin III, the former president of Baldwin Piano, passed away on Aug. 23. He was 92.

Wulsin served as president of Baldwin Piano during the 1960s. Under his leadership, Baldwin Piano sold more pianos to public schools than any

other company at the time.

In addition to serving as the chairman of Baldwin Piano and Organ,
Wulsin served as a trustee of the Colorado Arts Council, founder of Society for Creative Aging, and trustee and chairman of the board of trustees of Naropa University in Boulder, Colo.



DUSTRY GIANTS SUED

eginning Sept. 11, a series of antitrust Class action civil suits were filed by multiple law firms against musical products companies and organizations. At press time, those companies included NAMM, Fender, Gibson, Guitar Center, Bain Capital, Martin, Korg, Peavey, Roland, Yamaha, Tascam and TEAC.

Accusations against the defendants include violating the Sherman Antitrust Act, unlawfully restraining trade, attempting to create a monopoly and promoting unfair competition.

The plaintiff of the original suit, David Giambusso, brought this action on behalf of "purchasers of fretted musical instrument products, such as acoustic and electric guitars, violins, amplifiers and strings" between Jan. 1, 2005 and Dec. 31, 2007.

That suit is seeking \$5 million in damages for the plaintiff and anyone who purchased a "musical fretted instrument" during that time. It follows the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) investigation of NAMM and several of its member companies. That investigation was settled in March 2009.

NAMM statement calls accusations of antitrust violations 'groundless,' 'without merit'

NAMM has issued a statement in regards to the legal action, calling it "groundless."

"NAMM believes that the recent lawsuits filed by plaintiffs making antitrust claims against the association are without any merit and reflect an incorrect understanding of the consent agreement that NAMM entered into with the FTC in March of this year," the statement reads.

"These types of legal actions based on misinformation divert industry resources to defending against frivolous lawsuits and away from supporting the making and enjoyment of music. They are a detriment to the music industry, to music makers and to music lovers everywhere." {namm.org}





FENDER I ENVIRONMENT

PA Fines Fender

UNITED STATES

n Sept. 21, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fined Fender \$78,861 for violating federal hazardous waste requirements at the company's Southern ? California facilities.

During a routine inspection of the Fender facility in 2008, EPA investigators found hazardous waste violations involv-

ing issues with storage of wastes, weekly inspections, aisle space and personnel training.

In a statement issued by Fender, the company explained that it entered into a voluntary consent agreement with the EPA and said it takes these matters seriously. According to Fender, it has established strong measures to ensure full compliance with the agreement and all related laws.

"There is no suggestion by the EPA that any of the issues cited have impacted the environment or community in any way," read the

statement. "The areas covered under the agreement are procedural and administrative matters of space, storage and training that the EPA has established as safeguards to managing materials within our own facility." {fender.com}



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less force to clamp

eliminates side pulling

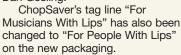
DISPLAY

ChopSaver Over the

Counter

ChopSaver lip care products are now available in a new, countertop POP dispenser.

"ChopSaver is a green product, and eliminating extra cardboard packaging is good for everyone," said ChopSaver President Dan Gosling.



"We have so many non-wind players that love the product, we didn't want to limit our market or that of our dealers," Gosling said. Each box contains 24 individually bar coded units. **{chopsaver.com}**

DAVE GUARDALA I LEGAL

MOUTHPIECE MAKER RECEIVES SENTENCE

ave Guardala, once a high-profile name among saxophone mouth-piece makers, was sentenced to four years in jail on Sept. 11 in Federal Court in Islip, N.Y. In 2008, Guardala pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Central Islip to one count of wire fraud, according to a report by Newsday, a Long Island, N.Y.-based newspaper.

He was charged with attempting to convince acquaintances to give

him money to invest in rare musical instruments, cameras and businesses that didn't exist.

The wire fraud charge involved Guardala's plan to get two acquain-

tances to send him a total of approximately \$277,000 through Western Union and MoneyGram.

Saxophone

mouthpiece

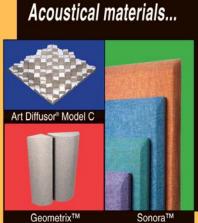
maker Dave

Guardala gets

for wire fraud

four years in jail







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VICTIMS SPEAK OUT

Caxophonist Bill Evans was a long-time friend of Guardala's and one of his many victims. Evans said he lost \$1,000 after Guardala alleged he had been pickpocketed in a Taiwanese airport. "I had no reason to believe he wouldn't be honest," Evans said. "As it turned out, he was never going to pay me back."

"How does one place a sentence relative to millions of dollars?" said saxophonist Greg Vail, another one of Guardala's scam victims. "It seems like 48 months is a very small price to pay for millions of dollars and life destruction for dozens of people."

"Four years for the misery he caused was certainly not sufficient," said scam victim Gerry Malkin. "[Guardala] destroyed a lot of lives."

The Guardala name is still used by The Woodwind & Brasswind and Professional Music Shop, a German company. Guardala's mouthpieces had earned endorsements from musicians, such as Michael Brecker, Branford Marsalis and Dave Liebman.



WEBNEWS



fishmandealers.com

Fishman Amplification's new, online dealer resource offers training videos and reference materials to give dealers more information about Fishman's products and technologies. There are also links to all of Fishman's installation guides, user guides and access to the company's technical support and FTP directory.

pro-activewebsites.com

The Pro-Active Web site now has the ability to communicate and sell in more than 40 languages. The site also features a new product comparison tool. This feature helps guide customers to quick and informed buying decisions.

behringer.com

Behringer has upgraded its Web site. It now boasts renovated product pages with access to high-resolution product images and manuals. The site provides downloadable product brochures, an improved site search engine and a new global service center locator that lets end-users easily find authorized repair centers.

quitarinstructor.com

Hal Leonard recently acquired the digital rights to guitar virtuoso Eric Johnson's songs. More than 50 of Johnson's signature tunes are now available in accurate, authorized editions on guitarinstructor.com and sheetmusicdirect.com.

The songs are available for download in note-for-note guitar transcriptions with tablature and in other formats. The Web site also offers exclusive lessons with Johnson, culled from the

Hal Leonard instructional DVD.

Songs on both sites sell for 99 cents a piece, and lessons on guitarinstructor.com are \$1.99.





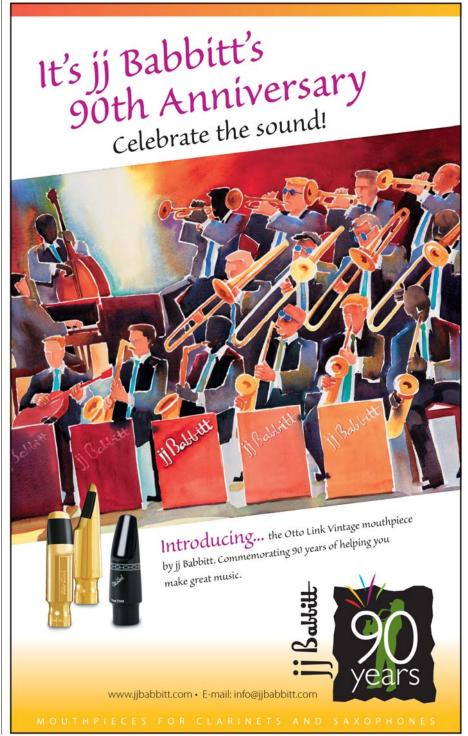
AM&S I DISTRIBUTION

AM&S GETS NEW DEALS

A merican Music & Sound (AM&S) has teamed up with Kurzweil to be its exclusive keyboard distributor in the United States. AM&S will also distribute Fostex audio products and recording gear in the United States.

"[AM&S] is a great partner for us," said Kurzweil Managing Director of Global Operations YT Kwon. "Their strength in the market will be the perfect platform for our products."

{americanmusicandsound.com}





LACE MUSIC I PARTNERSHIP

LAWRENCE, LACE JOIN FORCES

Pickup designer Bill Lawrence has teamed up with Lace Music Products to make all his future pickups at the Lace factory in Huntington Beach, Calif. Lawrence's current Keystone and Wilde products and all subsequent Bill Lawrence designs will now be built and shipped from the Lace facility under the supervision of Lawrence Pickups owners Bill and Becky Lawrence and Lace owners Jeff and Don Lace.

"This is a remarkable opportunity for our companies," Jeff Lace said. Lace Music is also celebrating its 30th anniversary this year with the introduction of its new Helix bass and guitar. {lacemusic.com}



A four-piece Yamaha Stage Custom birch kit took center stage in a new John Varvatos Bowery display that opened in the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. The concept clothing store outfitted a small stage with a complete backline of instruments and installed a P.A. system, so that customers and bands can play them. The interactive display also includes James Trussart guitars and a 30-foot video wall that will play music videos. {yamaha.com}





THE MUSEUM OF MAKING MUSIC I MOOG

Moog Exhibited

The Museum of Making Music and The Bob Moog Foundation have unveiled Waves of Inspiration: The Legacy of Moog, an exhibition that opened on Aug. 29 and will run through April 30, 2010 at the NAMM museum in Carlsbad, Calif. The exhibit is the first public display of the artifacts from Bob Moog's archives.

It will feature rare, vintage synthesizers and other Moog instruments and memorabilia from the Bob Moog archives and private collections. The instruments in the exhibit trace the history of Moog's work, beginning with vintage theremins and a prototype of the first modular synthesizer.

{moogfoundation.org}

API I ANNIVERSARY

API TURNS 40

API, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, has built a reputation in the recording industry for its high-end analog mixing consoles and outboard signal



processing equipment. But while vintage API equipment is still sought after, the company has continued to be a leader in analog recording gear with recent introductions, such as the Vision surround mixing console, the 1608 console, the 7600 input module and DSM series of DAW monitor racks. Most recently, API has established a new line of specialty analog rackmount equipment with the JDK Audio (formerly Arsenal Audio by API) line.

{apiaudio.com}



SONARE WINDS I DISTRIBUTION

Sonaré Keeps Keilwerth, York

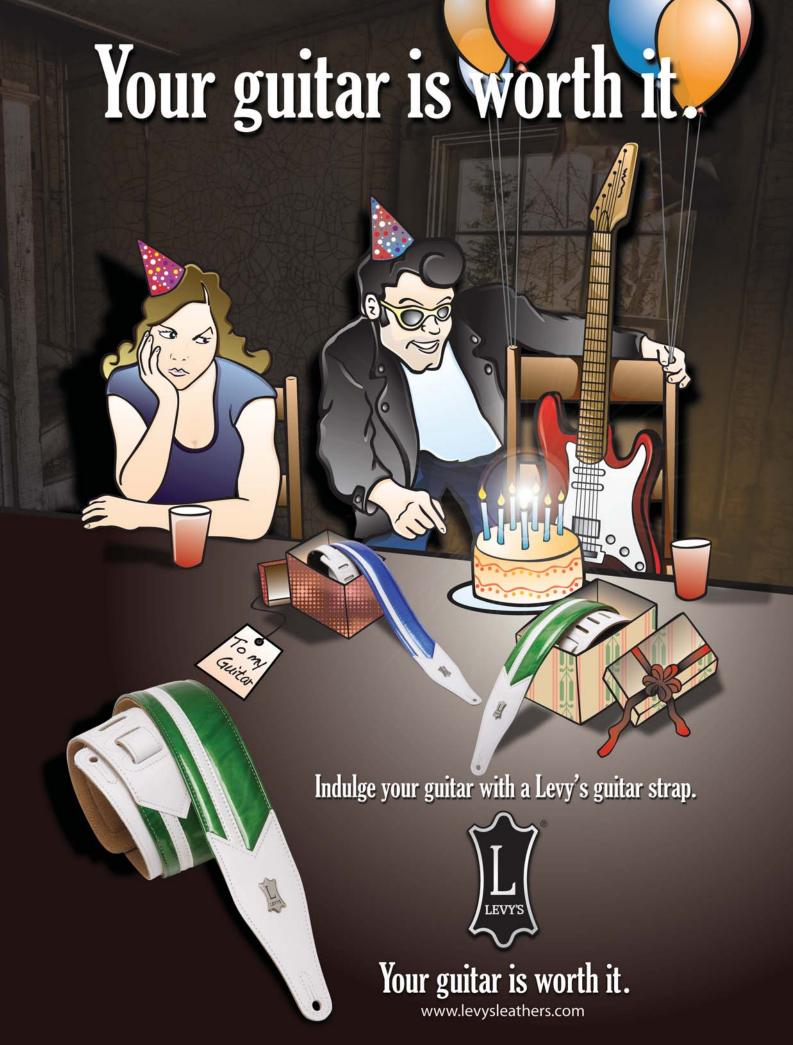
G emstone Musical Instruments recently formed an agreement with Germany-based Schreiber-Keilwerth to begin distributing Keilwerth saxophones and York brass instruments. But on Oct. 7, Sonaré Winds, a division of Verne Q. Powell Flutes, announced it would remain

the North American distributor for Keilwerth and York.

