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JULY 2013
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A NEW WAY TO WIN?

**BILLY
CUTHRELL'S
RADICAL
PLAN TO
TAKE PRICE
OUT OF THE
BUYING
DECISION**

PAGE 36

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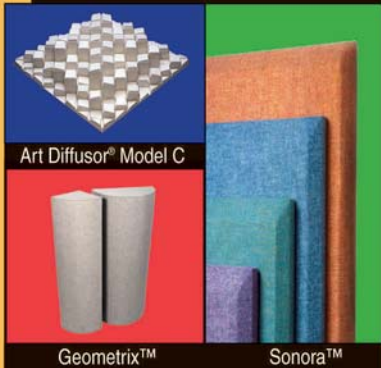
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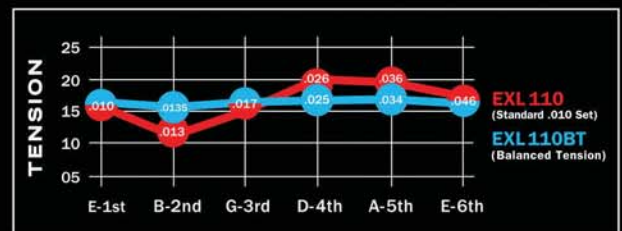


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BY DAVID ZIVAN



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Cover photo by Sahid Limon

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY DAVID ZIVAN

EXTREME MEASURES

Clowns to the left of me. Jokers to the right.

— S. WHEEL

Some of the details are a bit fuzzy now.

I was either on the west coast or the east coast of Florida. The retailer I was talking with was surrounded by MARS locations, or Guitar Centers, or both. We ate Thai, or maybe it was Chinese.

But one thing he told me during that interview 15 years ago has stuck with me as strongly as anything could: “There’s no playing in business,” he said. It’s an echo of a Tom Hanks line in *A League of Their Own* — that there is “no crying in baseball” — and I believe the core of the sentiment is much the same. That besieged retailer was not saying that MI retailing wasn’t often fun. He was saying that the game was real. That the final score would really count.



I’d ask you to keep that set of thoughts in mind as you read our cover story this month, “A New Way to Win?” (page 36). It details what in my view is a rather radical approach to the operation of a music store. Certainly it will not work for everyone, and will not be to everyone’s taste.

But the very ways in which we conduct commerce — the nature and shape of consumer transactions — are rapidly evolving, and not always to the advantage of the small business owner. As startling as Cuthrell’s ideas are, we must give

them a hearing. He’s not playing.

And what I especially like is that he isn’t crying either. In one story he relates, he is dealing with a smartphone wielding customer who is looking for an unreasonable discount. “I had a lady pull out her phone while I was talking to her, take a picture of a Fender guitar, grab the barcode off of it, go on Amazon, and turn around and say, ‘Can you meet this price right here?’” Cuthrell said. “I said, ‘No, I can’t meet that because that’s even below what I paid for it. I can get close.’ So she said, ‘I hate to do it, I can give you the lesson business, but I can’t give you the business to buy this guitar from you.’ And I told her, ‘I can’t blame you! I cannot blame you, because if I was a customer, I would do it too. I want the best deal I can get.’”

No crying. And no anger, despite what must be an all-too-familiar and all-too-frustrating scenario in music retail these days. If it sounds familiar, I urge you to give our interview a read, and let us know what you think.

Speaking of fresh approaches, this month we are pleased to launch a new, recurring feature. From the Top will present what we hope will be a series of candid conversations with some of the industry’s most interesting leaders. Expect smart insights — and, no doubt, some remarks about how they got their start (“from the top,” of course, being where all songs begin). **MI**

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LETTERS

50 Years of Thanks

Our family and the Strait Music Company family sincerely enjoyed the cover story on our store titled, “Family Tradition,” in the June issue of *Music Inc.* It was very nostalgic for myself, but more so for my father, uncle and grandfather as they relived the rich 50-year history of our family business.

We would not be in business today if it was not for our loyal employees and customers. We’d like to send them a very special ‘thank you’ for enriching our lives and business over the last half century.

Our online band and orchestra rentals have launched since the story ran, and we are working day and night to get as much product loaded every day so our online store can debut very soon.

Thanks again — we were very appreciative for the opportunity!

Clint Strait
Strait Music
Austin, Texas

Crowdfunding Advocate

Thank you for the June article “QuNexus Gets a Kick Start,” which covered how Keith McMillen Instruments used the online fundraising program Kickstarter to raise money for the development of our revolutionary QuNexus keyboard controller.

Crowdfunding is a game-changing way for small companies to bring innovative ideas to market and inject some needed excitement back into the creation of new music instruments.

We are proud to announce that on May 21 we began shipping finished QuNexus units to our Kickstarter backers and to customers worldwide.

Keith McMillen
Founder
Keith McMillen Instruments



Reflections on the RPMDA Convention

This year’s RPMDA Convention, held May 2-4 in Columbus, Ohio, was a fantastic, information-packed three-day show. While our attendance was comparable to years past, this year’s number of first timers to the show came to nearly 25 percent.

Many of those newcomers were of the “younger set,” and it was energizing and exciting to interact with them and get their fresh perspectives on the print business.

Several months out of this past year were spent analyzing the businesses of our retail members, and we confirmed that about 80 percent of those dealers are not print-only

dealers. As a result, we featured many programs at this year’s convention focusing on social media and current technology.

The additional track of sessions pertaining to “adjacent” retail areas demonstrated that not only can our members “profit from print,” but they can also add profitability to other areas of their business at the same time.

As always, by the close of the convention, we all agreed on one thing: The music business will always have its challenges to meet, but when we work together — publisher and retailer — obstacles can be overcome much more easily.

Carol Wilbur
President
RPMDA

Strum Up Sales by Joining GAMA

The article, “GAMA Helps Strum Up Sales” in the June issue of *Music Inc.* did a nice job outlining GAMA’s Teaching Guitar Workshops program.

It’s a fact: GAMA teaches teachers, teachers teach kids, and kids and schools buy guitars and guitar products.

The example given in the story regarding Russ McFee of GHS and GAMA and choir director Greg Black is a perfect example of the organization in motion. When the two got together, local dealer Marshall Music sold \$5,250 in gear to Black for his new classroom guitar program.

If I told you that I could invest \$500 of your money and give you back 10 times that much in a few months, you would probably look at me suspiciously. However, that’s exactly what happened with Black — he’s just one of hundreds of school music educators GAMA trains every year.

GAMA membership is a cost-effective way for MI companies to invest in the future of their business and industry, share that investment with their industry peers, and help create music — making opportunities for lots of kids.

We urge every company to join in and invest in the future of the MI industry!

Rob Sulkow
Executive Director
GAMA

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> **Center of the Storm**

GC employees move to unionize, while the company expands
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> **Rochester Rocks**

Green Day guitarist in the House
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> **In Memoriam**

George Quinlan, Sr., and Daniel Palen, industry titans
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RETAIL

AIMM | BY JOHN JANOWIAK

AIMM MARKS 15 YEARS

It was the late 1990s, and retail was entering a new phase. E-commerce blossomed, competition from other industries burgeoned, and consumers suddenly had more choices than ever before. Three veteran retailers — Skip Maggiora, Bob Bankston and George Hines — knew that the changing landscape posed a challenge to their businesses and to the whole music products industry. This was no time to reminisce about the glory days of rock 'n' roll retail. As innovative retailers who shared a passion for their industry, they leapt into action.

“If we were going to grow as an industry, everyone in it needed to work closer together to succeed against the challenges ahead,” said Maggiora, owner of Sacramento, Calif.-based Skip’s Music. “We simply needed to do all we could to meet the higher expectations of our evolving customer base and retail in general.”