According to a statement from Sonaré, the anticipated change in distribution has been put on hold. Sonaré is expected to retain distribution through the remainder of 2009.

{sonarewinds.com}





IDEAS

>>> Inside IDEAS

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INDEPENDENT RETAIL I BY TED ESCHLIMAN

AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

t's a common household scene on Dec. 25: shredded paper and ribbons, empty cardboard boxes, stacks of articles positioned in varying degrees of wantedness under the tree. It comes with a potpourri of emotions and sentiments, the most universal being a feeling of finality. Good or bad, it's over. The gift exchanging is done. Now what?

Our retail showrooms can be like this. We go through months of preparation, loading our stores with optimal yuletide allure and getting ready for the ramped-up spending that always accompanies the end of the year. Then, it's all over, and we face January's empty coldness and a whole new buy/sell cycle.

In preparing for the Christmas buying season, it's easy to make the perpetually myopic mistake of focusing on rapid-fire, big dollars and not capitalizing on the heightened traffic — a whole new arsenal of customer relationships. Some retailers even arm themselves with a quiver of loss-leader items, simply to increase traffic. It may boost gross sales (yup, giving things away), but does it fill you up with an equally ben-



Holiday marketing should focus on creating long-term customers

eficial increase in gross customers? I would argue that in our specialty industry "loss leader" is more loss than lead.

I suggest that music retailers have a more comprehensive goal in their Christmas marketing, one that primes the pump for first and second quarter sales — and beyond. Here is a slightly different set

of ideas that will not only give you December numbers but yield fertile seeds for the next round of customer visits.

Include an incentive to bring customers back. (I got this idea from fellow retailer Todd Skaw of Guitars Etc. in Longmont, Colo.) A 12-month, segmented coupon is a brilliant way to tie the notion of "return" to an actual calendar. A holiday drum set sale, for instance, could be good for a free pair of sticks in May, a half-priced percussion DVD in April and an extra 10-percent off drumheads in September. Document each month's deal on a piece of paper, and you'll cost-effectively induce multiple return visits.

Introduce customers to your permanent, ongoing services. This includes music lessons, warranties, accessories and string-changing clinics. Every instrument purchased should include a postcard or brochure that explains your music lesson program. Unlike big-box competition, dedicated music stores are wired to give optimal warranty service. Clarify for the customer what you will do for his or her guitar in six months (or less) when needs arise.

Create contact lists of people you've never done business with before. In the age of spam, junk mail and aggressive, multichannel marketing, you have a valid case for invading people's privacy with offers that will improve their musical lives. Kick butt and take names with your holiday sales. The customers are in your store now, and if you don't get e-mail or snail mail addresses, you can't invite them back.

Work the "wish list" benefits of customers who might remember you as their permanent shopping place. One of my favorite customers was a drummer's mom who visited the store twice a year: before Christmas and her son's birthday. It doesn't get any better, when your employees develop this trusting relationship and demonstrate the capacity to be the favorite goto resource for gift services.

Keep your eye on the prize. Remember: It's not just the cash in the December register that matters. MI

Ted Eschliman is a 29-year veteran of music retail and co-owner of Dietze Music in Southeast Nebraska. Mel Bay published his book, *Getting Into Jazz Mandolin*.

The Next Step

hen I wrote "What Went Wrong With the Piano Industry ... And How to Fix It" (June 2009), I thought it might be somewhat controversial. A friend from outside the industry asked if I thought the article would change the world. I just wanted to get a discussion started.

Since its publication, my editor told me that the article has gotten more response than any story previously published in *Music Inc.* I have received many encouraging e-mails and phone calls from music retailers and industry leaders. It was especially gratifying to see piano industry veterans

Terry Lewis and Phil Kennedy chime in. Both are respected old friends, and both were my reps when we were all young. They clearly expressed the manufacturers' point of view. In general, dealers liked the article, but the old guard hated it. Responses ranged from Terry's discussion of economic forces (stuff happens) to Brian Chung's defense of Piano Manufacturers Association International (PMAI).

I guess we're having a discussion after all.

Most surprising was the reaction to one of the tangential issues, recreational music making (RMM). The RMM coalition seemed to think my admonition to PMAI — that it's unwise to pin the industry's future on a program more likely to stimulate digital piano and organ sales than acoustic piano sales — was an attack on RMM itself. It wasn't, and I never suggested scrapping RMM. That said, I did suggest renaming it, and many agreed.



This summer, the piano industry debated the causes of its demise. Now, it's time for action

TEACHING FOR FUN

or the record, I am in favor of teaching people to play music for fun. I've been promoting it all my life.

My dad, Zeb Billings, was the home organ dealer who published the first cassette-based selfinstruction organ and guitar courses and some of the first E-Z

play, name-in-the-note music books. I spent most of the early 1970s traveling the world selling E-Z Play Organ books. (By the way, teachers hated those books.)

Like most surviving piano dealers, we offer easy, fun, adult group piano classes in our galleries, and we sell digital pianos to some of the students. I'm just saying — to PMAI, in particular — that RMM won't sell *acoustic pianos*. There are precious few examples where it has. Pursuing a program that will benefit only members who market electronic products puts added stress on a tenuous organization.

THE NEW LEADERS

y now, everyone has had their say about what went wrong in the piano industry. Unfortunately, we have heard very few solutions. Instead, there have been vague references to expanding the number of music makers, doing more of what isn't working and defending the status quo.

Change, however, won't come from the people who led us into this mess. Change will only come from currently active dealers, distributors and manufacturers who recognize the necessity of new approaches.

Fortunately, there's a new generation of leadership at most piano manufacturers that is not vested in past errors. And surviving piano retailers have refined their activities down to those that really work. Certainly, they disagree with the notions that we're enrolling enough 6 and 7 year olds, that senior centers are the future of our business, and that we should throw in the towel on acoustic uprights and just sell digital pianos.

These people are unlikely to accept the rationalization that events are beyond our control. They are too smart to beat dead horses and too dedicated to concede defeat without a reasonable effort to persevere.

NOW WHAT?

The central question remains: Where do we go from here?



The importance of player pianos as our primary revenue generator can't be ignored. There must be a resolution to the player piano software impasse. (PMAI could help.) There are essentially three formats. Two of the signals are already compatible, just placed on different channels. The third could easily adapt. Like the record business, the market for player piano content is at the end of the disc era and the beginning of the download and streaming era. We need standardization, and we need it now.

In most industries, when consumers reject a product, manufacturers move on and try to figure out what consumers *will* buy. Our manufacturers' strategy of forcing 44- to 46-inch furniture uprights into the market isn't working. Look at the numbers. At the very least, someone needs to come up with a hit product that everyone else can copy.

Elementary schools may be more open to offering piano instruction than we think. Skip Daynes of Daynes Music is pressing the issue in Salt Lake City, and he's having some success. His approach is to coattail on schools' existing computer labs by providing digitally interactive acoustic pianos with the QRS PNOscan USB keyboard sensor device. It's only one success story, but it's proof of what is possible.

It's difficult to imagine a solution to the current wholesale financing crisis without radio-frequency identification technology (RFID) or a similar inventory security system. This is every bit as essential to the piano industry as the bar code was to the MI segment, and it's more a question of "when" than "if." (Again, PMAI could help.) As one wag observed, "If they can put it in a puppy, they can put it in a piano." (Most animal shelters inject RFID-like identifier chips in all of their adopted animals.) When our industry implements RFID, everyone, except those attempting to defraud finance companies or manufacturers, will be better off. And some organization, hopefully PMAI, will have a continuing revenue stream that can be used for the common good.

It would be easy and convenient to call on NAMM to save us and blame NAMM when it doesn't. But NAMM has thousands of members, only a few hundred of which are engaged in the acoustic piano business. It's not NAMM's job to save anyone. NAMM has been more than generous to our segment and no doubt will help us if we come up with reasonable programs that have a likelihood of success. We should start by utilizing the many market-building programs NAMM already has in place. The Sesame Street Music Works program has stirred interest among preschoolers. It's a good place to start.

There were seven other suggestions in my original article. Hopefully, more ideas will come from dealers, distributors, manufacturers, teachers and publishers. It's up to us to keep discussing, innovating, experimenting, testing and even arguing.

We need to do more of what works, and we must abandon outmoded relics of the past. We can no longer look to our trade association solely for leadership. The front lines of our industry possess an amazing amount of marketing talent,

CORRECTION

In my June cover story, I implied that NAMM shouldn't award grants without matching funds. Having served on the NAMM board and chaired a committee, I am well aware that NAMM only awards industry associations matching fund grants. I meant to say that NAMM should only award PMAI future grants if PMAI comes up with useful programs. I apologize for the error.

creativity and energy. It is time to start working from the grass roots up. By sharing and discussing new ideas and best practices, we can create more pianists and bring new customers into our stores. Visit pianorecoveryplan.org to join our private dealer discussion forum. Together, we can find the way. MI

Greg Billings whispers to customers at the Steinway Piano Gallery in Bonita Springs, Fla. He welcomes questions and comments at greg@steinwaynaples.com.



THE LESSON ROOM I BY PETE GAMBER

Give Lessons Face Time

ewer holiday shoppers buying less means we need to have even better selling strategies in place. This is especially true for intangible products, such as music lessons. It's crucial to make those invisible services more tangible and marketable to holiday buyers, who might be experiencing your store for the first time.

These new customers evaluate music lessons based on what they experience in the store, on the phone and through the Web site. All three entry

points should send the same message to customers about the store's products and lesson program.



Web site gives music retailers the most control over keeping a consistent marketing message. The home page should include an ad for the dealer's lesson program that links to information about the teachers. This ad could be a quick video of the owner or teachers talking about the exciting music lessons at the store. Include photos or YouTube videos of the teachers performing. Any photos or videos of recent student events work great, too. If the Web site has a link to a direct e-mail contact for lesson inquires, even better.