And so AIMM, the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants, was born. The goal was simple: to create a group of some of the sharpest retailers and manufacturers in the industry. They intended to work more efficiently and effectively to bring consumers the best products and retail experience possible.



Maggiora, Hines, and Bankston

Since its founding in 1998, AIMM has expanded to include 60 independent retailers, representing close to 200 storefronts throughout the nation (and, according to Hines, between 8 to 10 percent of the industry’s sales volume). “The list of members is made up of a very diverse group of some of America’s best independent music dealers,” Maggiora said. “All share that same passion for the industry as the three of us.” AIMM hand-selects dealers who are progressive, creditworthy, proactive and willing to embrace new ideas. They are larger independents who tend to be the most high-profile dealers in their markets, and many have been in business for three decades or more.

All that experience adds up

to a wealth of expertise, which members readily share. Through regular meetings, conference calls, webinars and a weekly newsletter, they empower each other to provide better value to customers. “No matter what new project or program you’re undertaking, chances are a fellow AIMM member has already been there and done that and is willing to share their experience and knowledge,” said Bankston, a veteran Colorado retailer. “As a result, AIMM members can avoid a lot of trial and error.”

Members share best practices in areas such as operations, finance and sales management. They learn about operational efficiencies to promote growth, hiring the best employees, purchasing and choosing product,

building effective email marketing campaigns, managing inventory and utilizing social media. “And of course working on the e-commerce challenge, helping each other transition and accept the inevitable,” said Hines, CEO of George’s Music, which has 10 locations, in Pennsylvania and Florida. “We have partnered with the NAMM technology committee to help develop XML standards to handle data feeds and speed up the quality and standards for e-commerce growth.”

STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY

AIMM’s membership is a diverse lot, starting with the three founders, who form the group’s executive committee. Prior to starting AIMM, the three met on manufacturer-sponsored trips. “We found ourselves heading to NAMM Shows a couple of days early just so we could spend a few days of quality time together learning from each other,” Maggiora said. In the process, they became fast friends. “Anyone in this industry that knows the three of us may never have guessed that we would be working so closely. We’re three very different individuals with very different strengths and weaknesses. It’s been those unique strengths and

characteristics that have made us stronger as a whole.”

Hines is known as a detailed, strategic planner with a fondness for financial and operational issues. Describing his partners’ strengths, Hines said: “Skip is the ultimate social personality who develops the market. He knows everyone, develops programs like the Stairway to Stardom initiative and is generally a large personality to put a face on AIMM. Bob is the marketing and product development individual who knows how to get the message out and how to think like a consumer.”

Together, they make for a strong team. Meanwhile, all 60 retailer members lend their own areas of expertise to the alliance. “We’ve really expanded our

footprint on the school service side and have learned a great deal from those retailers,” said John Anning, AIMM’s executive director. “That’s been very positive. We have guitar- and drum- oriented stores, we have pro audio oriented stores, we have band and orchestra stores, and we’ve learned best practices that translate very well from one to the other.”

Maggiore echoed that thought. “I was able to comfortably commit to entering the band and orchestral segment because of the opportunity to learn from some of the best band and orchestral AIMM dealers in our industry today,” he said.

Rounding out the picture, AIMM’s membership includes a select group of manufactur-

ers as well as retailers. “We’ve never seen business as dealer-versus-vendor, but instead as dealers and vendors working together with the common objective of best serving the customer,” Bankston said. “With our preferred vendor members, we have created countless high-value proprietary products. This has been a big win for everyone, especially our customers.”

AIMM dealers have participated in more than 30 trade show events with manufacturers. In hundreds of presentations, they’ve shown each other ways to address a changing market. “We have met with dozens of suppliers to learn about their challenges and understand how they do business,” Hines said. “We even spent time with a

few suppliers explaining how retailers look at the industry and consumers, and it builds respect between both parties.”

AIMM members are not the only retailers to benefit from these efforts. Members openly share their experience and knowledge by participating in a variety of industry groups. You’ll see AIMM members giving keynote presentations at industry events, serving on boards and participating in panel presentations.

“In fact, AIMM has hosted events that include retailers other than those in AIMM,” Maggiore said. “AIMM believes that our [future] depends on the ideas and passion of all dealers to help promote a thriving industry for the good of all.” **MI**

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MANHATTAN GC WORKERS TO UNIONIZE; COMPANY OPENS FOUR NEW STORES

As reported in *Rolling Stone* and elsewhere, employees at Guitar Center's flagship location in Manhattan in late May voted to form a union. The move was spurred by what workers say have been declining wages.

Dennis Haffeman, executive vice president of human resources for Guitar Center, told the magazine that the development was "unfortunate." "We're constantly listening to our employees' needs so that Guitar Center can be the best work environment in the music industry," he said.

Guitar Center was purchased by Bain Capital in 2007. The



company's other retail holdings have included Brookstone, Burlington Coat Factory, Sports Authority and Staples.

The unionization effort was supported by the Retail, Whole-

sale and Department Store union (RWDSU). More votes are anticipated at other locations.

The move toward unionization occurs at a time of continued expansion for the retailer. Also

in May, the company opened its 246th, 247th and 248th locations, in Mesquite, Texas; Southington, Conn.; and Bellingham, Wash. A Macon, Ga., location opened in April.



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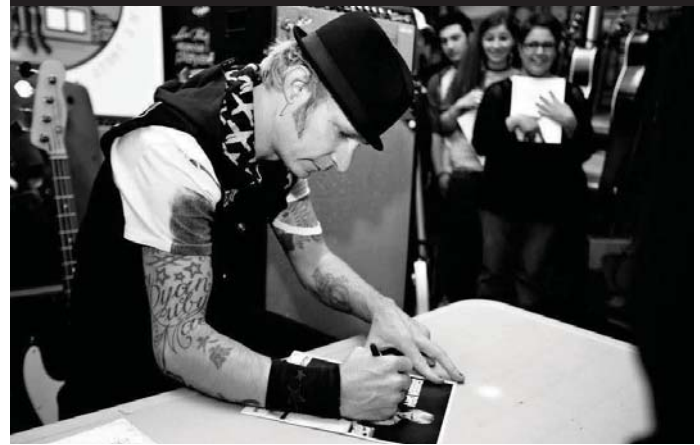
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GREEN DAY IN THE HOUSE

House of Guitars in Rochester, N.Y., hosted Green Day guitarist Mike Dirnt at a meet and greet in April. More than 500 fans showed up for an autograph from the postpunk pioneer, who performed that day at the Blue Cross Arena.




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Dorn Named President/COO at Fletcher Music

Rick Dorn, a 30-year veteran of Fletcher Music Centers (FMC), has been promoted to president and chief operating officer of the 19-store retail music chain that operates throughout Florida and Arizona. Dorn had been FMC's executive vice president since 2011, and will now oversee the company's 100 employees and all daily operations. FMC has 13 stores in Florida and six in Arizona.

Dorn began his career with Wurlitzer Retail Stores in 1974, and joined FMC nine years later. He has held various positions within the Fletcher organization.



Dorn

Full Compass Owner Honored by State Group

Susan Lipp, co-owner and board chair of Full Compass, based in Madison, Wis., was recently honored by Wisconsin Women in Government (WWIG) with their Woman of Achievement Award. Lipp was one of four women chosen statewide, earning recognition for her role in creating the fourth-largest woman-owned business in Wisconsin and for leadership of many non-profit and charitable organizations.



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IN MEMORIAM

George Quinlan, Sr.

On May 11, the music products industry lost a titan. George Quinlan, Sr., founder and chairman of Midwest chain Quinlan & Fabish, died while surrounded by family.

In a message to friends, Quinlan's son, George Jr., noted that shortly before his passing, Quinlan Sr. had enjoyed a family gathering including all five of his children and many of his grandchildren.