Giving basic phone training to the sales staff is essential. They need to know what makes your lesson program special to get excited about it. Make sure your employees are inviting callers into the store during these conversations. A great

phone call experience will bring in new faces.

Also consider what's playing when callers get put on hold. An FM station will play a competitor's ads. Create a recording of the store's hours, lesson program services and other current promotions. With today's technology, it's easy and inexpensive.



Get the most out of new holiday customers by making your lessons program more visible

CREATE TANGIBLE LESSONS

Since music lessons are like vaporware, an invisible product, it's important to create that lesson vibe in the store, even in the morning when students aren't present. What do you have to show for your lessons program? I suggest setting up a music lessons information area. This space should include informational fliers with a photo board of student performances and events. Playing videos of teacher performances also lets customers see that your teachers are talented musicians.

Incorporate lesson literature into store product displays and merchandis-

ing. Try placing guitar lesson information next to the entry-level guitars. In the print department, display a sign that reads, "Here are the books our teachers use."

Give customers a two-buck tour of the lesson studios while lessons are going on, so they can see the program in action. These are just a few ways to turn that vaporware into a tangible, sellable product.

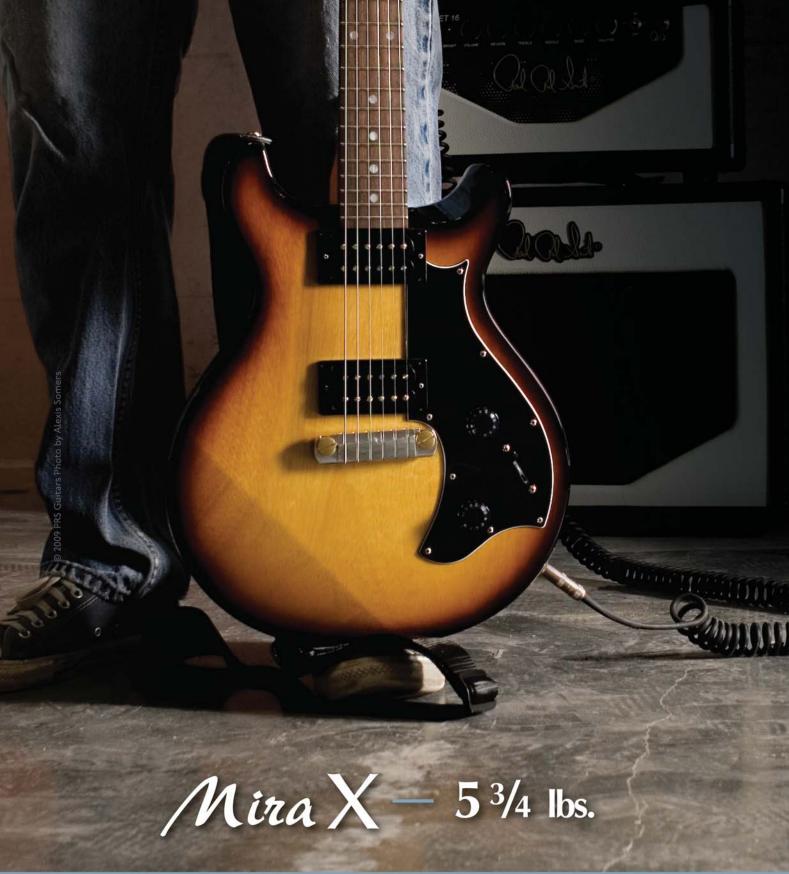
CONVERT LESSONS INTO SALES

cannot stress enough the importance of staff training, especially teaching how to use lessons to close merchandise sales. I recommend the NAMM University sales training videos at namm.org/nammu.

Train your staff to pick up on key phrases from customers, such as, "We don't know if they're going to stick with it," in reference to buying a starter instrument. A response, such as, "Lessons are a great way to get started on the right track," should be automatic. This type of tie-in wins over a lot of customers.

Offer extra instrument discounts if customers sign-up for lessons, or give a special deal for lessons *and* an instrument purchase. Music lessons might be vaporware, but they make an awesome gift. MI

Pete Gamber is the owner of Alta Loma Music in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. He welcomes questions and comments at pete@altalomamusic.com.



simple - harmonic - lightweight



At approximately 5.75 lbs., the Mira X is the lightest guitar in our solidbody lineup. Stop by a dealer near you to try this exceptional model and to Experience PRS.

STREETWISE SELLING I BY KENNY SMITH

Closing for Newbies

t's a tough world out there, and it's not getting easier, no matter how good your product, presentation, service or price. If you're not constantly in closing mode these days, you're going to lose deals.

Over the years, I've asked many retail sales pros, "How many times, on average, do you have to close before you get the deal?" The answer always varies between three to five times. In other words, if you only try closing once — or worse, you don't try at all — you're leaving money on the table.



STOP TALKING

Timing is everything with closing. Ask too early, and you'll seem pushy. Ask too late, and you'll miss the boat completely. So, how do you know when it's the right time? Identifying this magic moment is a lot easier when you listen. Some sales folks get so tied up trying to sell and demo that they don't give the customer a chance to talk until it's all over. Leaving space for customers to speak is critical, and many times, they will hand you the perfect opportunity and pathway to close them when you do so. Remember: Customers buy for their reasons, not ours.

A couple of telltale signs that it may be time to close include: a customer who has been talking a lot suddenly clams up or a quiet customer starts asking a bunch of questions. Even body language, such as unfolding of arms (dropping one's guard) or putting hands in pockets (reaching for

money), can signal that the customer is considering buying.

'Some sales folks get so tied up trying to sell and demo that they don't give the customer a chance to talk until it's all over.'

THE TRIAL CLOSE

The "trial" close can be a helpful tool, and it can be used early on in a deal. Think of it as a closing barometer.

In a previous life, I sold organs in the mall, and this is where I learned the value of using the trial close. I'd drag in some little old

lady from the mall. If she was wearing a wedding ring, I would ask, "Mrs. Jones, if your husband came home today and saw this organ sitting in your living room, what would he do?" If she answered, "He'd beat me with a rake," I knew she didn't make many purchases without her husband. But if she said, "He wouldn't do a damn thing — I'm the one who wears the pants in the family," I knew I had a shot at closing the deal.

Trial closes can be used almost seamlessly to help you unveil important facts early on about a deal. They also help soften the impact of a real close.

THE DIRECT CLOSE

The first real close you need to learn and use is called the direct close. After qualifying the customer and demonstrating the product, just say, "This seems perfect for you. Why don't you buy it?" Then shut up. No matter how long it takes, don't open your mouth. Wait for the customer to talk first.

A certain percentage of people will say, "OK, I'll take it," on your first try. The majority won't be as easy. If the customer says, "No," or throws up an objection, don't get flustered. It happens to everyone, and it's not all that bad. Seasoned pros know it takes more than one close to get a deal. They welcome objections, find solutions and close again. There are many other types of closes pros use, but all the great closers started with this one.

Don't be scared to ask people to buy, and don't be duped into thinking closing is not cool. We all agree that we want customers to be happy first and foremost. So ask yourself: When a customer leaves your store without buying something, do you believe he or she is happier? Think of closing as helping the customer make a positive decision.

Now go ask for the order! MI

Kenny Smith is an industry veteran and consults for both retailers and suppliers. He can be reached at kennysmith8888@gmail.com.

AUDIXDEALERS SAY WHAT?

"I love Audix because my net is so much better than the competition and the sound is superior. It's like shooting fish in a barrel; after all these years I still love to see the customer's faces when they hear the difference between the OM2 and the other guys."

Jim Pinkston Music, Gulfport, MS

Pictured: David Devaney, Jim Pinkston (owner), Derek Fountain





"Audix has been our go-to mic for over 10 years now and they've definitely helped us grow our mic business. Not only are the products great, profitable, and trouble free but the company always gives us fast, friendly service."

Sticks n Strings, Tuscon, AZ

Pictured: Chip Schnarr, Dan Hartman, Brandon Neumaier, Kane Flint, Justin Bernard, Tony Bernard

"For years we have recommended Audix OM microphones for their unsurpassed performance, exceptional gain before feedback, and rock solid durability. All I have to do is let a client try one and they're sold!"

Stage Sound, Roanoke, VA

Pictured: Don Clifton, Paul Thompson, Jeff Moore, John Thompson, Doug Thurman





"For 20 years Audix has consistently provided us with great products, great service, and great margins. We love the stuff!"

Gelb Music, Redwood City, CA

Pictured: David Vogel, Adam Jarvis, Kevin Jarvis (owner), Tommy LeMar, Don Frank



LESSONS LEARNED I BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Don't Wait to Terminate

his past week, my wife landed in the hospital with a fairly serious but treatable ailment. The cause turned out to be a medication prescribed by one of her doctors. After leaving a message with that doctor's receptionist, my wife waited several days for a return call. Ultimately, she called back and found out the message had never been delivered. What would you do with the inept receptionist?

Managers face these quandaries regularly, and they're dreaded by all

but the most hardened individuals. When all the training, multiple warnings and probations fail to correct a problem, do you find yourself continuing to make excuses for an employee? How many times have you uttered: "He's got a family," "She's a fixture around here," "I'm too shorthanded" or, one of my personal favorites, "I think he's learned his lesson"?

You can build a beautiful facility in a perfect location, sell the best products, implement the greatest systems, use creative incentives and run world-class market-building programs. But nothing can destroy your business faster than employees allowed to perform poorly. No matter what you do right, you ultimately rely on your people to implement your plans. If they fail, you and your company fail.

By many accounts, I had a staff admired in many corners of the industry. Still, an occasional poor hiring decision brought a couple of rotten eggs into the mix. It's inevitable.

They say patience is a virtue, but if I had to do it over, I would have had a much shorter fuse.



Nothing can destroy an otherwise great business faster than poor performers. Don't wait to pitch the dead weight

THE COST OF POOR PERFORMERS

As with the doctor's receptionist, a missed message can cost your company a sale or, worse, its reputation. An employee losing his or her patience with a customer can give you a reputation for mistreating customers. A promise

made and broken will lead customers to think your company's unreliable.

These single acts by single employees tend to take on a life of their own. One bad deed gets more lip service than countless jobs well done. Happy customers tend to say little. Dissatisfied customers will go on a mission to take you down. Their rants are likely to be directed toward friends, family and anyone who will listen on Facebook, Twitter or other online forums.

The problems don't stop there. Poor performers hurt morale. An employee allowed to show up late sends a message to others that lateness

is tolerated. An employee allowed to ignore a directive causes a breakdown of authority.

Left unchecked, the performance of otherwise stellar performers degrades as a result of your worst employees' actions, and a company with a mission of excellence mires in the realm of mediocrity. You get measured by your weakest link: the underachievers in the organization.

THERE'S NO BETTER TIME

It's time to commit to jettisoning your company's dead weight. Do it now. Finding talent is never easy, but avoiding the search is nothing short of lazy. You owe it to culprits to provide appropriate training and normal guidance when they err. But you owe it to yourself, the other employees and your customers to purge the problem (doing it legally, of course) when other remedies fail.

Even if you've had problems finding help in the past, you'll likely discover that in the current economy one of the six million available folks out there is just right for your needs.

Oh, make that six million and one. The receptionist *has* to go. MI

Gerson Rosenbloom is the president of Spectrum Strategies, a consulting firm serving the music industry. He's former president of Medley Music and a past NAMM chairman. E-mail him at dersonmusicinc@umail.com.