Just the week before his death, he had gone to the Kentucky Derby and enjoyed a visit with the company's Omega group in Cincinnati. In the final year of his life he was able to conduct (despite three broken ribs) the VanderCook band at the Midwest Clinic with his namesake grandson, G. Andrew Quinlan III playing the field drum, travel in March to San Antonio for NASMD and welcome his second great-grandchild into the world.

A lifelong professional trumpeter, Quinlan, Sr. held a B.M. and M.M. in Music from DePaul University, where he met his late wife, Lorraine.

Quinlan & Fabish Music Company was founded in 1959 by Quinlan, Sr. and his business partner, Tom Fabish. Now with seven locations, Quinlan & Fabish has been the recipient of numerous industry awards and accolades, including Retailing Excellence Awards from *Music Inc.*



Daniel Palen

Daniel Palen, founder of Palen Music Center, passed away in March. Palen worked as president and CEO of the company for three decades, serving during that time as president of the National Association of School Music Dealers, co-chairman of the Music Achievement Council and a board member of NAMM.

He was married to Sue Palen, who survives him, on October 18, 1957.

Palen graduated from Southwest Missouri State University in 1957 and was a standout musician and golfer. He was in the 135th Division National Guard Band for eight years, and was a director of bands for several high schools and Southwest Missouri State University.





Note From Joe

Have You Heard the One About the Man Who Prayed to Win the Lottery?

Day after day he prayed, "Dear God, help me win the lottery..." After months of prayer, he finally heard a thunderous voice from the sky.

"Yes, I will grant your request to win the lottery, but will you do just ONE thing for me, please?" "Yes, God, anything." "Will you PLEASE go buy a ticket?"

The stage is set for an incredible learning opportunity in Nashville—will you “buy a ticket?” Perhaps that’s a bit of a stretch on how attending Summer NAMM will impact your life, but this much is clear: The wealth of educational opportunities, evening networking events and the chance to see brand-new and established suppliers eager for your business cannot be underestimated.

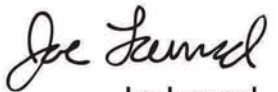
Some of this year’s highlights include:

- **A New Venue:** Summer NAMM moves into the state-of-the-art Music City Center
- **Retail Boot Camp:** This year’s intense pre-show training focuses on “Foot Traffic Formula,” getting buyers geared up for show opening the next day
- **Grand Opening Party:** The fun starts Wednesday night with a “Nashville Tribute to Jimi Hendrix” with Billy Cox and the Gypsies, where you can take in the music with free food and drinks
- **NAMM Retail Summit:** Thursday’s Breakfast Session delivers critical ideas for ending 2013 strong—walk away with a fourth-quarter business plan
- **Insight:** Grab free drinks and food while tuning in to Thursday night’s “Hard-Earned Wisdom from Industry Icons,” moderated by country music legend Vince Gill and Two Old Hippiess’ Tom Bedell

- **Take the Stairs:** World-renowned strategist Rory Vaden puts you on the path to your goals at Friday’s Breakfast Session
- **2013 NAMM Top 100 Dealer Awards:** This Friday night gala honors the industry’s most proactive and innovative music retailers—celebrate and network with peers while you enjoy free beverages and food
- **Best in Show:** Panelists at Saturday’s Breakfast Session provide a snapshot of what to see before you leave Nashville

The opportunity to learn from the best and brightest in our industry might be considered “winning the lottery” of good ideas. Our business is changing—and quickly—and those who seek out solutions and commit to implementing them will have a chance at a much brighter future.

We look forward to three valuable and fun days in Nashville with our progressive dealers and the suppliers who support them. Hope to see you there!



Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO

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Dealer Awards

NAMM **idea center**

RETAIL **BOOT CAMP**
JULY 11-13, 2013

Summer's **insight**

JULY 11-13, 2013 • NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

NAME
NAMM News

July No 2013

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Summer 13
NAMM[®]

insight

**Hard-Earned Wisdom
from Industry Icons**



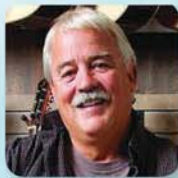
Moderated by
Nashville's Own
Vince Gill
and Tom Bedell

Thursday, July 11 at 6 p.m. • Music City Center, Davidson Ballroom • Nashville, Tennessee

For the first time in history, these interesting, and sometimes outspoken, business leaders will all share a stage for an event guaranteed to both inspire and challenge retailers. We've invited each of these thought leaders to share a personal message with dealers to help further their success—hard-earned wisdom you won't want to miss.



Sterling Ball



Tom Bedell
Co-Host



Jim D'Addario



Fred Gretsch



Henry Juskiewicz



Chris Martin



Hartley Peavey



Bob Taylor



Andy Zildjian

Food and drinks provided courtesy of the generous support of the panelists and their companies.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

**What I've Learned Being an
Online Retailer**

**Lean Strategies
for Retailers**

Succession Planning

Building Your Brand

Creating Value

Leadership through Change

**A New Paradigm
in Tonewood**

Selling Passion

**Lessons I Learned
From My Father**

Panelists and topics subject to change

Event begins at 6 p.m. • Live music, food and beverage provided • Show badges required

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Donates music materials to HOLA
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Names new director
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SUPPLY

FARGEN AMPLIFICATION | BY KATIE KAILUS

IMAGINE GROWTH

It's been a busy 18 months for Fargen Amplification. In addition to striking a deal with **Yoko Ono** and **Live Nation** to distribute its limited edition John Lennon amps, Fargen has also implemented a dealer program, fazing out most of its direct sales (it still has a custom shop). The expansion of the company, founded in 1997 and headquartered in Sacramento, Calif., has been something founder Ben Fargen and partner Marc Reiser have had their eyes on for some time.

"We developed this great boutique niche name, but we found that when we got out into the world, [customers] hadn't heard of us or plugged into our amps," Reiser said. "We are trying to roll this [business] model out and grow it slowly."

But not too slowly. From July 2012 to January 2013, the amp company entered the market in more than 20 countries and is now concentrating on growing in the United States.

"We have been able to increase our volumes, while maintaining our high standard of quality," Fargen said. "Our current focus is on expansion within the U.S. We'd like to have



Ben Fargen with the Lennon amp line

a main dealer[s] in each state, depending on the size and cities in each given state. We've been happy with our global coverage, and are reaching out to the few regions where we don't have dealer coverage."

THE POWER OF LENNON

This past Winter NAMM, Fargen released two series of limited edition John Lennon amps. Both the Lennon Artist series and Imagine series are limited to about 50 models each and hand built by Fargen himself. Before making the amps, the company had to get approval

from Yoko Ono's artwork with his music," Reiser said. "We could frame his artwork in a way that has never been done before — in a way that's unique. The amps are inspired by Lennon's tone, but [using] current day technology."

Reiser said customers and dealers alike have been impressed. "There's been a really strong reception," he said. "Especially when folks get to plug into them. I think because they don't look like a Vox or a Fender Deluxe it has taken people plugging into them to understand how awesome they are."

The Lennon models have been so successful that Fargen plans to add two pedals to the line as soon as this upcoming Summer NAMM. "At minimum, we'll be able to show prototypes and take pre-orders," Reiser said.

LOOKING AHEAD

Aside from the new product offerings, Fargen Amps is planning on keeping its line streamlined in the future.

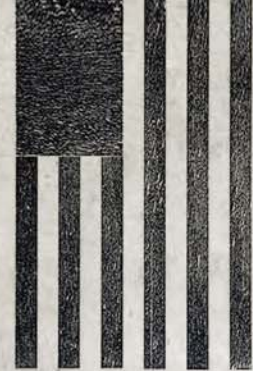
"It's all about growing our brand and reaching more and more players, and introducing them to the Fargen tone," Fargen said. "And we will continue to step up our marketing especially in the digital and social spaces." **MI**

Fargen expands its dealer network to 21 countries with plans to add more

from both Lennon's widow Yoko Ono and entertainment giant Live Nation. Each amp features artwork from Lennon on the front.

"We wanted to combine Len-





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Ultimately, what other people feel about the phrase USA Made doesn't really matter. What matters is what it means to you – as an individual and as a musician. Does it fill you with pride? Does it spark inspiration? It did for us, that's why we created the **American Stage Cable**. The toughest, most reliable instrument and microphone cables built for today's working musician, and winner of a **"Best in Show"** award during the Winter NAMM Convention of 2012.

The GeoTip Connection gives you that satisfying "click" in any instrument, pedal, or amp jack.



For D'Addario, USA Made is a way of life. 95% of our products originate here, with the vast majority designed & manufactured in New York. Why? Not because it's easy (it's not) and not because it's cheap (it's not), but because it comes with access to the most talented people, the best materials and the strictest quality control standards in the world. That level of commitment is important to us every step of the way, from the conceptual stage to the performance stage.

So whether it's the first time, or the 100th time you plug-in and hear that secure "click" on your American Stage Cable, you'll know that you're getting a superior product, designed to reproduce the natural tones of your instrument with zero interference. Guaranteed for life.

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EVENT

Linkin to Perform at ClarinetFest

Larry Linkin, former NAMM president and CEO, has been invited by the International Clarinet Association (ICA) to perform at their ClarinetFest in Assisi, Italy. Since his retirement from NAMM in 2001, Linkin has been a featured entertainer on Holland America and other cruise ship lines as well as a soloist in concert halls around the world, including Carnegie Hall. ClarinetFest 2013, scheduled for July 24–28, is an annual convention featuring four days of artist appearances, manufacturer and support exhibits, and seminars. accademiaitalianclarinetto.com



WEB

Pearl Debuts Cajon Zone

Pearl has launched cajonzone.com, a site featuring Pearl's full range of cajons and accessories for the working percussionist. Users can watch demonstration videos for each instrument performed by Pearl's Glen Caruba, or browse the line of cajon products and accessories with specifics listed under each item. If interested in demoing or purchasing a Pearl cajon, visitors can check out the authorized dealers' page for a complete list of Cajon Zone Dealers in their area who carry Pearl Cajon Zone products. pearlcajonzone.com



ACQUISITION

TEAC Becomes Part of Gibson Family

Gibson successfully completed a tender offer this month through a special purpose company for 54.6 percent of the issued and outstanding shares of Japan's TEAC Corporation. TEAC is an audio and visual equipment company, which manufactures Tascam products. As a result of this transaction, TEAC will become a member of the Gibson family, and it will also remain a listed company on the Tokyo Stock Exchange's first section. gibson.com; teac.com



Woody Moran (left) and John Maher

NAMBACKER | ORGANIZATION

Manufacturer Networking Group Launches

Namba Gear's NAMBACKER B2B, an MI manufacturer and distributor business-to-business networking group, was launched at the past Winter NAMM Show by Woody Moran, owner of Namba Gear, and John Maher, owner of Maher Marketing.

Moran's company, Namba Gear, manufactures backpacks for numerous users including musicians. Moran said he thought it was time the MI industry had a well-established manufacturer business-to-business networking group that assisted with product bundling, endorsers, seasonal promotions and business referrals.

"Because a backpack is one of the most essential yet non-competitive products you can think of in the musical instrument business, it made sense that a backpack manufacturer would get the ball rolling in our industry," Moran said. "To that end, the name 'NAMBACKER' was

conjured, combining the Namba Gear name with the 'got your back' aspect of a traditional business-to-business networking team."

While at The 2013 NAMM Show, Maher recruited 33 NAMM exhibitors as the founding members. To help kick off the relationship, Maher produced videos for each new member, shot in their booth and featuring the company's profile and product benefits. According to Maher, the mission of NAMBACKER B2B Network is to "provide music manufacturers and distributors a platform where its members can increase their business through constructive interaction that allows them to develop long-term relationships."