"The highest quality products, with a lifetime warranty, at very competitive prices!"

Stock up on quality accessories that sell!







MY TURN I BY TOM DOLAN

The Case for RFID

n *Music Inc.*'s recent coverage of the acoustic piano industry's problems, several writers have referenced radio-frequency identification (RFID). Many readers, however, may not know what RFID is and how it can benefit manufacturers, lenders, distributors, suppliers and dealers.

Most piano dealers are dependent on inventory financing in order to offer a reasonable variety of instruments. Unfortunately, Textron has withdrawn from the music industry, banks are reluctant to give loans, and

the sole remaining lender, GE, has tightened its policies and raised rates. They are wary for good reason. Some pianos have the same value as a luxury car but can disappear as easily as a guitar starter pack. And lenders have been burned more than once.

RFID technology can help solve this security problem inexpensively and offer many ancillary benefits. It's widely used to track assets ranging from bulldozers to DVD players. RFID can provide the security lenders crave and offer inventory-control benefits to dealers and distributors, as well. Administering RFID could also provide an ongoing revenue stream for Piano Manufacturers Association International (PMAI) or another independent agencies.



ere's how an RFID tracking system for pianos would work.
Two "tags," one active and the other passive, are placed on

a piano. The active tag continu-

increased security. The industry

standard, low-cost, passive tag is

ously broadcasts a signal to an Internet connection, which passes that information to a central server that contains the piano's serial number, model, finish and location. The active tag is tamperproof, so when the piano is moved out of range, an e-mail alert gets sent to the lender or distributor for

triggered by a reader/gun that can read it. This tag will stay with the piano.

The server is managed by an independent third party. The server's cost would be paid for through the tags' sale to manufacturers and those taking advantage of the infrastructure. Members would have access only to information that pertains to them. Dealers, suppliers, and finance and freight companies would each have a secure portal. Additional features provided to the members' back-office systems could also enhance their capabilities to provide extra services and efficiencies.



ecure asset management Opens the door for manufacturers to offer consignment programs, providing dealers more financing options. It also lets them instantly pool dealer inventory without requiring cumbersome reporting. Distributors can have instant sales reporting by model data they crave but most dealers can't provide. Secure asset management can also create a platform for manufacturers to deliver innovative, value-added warranty and service programs.

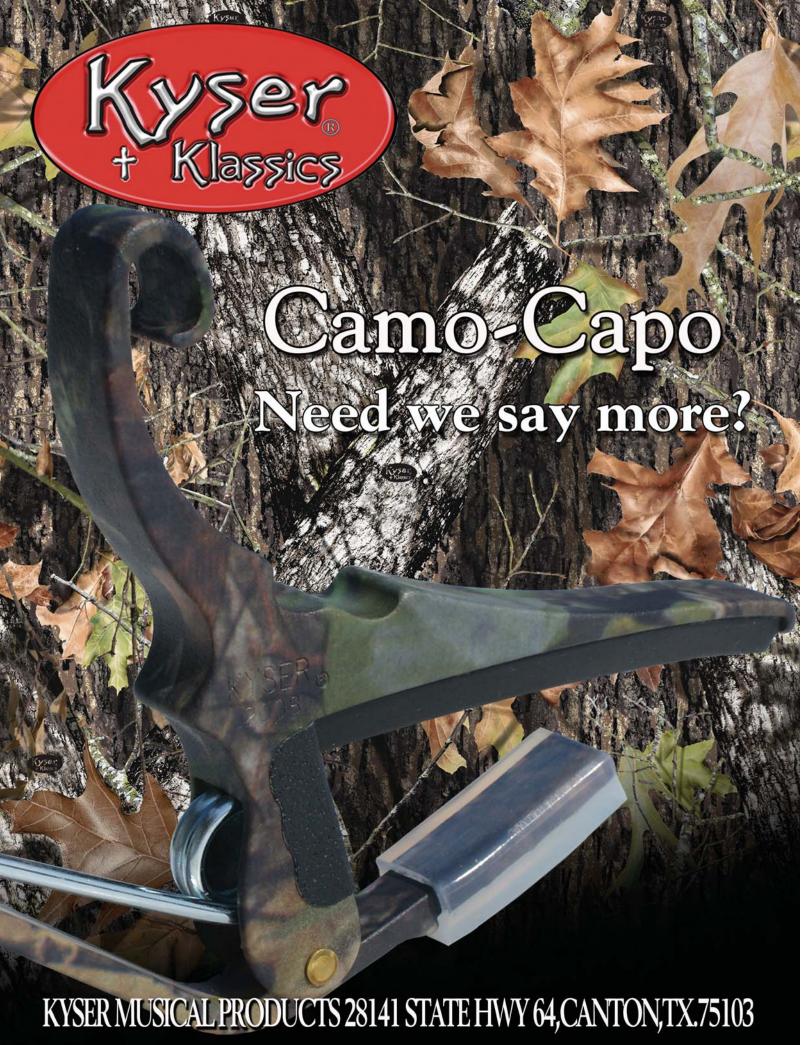
Dealers benefit by having greater access to financing and real-time inventory management. Inventory turns can improve, freeing funds tied up in slow-moving product. Dealers can post overstock pianos on a grid and make them available to other dealers.

Lenders can monitor secured inventory without floor checks, making inventory financing less expensive and more secure.

If PMAI chose to revisit an RFID program, it could generate revenue for projects; set standards for the industry that enable low cost of entry; and increase overall participation. An RFID program would also make PMAI's sales data more accurate and easier for manufacturers to supply. MI

Tom Dolan is the president and CEO of QRS Music.







Debra and Matt Perez create their own economy by preaching the gospel of RMM

quick visit to The | PUTTING RMM IN PRINT Piano Gallery channel on YouTube will shatter any preconceived stereotypes of recreational music making (RMM) as smiling grannies tinkering away to "Auld Lang Syne." Matt and Debra Perez, owners of Texas-based Valley Keyboards and The Piano Gallery, have pushed the boundaries of RMM with innovations, such as posting YouTube footage of their teenage RMM students jamming together instead of playing in traditional recitals.

"By creating an RMM program for students of all ages, including young adults and teens, we can create our own economy," Matt said. "We are planting musical seeds that will grow into future sales."

Between both locations. Valley Keyboards and The Piano Gallery hold about 30 RMM classes per week. While the majority of their RMM group piano lessons are for adults, the Perezes are also bringing RMM to younger demographics.

"Young people today are involved in a lot of different activities and don't often have the time to commit to a traditional music path," Debra said. "But they love music and our Way Cool Keyboarding program allows this to happen."

rom 2007 to 2008, Debra toured the country with the support of Piano Manufacturers Association International (PMAI) to conduct RMM training sessions for teachers at piano and full-line dealerships. After listening to feedback from teachers at these sessions, she decided to put her own RMM program materials into print.

She partnered with composer Will Baily to create fun music that could be learned quickly. Their venture has evolved into an 11-book series called Musical Moments, which features original music and traditional favorites.

The lessons teach students to read music and play chords but also offer a wellness aspect with stretching and breathing exercises. Using the same holistic approach to learning, they also wrote Way Cool Keyboarding for the teen RMM program.

The Perezes have since started their own publishing company, Pedagogy in Motion. Their books and support materials include how-to guides to help retailers and teachers create their own RMM programs. The instructions feature lesson plans, information on how to recruit students, marketing advice and ideas for hosting an open house.

"I included all the details of how we built our program with the intent that others could duplicate it," Debra said.

BACK-TO-BASICS PROMOTION

he Perezes attribute much of their success to relentless grass-roots marketing.

"One of the most significant issues facing the piano industry is market development and expansion," Matt said. "How can we get more people of all ages playing the piano?"

instrument purchase evolves naturally in this environment."

This year, the Perezes have also initiated a back-to-basics marketing push. Despite 30 years in business and 15 years of RMM lessons, they are revising their approach to promoting lessons.

"We made a business decision to pretend we are a brandnew program, go back out into the community and do all of the things that we've been telling people all over the country to

RMIM SUCCESS **FACTORS**

- 1. Everyone in the company must understand the RMM philosophy.
- 2. Commit to changing company culture. Everyone is responsible for the success of the program.
- 3. The right facilitator/teacher is crucial to the program's success.
- 4. Establish ongoing communication between the facilitators and the sales staff.
- 5. Set the direction and keep the team focused, trained and accountable.

- Debra Perez

Their solution: Get out into the community. Matt and Debra attend health shows, home shows and retired teacher meetings. Everywhere they go, they share their love of music.

"Our message is, 'Let us help you fulfill your dream of playing the piano," Debra said. "The

do," Debra said.

"I would encourage every dealer to take action and start a lesson program in their stores," Matt said. "Whether it is traditional or recreational, it requires initiative, commitment, teamwork, patience and a fixed determination not to quit." MI



TED BROWN MUSIC I BY ZACH PHILLIPS

COMMUNITY JAM

very Thursday night,
a medley of people
gather at Ted Brown
Music's Tacoma,
Wash., store with a
common purpose: to enter the
hypnotic groove of a community drum circle.

The jam begins at 6:30 in Ted Brown's recital room, but participants can come and go as they please. Blocks, shakers, maracas and bells are kept out, and players looking to make a bigger beat are welcome to grab a diembe or conga from

Ted Brown Music harnesses the power of group drumming to promote its brand

and players looking to make a bigger beat are welcome to grab a djembe or conga from transition to hand drums,

they're usually hooked.

"What's beautiful about that is people will find drums that they like, fall in love with them and buy [them]," said Whitney Grisaffi, president of Ted Brown Music, a five-store, full-line dealership.

She explained how her company also offers a layaway plan for hand drums.

"That way, nobody's going to play [that drum] except for them," Grisaffi said. "People can come in weekly, pick up the drum, play with it during the drum circle and put it back on layaway."

But the purpose of the free drum circle isn't so much about spurring residual business — which the company gets plenty of — as it is about generating traffic, fostering community goodwill and spreading the joy of playing music.

Grisaffi explained: "[People] get started, and they're like, 'Whoa. Who would have known it was so much fun and we could sound so good? How amazing!""

EVERYONE'S A DRUMMER

rum circles' simplicity and low barrier of entry give them universal appeal, helping Ted Brown Music reach out to multiple demographics at once.

"I tell people, 'You have a heartbeat, so you've got rhythm," said Mellina Germano, the drum circle's facilitator.

A typical Thursday night will bring in anywhere from 12-30 folks, ranging from working professionals to teenagers to families. The drum circle's informality also makes it convenient for working adults running late or parents who have to leave early to get their kids to bed.

"We want to make it late enough that they can grab a bite on the way here but early enough that they can bring their kids because we encourage it to be an all-family activity," Grisaffi said.

SPREADING THE RHYTHM

The Thursday-night jams have become a fixture at Ted Brown's Tacoma store, but they're only one part of the company's group drumming activity. Ted Brown has hosted several in-store events with drum circle godfather Arthur Hull. Germano also travels to schools, farmers markets and state fairs to get more people involved in drumming.

As the company head, Grisaffi does her part, too, never missing a chance to drag someone into a jam. When the chamber of commerce and local



women's networking group use her store as a meeting place, the day is always capped off with a drum circle.

"Some of them don't want to do it, and we really don't give them an out," Grisaffi

said. "It's another way to get businesspeople thinking about recreational music. That's one of my favorite times to do the drum circles, with reluctant participants, because they don't know how cool it is." MI

CONSISTENCY HAS A NEW NAME



Introducing 3^{1/2} + for Clarinet

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Better Cane. Better Consistency.



BETHEL MUSIC CENTER I BY JEFF CAGLE

GROUP LEARNING

t hasn't been a full year since Bethel Music Center launched its RMM programs, but company founder Bruce Treidel has already enrolled more than 50 students — the vast majority of them new to his store.

"For a while, we were trying to figure out how we could work [an RMM program] into our existing lessons programs," Treidel said. "RMM was a big topic at The NAMM Show a couple of years ago, and that really set things in motion."

LESSON PROGRAM BUILDER

The Bethel, Conn.-based, full-line retailer's roster of group learning opportunities includes a beginning guitar workshop and string chamber ensemble, both for children, as well as the BMC School of Rock for adults.

"The whole idea is to get people out of their living rooms playing by themselves and [teaching them] to play in a group environment," Treidel said of the School of Rock. The children's programs are also designed to teach newbies how to play instruments in an ensemble format.

Treidel said his only expenses since launching the programs last February have been the cost of teachers and his promotions. Still, the programs have increased revenue via an expanded lesson program base and new, entry-level guitar sales. And according to Treidel, approximately 50 percent of students have moved from Bethel Music Center's RMM programs into its traditional music lessons.

"What tends to happen is people who are involved in one of the classes — especially the guitar class — tend to find some kind of value in playing, or their parents find value for their children, and they either move into small group or private lessons after the initial RMM program," Treidel said.

"Sales come mostly from the guitar class. We give students a book and a guitar to use for the program, and after the class is over, we offer [to let] them purchase the instruments they're using and sell about half of them."



Bethel Music's RMM initiatives solidify its status as the local music education hub

BUILDING A BUZZ

Treidel publicized the programs in press releases as part of Bethel Music Center's 25th anniversary, which it celebrated in June. This resulted in coverage in the local community newspapers. Email blasts featuring information about Bethel's programs were also sent to the store's customer base and generated a slew of telephone calls.

"The most important thing that we're finding is that [the RMM programs] bring our business to top-of-mind in the community," Treidel said. "When people think about learning music or making music, we want them to think about Bethel Music Center.

"We find that the kids and adults who are involved with these kinds of programs turn into emissaries in the community, and they talk it up if they see it's a very positive experience. That word-of-mouth, even though it may spread slowly, is invaluable." MI

CH-TO-SELL M

t Lacefield Music's adult At Lacellelu iviusio e accidentational service is a dirty word.

"You never tell people you're going to go out and practice 18 holes of golf," said Cathy Krubsack, owner of the St. Louis-based dealership. "If you take some of the stress off, [studentsl won't feel as though they are failing and want to quit."

Krubsack shares ownership of the company with her sons Steven and Larry Lacefield. Dwayne Hilton, a fourth coowner, helped her develop Lacefield's own adult lesson course 10 years ago. They also have a turnkey Lowery Organ group lesson program for older adults at all three locations.

TURNING RMM INTO SALES

acefield's RMM lessons all have a teach-to-sell focus. Anyone who buys a piano from the company receives free group lessons for life. Lacefield's three locations also offer a deal twice a year where customers can sign up for eight-week RMM piano lessons for \$29.95.

"Our goal is that, if they don't have a piano, they'll enjoy the hobby so much that they will want to purchase a piano from us," Krubsack said. "So, we get that loyalty from them, and it's really good for sales."

Lacefield's RMM lessons are designed to evolve with the student's musical development. The Lacefield Music Adult Piano Course consists of three levels, each eight weeks long. Once participants complete all three, they're eligible for advanced classes. These provide special training in a particular genre or style of playing. Recently, Lacefield added a four-week Beatles class and a

Lacefield converts adult **RMM** classes into steady revenue

blues course.

The program's enrollment grows each year. This past January, the company facilitated 100-150 piano students in levelone programs at each of its three locations.

"In just a few weeks, they are excited, successful and playing songs," Hilton said. "Before you know it, they are approaching us about [buying] pianos."

The Lowrey Quick Start program has proven to be another effective sales tool. It provides

players with a small home organ that they can keep for 10 weeks. At the end of the trial period, the student can opt to purchase it.

SALES STAFF AS TEACHERS

rubsack credited much of the success of the RMM lessons to her staff. The entire sales team plays piano proficiently and is trained to teach Lacefield's RMM classes. "It has never made sense to me that a piano salesperson wouldn't be able to play some," Krubsack said, adding that teaching keeps her staff busy during slow times.

"They aren't sitting there staring at computers all day. You've got piano salespeople with energy levels that will go down low if they don't have something creative to do. It puts them in front of customers constantly, so that they have an opportunity to make money." MI



TUESDAY NIGHT MUSIC CLUB



ick Rail Music's Prime Time Band has been responsible for more than one marriage between its members, not to mention several widows and widowers who'd be "marching to the beat of a very different drummer" if not for the group, according to Nick Rail, company president.

In fact, the Santa Barbara, Calif.-based concert band is as much a community as it is an opportunity for older adults to re-experience the glory of blowing a horn in a low-pressure environment.

"People over 50 love the concept — joining a group where they're not challenged by more ambitious, younger players," Rail said.

And while he referred to the band as one of his "most rewarding and meaningful business decisions," Rail also acknowledged that it has influenced countless instrument purchases and subsequent stepup sales. Note here: Hosting Prime Time Band doesn't cost Nick Rail Music a dime.

"The group is self-supporting," Rail said, mentioning that the band received 501(c)(3) non-profit status 10 years ago. "There's some good money to be made here, no question, but the sense of job done well and immeasurably good community outreach is priceless."

THE NEW HORIZONS MODEL

ail and retired band director J.B. Vander Ark founded Prime Time Band in August 1995, basing it off of NAMM's New Horizons Band template (i.e. a play-for-fun concert band program for older

adults). The group began with 33 members. By the end of that year, it had grown to 50 members and, not long after, 100.

Nowadays, the group sits closer to 80 people, a number Rail said is more manageable. Participants rehearse for two hours every Tuesday night in a local junior high school's band room and then perform a winter and spring concert.

THE ROAD TO NON-PROFIT STATUS

ach member pays \$25 in monthly dues, which covers the cost of the band's director, local educator Jeffrey Peterson, as well as sheet music, band shirts, concert costs and the group's manager. Prime Time Band's non-profit status has also led to tens of thousands of dollars in instrument and

resource endowments.

"Our non-profit status has allowed us to boost donations to the group by individuals and foundations, leading to the acquisition of, but not limited to, a set of four new Yamaha copper timpani, a \$25,000 portable sound shell for indoor and outdoor concerts, and a \$10,000 sheet music endowment," Rail said.

Don Bennett, a charter member of Prime Time Band and its first president, said achieving non-profit status took roughly six months. He suggested that retailers interested in forming a non-profit pick up a Nolo publication on the topic.

"It's is a recipe book that tells you what to do and in what order," Bennett said. "I prepared the papers, submitted Nick Rail
Music's Prime
Time Band is
equal parts
community and
performance
group

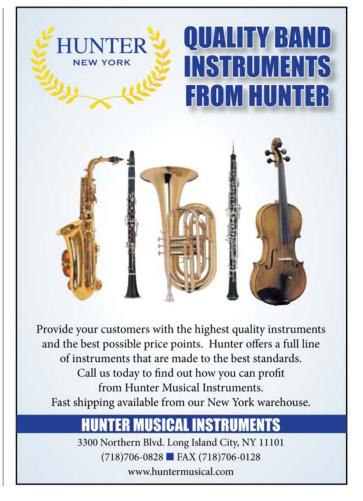
them to the state and federal governments as directed, and all were accepted and approved." He added that it's unnecessary to hire an attorney.

PRO-LEVEL INSTRUMENT SALES

While the band is self-supporting, it still has an association with Nick Rail Music. Members receive a 10percent discount on sheet music and accessories at any of the store's seven locations. Rail also continues attending the group's board meetings. This keeps his company front-of-mind among members when they decide to make a purchase.

"Our sponsorship was obvious, and we did a good deal of business with band members over the course of the first two or three years, and step-up purchases continue to this day," Rail said. "Bach Strad trumpets, Sonaré flutes, Yamaha rotaryvalve tubas, Conn double horns, Buffet clarinets and black-nickel Keilwerth tenors are just a few of the instruments Prime Timers have purchased from us. It's also worth noting that when they buy, it's at the pro level a good 80 percent of the time." MI





PROFIA

Need margins? The following small goods have been recommended by your fellow music product retailers. All are readymade to turn quickly and boost profits. (We've also included a few add-on concepts for your consideration.)





BRUCE BANNISTER SAMUEL MUSIC EFFINGHAM. ILL.

ON-STAGE TANDS SM7122

A sheet music stand featuring rugged metal piping and piped edges for increased durability. It comes with a travel bag.

with a travel pay.

MSRP: \$25.99

Margin: "Usually in the high 50s, up to around 70 percent."

Customer: "Everyone is the terrot customer."

the target customer."

Sales Strategy: "One of our

company's non-negotiable standards is to ask each customer to add-on products to the sale. Although we really like the additional sales and the additional margins, we are really doing a disservice to our customers if we do not sell them the accessories they are going to need to use and enjoy the product they are

purchasing."
Samuel Music displays the stands in two spots: near products that they can be added on to and also at the point of purchase. Bannister said placing them near the checkout gives a "great second chance" to add

them on to a sale.



{PROFITABLEACCESSORIES}



>>> MIKE GUILLOT MISSISSIPPI MUSIC JACKSON, MISS.

PEAVEY PVI2

A durable, inexpensive dynamic microphone with an on/off switch and heavy construction for low handling noise. **MSRP:** \$59.99

Margin: In the low 60-percent range, according to Guillot. Customer: Houses of worship, hobbyist musicians, schools, school bands and home karaoke users Sales Strategy: "All mics are out on display on the slatwall in the combo department. We also have mics hooked up to a P.A. so that they can be A/B'd at all





LUXURY ANGLE

CORY LAKE

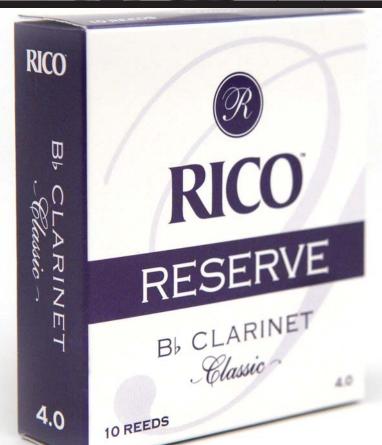
CARLOS FALCHI GUITAR STRAPS

High-end, one-of-a-kind guitar straps from luxury fashion accessory designer Carlos Falchi. American Guitar & Band sells them via special-order.

PRICE: Begins at \$550

CUSTOMER: Professional musicians, guitarists and collectors

SALES STRATEGY: "I make sure that my staff knows details about the materials and manufacturing in order to convey the value to clients. The Falchi designs are always featured on the home page of our online store, and we stick to the higher-priced models for Internet and international sales."





>>>
RAY GUNTREN
RAY'S MIDBELL MUSIC
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

RICO REEDS 10 PACKS

Reeds for clarinet and saxophone in boxes of 10, which are ideal for new players.

MSRP: clarinet, roughly \$23; alto sax,

roughly \$38

Margin: "Very good," Guntren said.

Customer: Every new clarinet and alto saxo-

phone player

Sales Strategy: Ray's Midbell Music's road reps encourage each new clarinet and alto saxophone student to get a box with his or her instrument rental.

"A 10-pack is enough reeds to get a beginning student [started for] a few months."

{PROFITABLEACCESSORIES}



>>> MENZIE PITTMAN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CENTER HAYMARKET, VA.

A compact tuner featuring a pitch reference tone and marks for pure major thirds and minor thirds.

MSRP: \$32

Customer: Anyone

Margin: "You are always up against Internet [competition] or a big-box, so margins are always squeezed on every product.' Sales Strategy: "What's wonderful about this

product is the ability to connect it with all music sales. The CA-30 helps young musicians develop their awareness of tuning, while giving them a better sense of tuning confidence."





PACKAGING CONCEP

BRIAN STUHR AMRO MUSIC (MEMPHIS, TENN.)

AMRO CARE KITS

A standard Amro Care Kit includes valve oil, polishing cloths, brushes, cork grease, a fingering chart and other items customized for each B&O instrument.

PRICE: \$13.24

CUSTOMER: Every B&O student

SALES STRATEGY: "We try to target every customer that walks in the door. These are items that every player needs, whether they are beginners or advanced players. In addition, the items in a care kit get used, and they need to be replenished. So, we ask [returning customers] every time they come in."



BOBBY BOYLES OKLAHOMA VINTAGE GUITAR EL RENO. OKLA.



{PROFITABLEACCESSORIES}



PAUL HUBER **HUBER AND BREESE MUSIC** FRASER, MICH.

MYSTAR SOUND **U.S. CABLES**

High-quality, U.S.made instrument and audio cables that come with a lifetime warranty. MSRP:

\$16.99-\$44.99

Margin: "On a lot of our accessories, we are in the 100-percent-return [range]." **Customer:** Fidelity

junkies

Sales Strategy: "We can offer someone a money-back guarantee. If they break a cable, they can just come and get a new one."





It's hard to believe how perfectly the new Aura Spectrum DI reproduces the subtle uniqueness of your acoustic instrument. But this is no ordinary direct box. Powered by Aura technology, it gives you the eye-opening sound quality of a recording studio - anywhere you plug in. And it's loaded with everything from a tuner and 3-band EQ to compression and auto feedback control. Yup, it's pretty unbelievable.



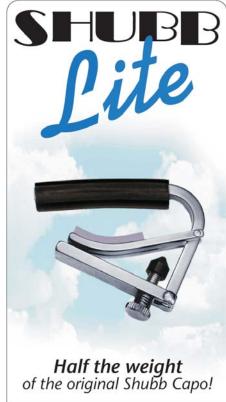




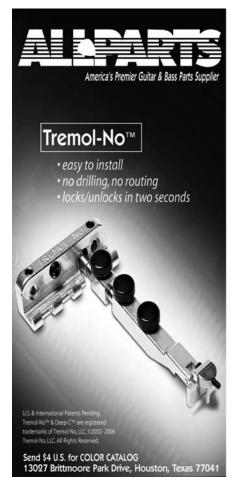
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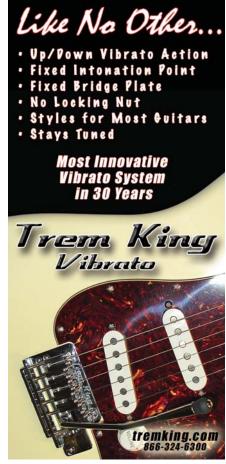
ACCESSORIES SPOTLIGHT

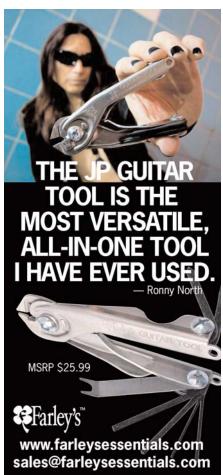


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GEAR



> Audio & Recording

Tascam rackmounts iPod player PAGE 66

Drums & Percussion Evans' drumheads optimize attack PAGE 68

> Band & Orchestra
Atlus releases intermediate line
PAGE 71

> Pianos & Keyboards Avid's Axiom Pro 25 offers shortcuts PAGE 72

> Print & Multimedia Lowrey updates RMM print resources PAGE 74

> DJ & Lighting MBT Lighting's Flurry forecasts early snow PAGE 76 **BOSS I TU-88**

Jammin' Tuner

A long with its tuner and metronome features, the new Boss TU-88 micro monitor and tuner has a built-in headphone amplifier, so players can directly monitor or record sounds from stomp boxes or electric guitars with the built-in speaker simulator.

Guitarists can also jam with songs from a CD or MP3 player using the mix input function. {bossus.com}



1 LEVY'S LEATHERS PLATINUM

COLLECTION Levy's has expanded its Platinum Collection guitar strap line. One of this year's models is fashioned with a striped, polyurethane fabric called Online and features foam padding, soft leather backing and a decorative braid. Pictured is the PC17OL model. {levysleathers.com}

2 PLANET WAVES BEATLES PICKS,

STRAPS Planet Waves has launched Beatles guitar straps with matching pick designs. Consisting of eight faux-leather and vinyl strap designs and multiple pick sets in thin, medium and heavy gauges. these accessories feature historic Beatles album artwork. MSRP: straps, \$54.99; picks in packs of 10, \$8.99. {daddario.com}

3 PROFILE PT-2800 Profile has expanded its tuner and metronome line with the PT-2800 mini clip-on tuner. It features a large, bright, multicolored LCD screen that's easily visible while attached to an instrument's headstock in any lighting situation. The screen color changes to green when correct tuning has been reached.

{americanmusicandsound.com}

4 ROTOSOUND BRITISH STEELS

Rotosound's British Steels are based on the original Rotosound stainless steel electric quitar strings from the 1960s but use improved processes and materials. The new strings feature stainless steel with the highest possible iron content. The strings are manufactured under tighter quality control to ensure consistency, clarity and durability. {rotosound.com}

5 DAVA GEL PICKS Dava is now making its picks in a polycarbonate gel. The material gives the original Dava Control picks, Grip Tips and Jazz Grips a stiffer flexibility and a smooth release from the strings. MSRP: Control, \$0.75 each; Grips, \$1.25 each. {davapick.com}

6 THE MUSIC PEOPLE GRIPCLIP The

Music People, parent company of On-Stage Stands, now distributes the GuitarGuard NeverKink cable clip in North America and renamed it the GripClip. By clipping the GripClip to the strap behind the player's back, the unit creates a wide, gentle loop that reduces stress on the input jack. MSRP: \$3.99. {musicpeopleinc.com}



GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



1 MICHAEL KELLY

NOSTALGIA SERIES Michael Kelly has released six new acoustic guitars in its Nostalgia series. The new models span a variety of design styles from folk to full-sized dreadnought to jumbo models. The folk guitars include the Nostalgia F2 and the Nostalgia F2C. The N60SJCE is Michael Kelly's first jumbo guitar design and has a flame maple back and sides and rosewood binding. MSRP: Nostalgia F2, \$270; Nostalgia F2C, \$400; N2, \$270; Nostalgia 10CE, \$410; N40CE, \$550; Nostalgia N50S, \$460; N60SJCE, \$660.

{michaelkellyguitars.com}

2 HAGSTROM TREMAR

SERIES Haastrom is now shipping the Tremar series of electric guitars. Featuring a distinctive vibrato bar, tailpiece and matching hardware, the Tremar series is suited for musicians who play with a vintage feel and subtle vibratos. A number of Hagstrom's vintage models have been "tremarized" for the new line, including the Viking, Viking Deluxe, Deluxe-F. Super Swede, Swede and HJ-500 guitars. They feature the Hexpander truss rod, resonator fretboard, vintage-voiced pickups and transcendent tone.

{hagstromguitars.com}

3 HOHNER ESSENTIAL

SERIES Hohner's new Essential series of acoustic guitars utilize a frequency-matching technique. Hohner's technicians use a form of tap tuning to determine the resonant frequencies of the wood and then match the solid spruce tops with similarly resonant mahogany backs and sides. The guitars produce rich tones, even in the small-bodied Parlor and Folk models. Each Essential guitar is equipped with an Earvana compensated tuning system that offers greater intonation up and down the length of the neck. MSRP: starts at \$249. {hohnerusa.com}

4 EASTWOOD GUITARS

CUSTOM STD, DLX Eastwood Guitars has added two new models, the Town and Country '59 Custom STD and DLX, to its Airline '59 Custom series. These guitars feature a black rubber binding around the vintage cream body, replicating the aesthetics of the original Airline Res-O-Glas guitars. The instruments deliver a variety of tone possibilities with high-output Airline vintage-voiced, single coil pickups; a three-way switch; and master volume. Both guitars come with a formfitting Airline hardshell case.

{eastwoodguitars.com}

KALA I EDUCATION PACKAGES

Jke Education

Ala now distributes James Hill's Ukulele In The Classroom method series with its new education packages. Kala's uke packages include a ukulele, padded bag, tuner, and the choice of either Play Ukulele Today! or Ukulele In The Classroom instructional books. {kalaukulele.com}

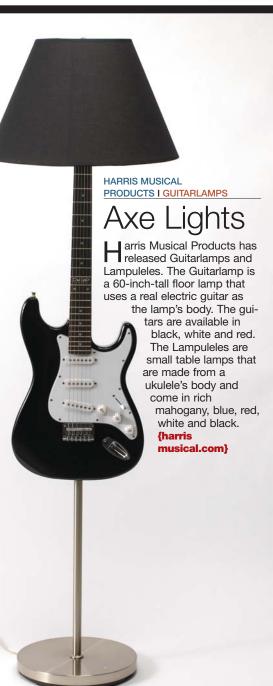




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TONE BOX I SKULL CRUSHER

Skull Stomper

one Box breaks the mold of traditional stomp box shapes and tones with the new Skull Crusher stomp box. Production models are available in four finishes: gun metal, stainless steel, aged and ancient. On the back of the skull are the voicing, tone and gain controls. The voicing knob lets the musician select from four presets labeled clear (3 dB up), ice (11 dB up), chains (15 dB up) and body (18 dB up). Combine these four with the 10 dB boost. and the artist has eight voices to create a wide variety of sounds. MSRP: starts at \$399. {thetonebox.com}



MARSHALL I MG2FX

Tone to Go



M arshall Amplification has added the new, portable MG2FX to its MG4 guitar amp line. It offers a userfriendly interface consisting of four dual-function knobs to provide easy access to 10 gain stage settings, five digital effects, a two-band EQ and a tuner. For greater mobility, the MG2FX can run on battery power via six C cells and includes an AC adapter. MSRP: \$205. {marshallamps.com}



TC ELECTRONIC I CLASSIC450

Vintage Bass

C Electronic's Classic450 is a new bass amp that gives bass players easy access to a wide range of classic tones via the versatile, vintage tone control section. This is backed with TC Electronic's Tubetone and multiband SpectraComp technology. TubeTone emulates characteristics of a tube preamp and power amp. SpectraComp virtually evens out the compression across all strings, delivering a punchy sound. The Classic450 is portable and compatible with all TC Electronic RS cabinets. MSRP: \$1.095.

{tcelectronic.com}



EDEN I ENSMICEO AMPLIEIER

New Nemesis

den Electronics' new 40W EN8micro amplifier is part of the Eden Nemesis series. The EN8micro is designed as a small home practice amp. It helps new guitarists develop proper technique for any style at an earlier stage of learning. The EN8micro amplifier features an Eden-designed, 8-inch speaker, and it's the ideal amp for players who don't want to spend a fortune but want to get a feel for their sound.

{eden-electronics.com}



IBANEZ I WH10V2

Pedal to Metal

banez has upgraded the Ibanez
WH10V2, replacing the wah pedal's
original plastic case with a die-cast
metal construction. The guitar
pedal has the same multiple
feedback op-amp circuit as
the original but also offers
a depth knob to control
the level of the wah
effect and a dry out
for mixing a dry
signal. MSRP:
\$153.83.
{ibanez.
com}



STAGETRIX I THE PEDAL RISER

No More Tap Dancing

StageTrix has created the Pedal Riser, a pedalboard management solution. It creates individual platforms for easy access and cable routing to selected pedals that eliminates tangles. The Pedal Riser features 18-gauge steel construction and works with most pedalboards. MSRP: \$23.99. {pedalriser.com}

KASHA I OVERDRIVE PEDAL

Kasha Stomps Out

Boutique amp builder Kasha Amplifiers has introduced the Kasha Overdrive pedal. This pedal is designed without a tone knob to maintain the tone of an amplifier. It also has four channels with separate voicing and gain structure, 10 dB clear boost, analog design, true bypass switching and low power consumption. The pedal comes in a high-



gloss, mirror-black powder coat and is handmade in the United States.

{kashaamplifiers.com}







NADY SYSTEMS I HPA-8

Maximum Monitoring

N ady Systems's new, eight-channel, single-rack headphone amplifier, the HPA-8, enables multiple signal distribution options for maximum monitoring flexibility. Each channel boasts a separate volume control, 1/4-inch stereo output and more than 100 mW of power. The HPA-8 also features full-spectrum audio response, maximum headroom and a mono/stereo selector switch for each set of inputs. MSRP: \$159.99. {nady.com}

Dorfoot Eit

exicon's new Windows and Mac software drivers for the I Onix series of desktop recording interfaces feature dbx microphone pre-amps and are driven by a 60 V high-voltage supply. The high-definition converters ensure 24-bit, 96-kHz audio. Each of the three I Onix models provides a different level of recording capability. The new, 64-bit Windows driver operates on 64-bit XP and Vista operating systems. The Mac driver now supports all computers operating on OS X 10.4.9 or higher. {lexiconpro.com}





TASCAM I CD-200I

iControl Tascam

Tascam has released the CD-200i, a rackmountable CD player with a built-in dock for an iPod. The unit plays back audio CDs, MP3 files and WAV files from CD media. The iPod can be controlled from the CD-200i's transport buttons or the wireless remote. The audio and video plays from the unbalanced output and video outputs on the rear panel. The CD-200i includes CD text and ID3 tag support; program play modes; and a wireless, 55-key remote control. {tascam.com}



JBL I MSC1

Tuneable Controller

The new MSC1 Monitor System Controller from JBL Professional integrates monitor system control and tune-ability with features that are usually found in larger mixing consoles. This unit has the ability to monitor up to three two-channel input sources, such as a mixing console or personal music player, while controlling the volume of the monitor system and connected headphones. Two sets of speakers and a subwoofer can be connected to this device. The MSC1 works with any speaker system.

MSRP: \$375. {jblpro.com}



HOSA I HDMI CABLES

Mini Me

osa Technology has added the NHD-518 HDMI female-to-mini HDMI male adaptor to its HDMI cable line. These cables are ideal for professional A/V installers, as well as home use with cable/satellite receivers, DVD/Blueray disc players and game consoles. The cables feature gold-plated contacts. This adapter preserves clear sound and picture quality. The HDMI cables integrate with a variety of digital media devices, such as digital cameras, camcorders and small DVD players. MSRP: \$27. {hosatech.com}



BLUE I ENCORE

ncore!

lue Microphones new enCORE series brings highquality studio microphones to the stage. The enCORE comes in three models: the 100, 200 and 300. They feature thick, steel grills and precision-machined, cast-zinc bodies. The enCORE 100 (pictured) is a studio-grade, versatile microphone that features Blue's custom-tuned Aria dvnamic capsule. MSRP: enCORE 100, \$99.99; enCORE 200, \$149.99; enCORE 300, \$199.99. {bluemic.com}

AUDIO-TECHNICA I RIBBON MICROPHONES

Expands

Audio-Technica has added the AT4080 and the AT4081 bidirectional, active ribbon microphones to its expanding 40 series. The AT4080 and AT4081 both feature active electronics for easy use with microphone pre-amps. The AT4080 offers an AT8449/SV shock mount and comes with a dust cover and a protective carrying case, while the AT4081 isolation clamp provides high-level isolation. MSRP: AT4080, \$1,245; AT4081, \$895. {audio-technica.com}



eil Sound has released the PR 48, a large diaphragm dynamic microphone designed for the kick drum. The PR 48 is mounted in a vulcanized, double-shock mount, which offers complete isolation within rugged, cast metal housing and features a 1.5-inch diameter element. The metal housing boasts a slanted entrance to the three-pin XLR for easy cable assembly. The 8 kHz response controls unwanted top-end noise from inside the drum. {heilsound.com}







Ribbons for All

XL Microphones has debuted the R144 M XL Microphone, which offers the necessary sound quality for vocal and instrument recording - including acoustic instruments and strings. The R114's SPL rating also makes it ideal for electric guitars, percussion and horns. This microphone includes a 1.8-micron aluminum ribbon, free shockmount, carrying case and cleaning cloth. MSRP: \$159.99. {mxlmics.com}





AURALEX I HOVERDECK

Accurate on Stage

A uralex Acoustics now offers the HoverDeck. This drum isolator reduces coloration from floor resonance by decoupling the drum kit from the structure, resulting in a tighter, purer sound. The engineering technology for the HoverDeck is based on Auralex's patented Gramma, Great Gramma and MoPad isolation







EVANS I EC2

Sound Shaper

vans' new EC2 heads feature Sound Shaping Technology (SST), which provides the ability to control the ring thickness and density in addition to the drumheads' width. Controlling the placement and mass of the ring lets the player target select frequencies for removal to optimize the attack, tone, length of sustain and ease of tuning for each size head. This provides a more balanced and pre-EQ'd sound across the full drum kit. Evans EC2 with SST is available in 6–18 inches, both clear and coated. MSRP: \$26–\$50.

{evansdrumheads.com}



VIC FIRTH I CORPSMASTER

Gettin' the Groove

/ic Firth's Corpsmaster Groove series is a new line of sticks and mallets for marching snare, single tenor, Scotch bass and large tonal bass. The Scotch Groove (pictured) is designed for the Scotch bass drum. Its heavy gauge aluminum shaft is ideal for speed, response and durability. Textured rubber handles enhance the grip and feature a cord that can be securely attached to the player's wrist. MSRP: \$17-\$80. {vicfirth.com}





1 SABIAN ARTISAN HATS

Sabian's new, premium Artisan hats are available in 13-, 14- and 15-inch sizes and feature pure Sabian B20 bronze. Designed with a medium top and heavy bottom, each pairing offers its own sound. The 14-inch cymbal provides a combination of soft, warm sticking and pedal response, while the 13-inch set delivers a tighter sound. The 15inch produces a bigger, deeper sound. Available in natural or brilliant finish, the cymbals are quality-protected by a two-year warranty. {sabian.com}

2 TRX FLAT-RIDE MODELS

Rounding out the deeper, warmer-sounding DRK (Dark) series, TRX Cymbals is offering three new flat-ride models. The handcrafted 18-inch, 20-inch and 22-inch TRX DRK flat-rides feature a natural finish with hand-hammering and a classic, extra-dry sound intended for a variety of traditional and progressive jazz styles, as well as world music applications. The authentic, Turkish cymbals are distributed in the United States and Canada by Direct Music Supply.

{trxcymbals.com}

3 ZILDJIAN ARTIST

COLLECTION CYMBAL BAGS Zildjian's latest addition to its line of Artist Collection cymbal bags was designed in collaboration with drummer Steve Gadd. The Zildjian Steve Gadd artist collection cymbal bag is constructed from heavy-duty cotton and boasts a rich, brown leatherette trim exterior. The 22-inch diameter bag also features an adjustable shoulder strap, padded carrying handle and rubberized skid plate that protects the bottom.

{zildjian.com}

4 SUPERNATURAL MYSTIC

CYMBALS The new Mystic series by Supernatural Percussion is designed for hard rock and metal drummers. Its raw bell, polished bow and raw edge create a penetrating, piercing heavy metal sound. The Mystic crash (pictured) produces a forceful attack with a dark, edgy wash. These handcrafted, Turkish cymbals provide clear, dry stick definition and a warm, piercing bell that will cut through the loudest music in live performances.

{supernaturalcymbals.com}

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JUPITER I ALTUS FLUTES

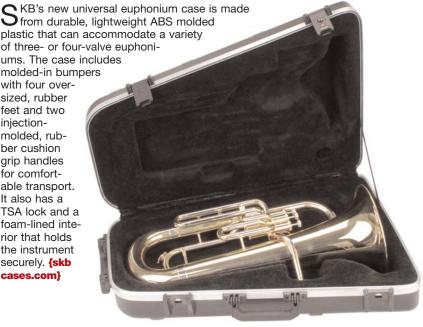
Big, Easy Sound

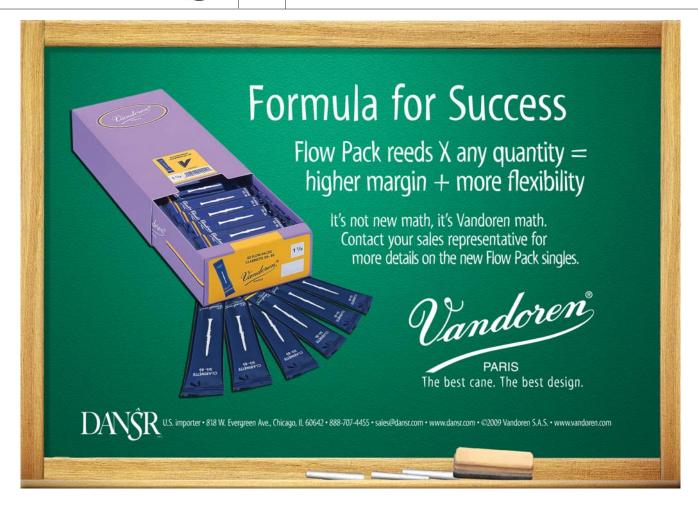
Δ Itus Flutes has released an intermediate line with Azumi flutes. The 2000 and 3000 Azumi models are constructed using 0.958 Brittania silver and feature the Z-cut headjoint, which produces a bigger sound that's easier for musicians to achieve. The flutes are available with inline or offset key configuration and an option for the split E mechanism. {azumiflutes.com}

SKB I EUPHONIUM CASE

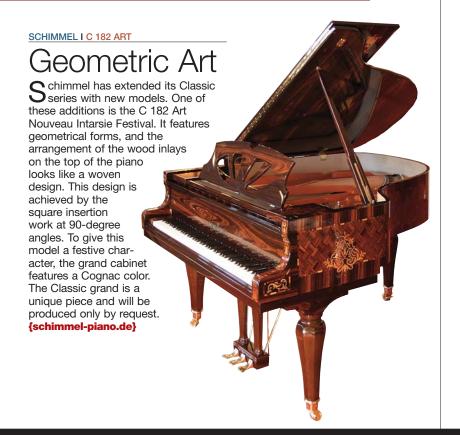
Euphonium on the Move

plastic that can accommodate a variety of three- or four-valve euphoniums. The case includes molded-in bumpers with four oversized, rubber feet and two injectionmolded, rubber cushion grip handles for comfortable transport. It also has a TSA lock and a foam-lined interior that holds the instrument securely. {skb cases.com}











YAMAHA I GC2, GC1, GB1K MODELS

Simple Keys

/ amaha has made three additions to its acoustic piano line. These include the GC2, GC1 and GB1K. The 5-foot, 8-inch GC2 (pictured) features polished ebony; a simpler-style cabinet with straight-leg design; and traditional, synthetic key tops. The 4foot, 11-inch GB1K grand is ideal for those looking for a smaller unit. The 5-foot, 3-inch GC1 model has also been updated with a simpler-style cabinet, sostenuto pedal and softclose fallboard. MSRP: GC2, \$28,195.

{yamaha.com}





STUDIOLOGIC I NUMA NERO

Sexy Stylings

Studiologic's new Numa Nero keyboard controller has Fatar's 88-note grand touch and the new You-Play system, which gives players control of the keyboard's velocity response. Real-time sensing of a user's playing dynamics enables a customizable velocity-response system. Users can design and save more than 20 personalized dynamic curve settings.



Artist



ianist and composer Ronnie Milsap is the newest endorser of the Barcus-Berry 4000 Piano and Harp Planar Wave system.

"There's nothing quite as inspiring as the sound of a Yamaha grand piano and no greater challenge than to reproduce it onstage," Milsap said. "The Barcus-Berry Planar Wave 4000 faithfully captures the full dynamic and tonal range of my C-7 MIDI grand and lets me monitor it at virtually any level without sacrificing fidelity. I can now use virtual technology to support my instrument, not replace it." {musicorp.com}



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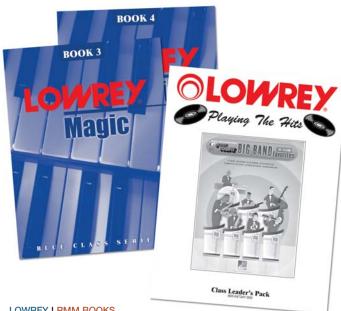
DUCKS DELUXE I GUITAR CHORD, FRETBOARD CHART

Traveling Guitar Chords

ucks Deluxe now offers the Practical Guitar Chord and Fretboard Chart. On

one side are chord diagrams of the most-used guitar chords. On the other side is the guitar fretboard filled in all the way to the 15th fret with the names of each note laid out with the guitar kevs at the top of the chart and the horn keys at the bottom. It also shows bar chords and teaches how to read tab. Printed on recycled card stock, the chord sheet is fullcolor, UV-plastic-coated and drilled for three-ring notebooks, MSRP: \$8,95. {ducksdeluxe.com}





LOWREY I RMM BOOKS

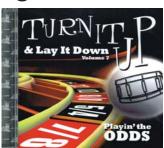
Musical Magic

owrey has expanded and updated all of its Lowrey Magic titles. The course is designed for recreational players and features the necessary tools for RMM classes. It includes class leader guides, a wellness activities guide, class party guide and class member certificates of achievement. The newest series, Playing The Hits, is designed for those who wish to continue beyond Lowrey Magic. {lowrey.com}

HAL LEONARD I 'TURN IT UP & LAY IT DOWN'

Musical Magic

al Leonard recently became the worldwide distributor for DrumFun's Turn It Up And Lay It Down line of playalong CDs for drummers. The series gives drummers learning tools for becoming well-rounded musicians. The series covers a range of styles, including rock, jazz, Latin



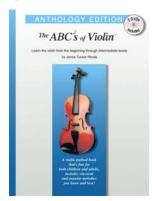
and heavy metal. The newest edition, Vol. 7 Playin' The Odds, is now available. MSRP:

\$12.95. {halleonard.com}

CARL FISCHER I VIOLIN ANTHOLOGY

/iolin ABCs

arl Fischer's The JABCs Of Violin: Anthology Edition is a combination of four publications in the ABCs Of Violin series from string educator and composer Janice Tucker Rhoda. The anthology includes: The ABCs Of Violin For The Absolute Beginner, The ABCs Of Violin For The Intermediate Player and both companion DVDs. The package deal will

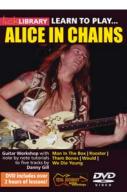


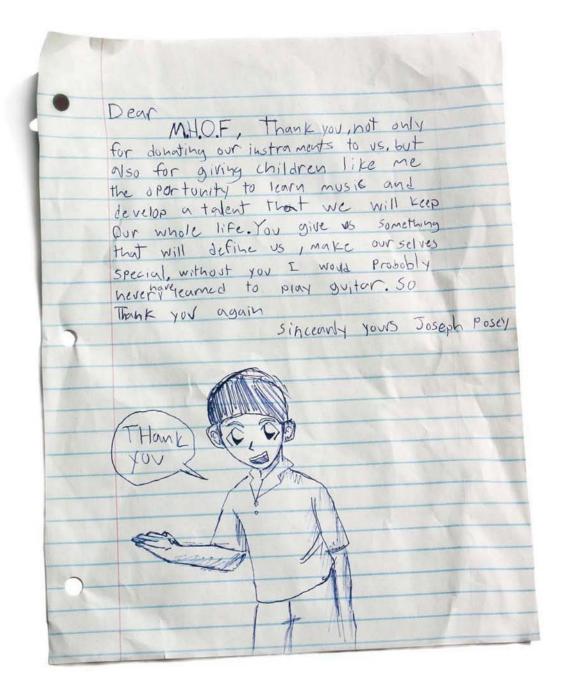
appeal to students and teachers. MSRP: \$29.95. {carlfischer.com}

LICK LIBRARY I LEARN TO PLAY

earning Licks

ick Library has released Learn To Play Alice In Chains. The new DVD provides guitar lessons on five of the band's classic tracks. Danny Gill, one of Joe Satriani's former students, guides players through the DVD and breaks down each track. All aspects of the songs are looked at, including the chorus, verse, intro, solo and bridge. Gill shows how to achieve lead guitarist Jerry Cantrell's distinctive sound. MSRP: \$23.99. {licklibrary.com}



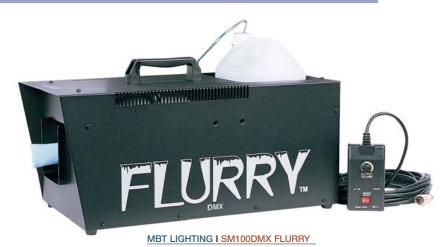


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Snow Patrol

BT Lighting's new SM100DMX Flurry simulates snowfall, which can be regulated by volume or a timer via remote. The DMX input is compatible with any standard DMX controller and occupies two channels for the snow volume and air speed. The Flurry has a three-pin XLR input and output for master/slave control. MSRP: \$399. {mbtlighting.com}



CHAUVET I COLORDASH BLOCK

Added Dash

hauvet has launched Colordash Block, a compact wash that offers high-power output with four separate clusters of LEDs. It comes with seven operating modes and full-color mixing by the but DWY control.

without DMX control. The Colordash can be used as a wash light or can take control of each pod individually. It has built-in automated programs or can be customized. The unit can be back-mounted to a wall or hung on a truss, and the doublebracket voke also serves as a floor stand. {chauvetlighting.com}



MIXVIBES I CROSS PACK

Computer Crossover

The new Cross Pack from MixVibes is a digital vinyl system that lets DJs mix and scratch digital audio files on a PC or Mac using existing turntables or CD players. The Cross Pack includes Cross software, the U46MK2 audio interface, a pair of 12-inch control records and control CDs. Cross works with iTunes, which makes importing tracks and playlists easier. MSRP: Cross Pack, \$349.99; software with control CDs only, \$129.99. {mixvibes.us}



ALLEN & HEATH I XONE: 22

In the Xone

Allen & Heath's new Xone: 22 is a two-channel DJ mixer that offers a "lite" version of the analog Voltage Control Filter system. This provides low-pass and high-pass filters, frequency sweep, and resonance control. The soft-switched effects loop brings in external effects, which are routed back in through the filter system. The mixer is equipped with comprehensive monitoring facilities and is finished with UV-sensitive ink screen for low-light legibility. {xone.co.uk}

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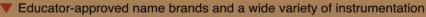
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Tim Coy

Centerville Music Dayton, Ohio

ince the used gear market has Changed due to things like eBay, we don't have the backlog of used stuff sitting in the store like we once did. So, we converted our used storage room into a guitar amp museum. I put up shelves to display the amps. Cost-wise, it was only the shelving and a little bit of my time to do it.

These changes came out of necessity. Our used storage room faced the street window. If it was empty, people would see that, so I had to put something new in there.

We've also moved our repair shop up by the [front] counter. The repair shop works out better near the counter for providing service [to customers], and it gives me easier access to the phone. I've also noticed a lot more people asking about our repair services and an increase in the amount of repair work that we are doing.

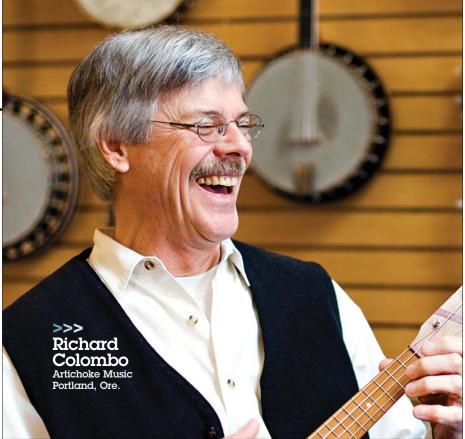
>>> Matt Johnston

Mid Michigan Music Midland, Mich.

Ve've done a number of things this year in our drum and percussion areas. We've set things up in a pyramid formation. All our amplifiers are now in a block formation and organized by product name. The biggest challenge to rearranging the store is finding time between serving customers.

When people walk in, right away they see hundreds of guitars and basses on our guitar wall. We also have a special section that is like a red carpet area for some of the highend guitars. We have a nice velvet rope in front of those.

I think design has a lot to do with store culture and making sure everything is properly organized.



How have you improved your store design this year?

\int e've expanded our | impact?" front room a little bit, especially in the [economic downturn. We thought, "What can we do more?" We set up a complimentary coffee table and have expanded our living room area in the store where we have a nice couch and chairs, so people can hang out and have coffee.

I find furniture at yard sales and Goodwill. The coffee and tea comes from Trader Joe's. It didn't cost us anything and just took a little imagination.

Instead of getting depressed about the economy, we said, "What can we do to make a positive

The whole feng shui thing is important to me. Things really do have a flow. Physical space can be really nice to work in, or it can be challenging.

You walk in, and first you see the area with the table and chairs. Then, we have our book area behind that. Every section flows into another. Then, you walk into a teaching space that is in the middle, between the performance space and store. Beyond that, there are glass doors that go into our performance room, which is a 60-seat space. It's booked almost a year in advance now.

People love [the store]. They love having a place to hang or catch up on the latest song someone wrote. We have a strong songwriting community here. It's a nice vibe. The first thing anyone says when they walk in is, "Ah, this place feels really good." People say this is their home away from home.

We have lots of workshops, song circles, jam sessions and concerts in the evening. Some nights, we have so much going on, we have to hold lessons in the [showroom]. We have a really loyal following. It's a family place, and we are proud of that.

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