"The philosophy of NAMBACKER is 'providers profit,'" Maher said. "By providing business referrals and market collaboration to other manufacturers, you will profit in return."

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ELATION | DISTRIBUTION

ELATION GETS CAPTURED

Elation will distribute Sweden-based Capture Visualisation AB's Capture lighting design and documentation software.

Available in versions for Windows and Mac OS X, Capture software gives lighting professionals the ability to work in real-time with all elements of their design, providing a streamlined environment for their creativity.

"We are proud to announce our new partnership with Elation," said Capture

Visualisation's Lasse Berg. "Capture has been around for more than 15 years, and we have focused our attention on making the best possible lighting design program.

"As lighting designers ourselves, we know what users want. A lot of people in the U.S. have downloaded our demo over the years, but being situated in Sweden our product has not achieved its full potential in the U.S. until now. With an established company that has as good a reputation as Elation, we have found the right partner in the Americas. We are looking forward to a good cooperation." [\[elationlighting.com\]](http://elationlighting.com)



Gretsch's top indie dealers at its factory



GRETSCH | FACTORY

GRETSCH HOSTS TOP DEALERS

On April 1, Gretsch Drums invited 14 of its top independent retailers to its factory in Ridgeland, S.C., for three days of events with KMCMusicCorp sales and percussion management in and around the Gretsch facility. As part of a hands-on tour of the drum factory, retailers were able to design their own custom snare drums. Attendees were also eligible to win prizes, including two one-of-a-kind Gretsch USA Custom snare drums created specifically for the event. The group was also treated to a performance by Gretsch artist Keith Carlock, as well as a guided tour of nearby Savannah, Ga.

"Each aspect of the trip was very informative and enjoyable," said Peter Treuden of Interstate Music, a division of Cascio Music


Company. "I came away with a much better understanding and appreciation of Gretsch Drums. I was extremely impressed with the quality of the products and the process of how they are made. Simply great craftsmanship."

"Gretsch Round Badge independent drum retailers represent Gretsch Drums in the best possible light," said John Palmer, Gretsch director of product. "This event brought supportive dealers together to celebrate Gretsch Drums, develop new Gretsch strategies and share information in a relaxed and enjoyable setting. Keith Carlock was musically inspiring as always, especially with this group setting of Gretsch devotees and Gretsch factory staff."

[\[kmcmusiccorp.com\]](http://kmcmusiccorp.com)

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MIGHTY BRIGHT | LEGAL

Mighty Bright Wins Against Counterfeiters

Mighty Bright has won a battle against unlawful copycat distributors. Mighty Bright's victory occurred at the recent Musikmesse in Frankfurt. Several unauthorized manufacturers, attempting to capitalize on Mighty Bright's LED music lights, exhibited imitation lights under a variety of brand names.

After the infringing companies failed to heed court orders stemming from the 2011 Musikmesse preliminary injunction, Mighty Bright enlisted legal assistance to compel cooperation. On April 11, Mighty Bright's attorney and a German high court bailiff visited the Musikmesse show booths of the violating companies and served cease-and-desist warnings. [\[mightybright.com\]](http://mightybright.com)



ALFRED | OUTREACH

Alfred Helps Out HOLA

Alfred Music recently donated more than \$8,000 worth of music education materials to nonprofit Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), which provides local underserved youth with academic, arts and athletic programs in the Rampart District. Members of the Alfred Music team visited HOLA's music program to meet the students and staff, and present them with sheet music, songbooks, and method books.

"What's wonderful about HOLA is that we offer free and [exceptional] programming, providing opportunities our youth cannot get anywhere else, inside or outside of school. Support from the community, like Alfred Music's donation, is how we're able to do a lot more with a lot less," said Lee Schube, communications director for HOLA. "The students are learning skills that they will take with them through their life."

"We are so happy to share our resources with this great organization," said Alfred Music CEO Ron Manus. "Each time we are able to help out, we get one step closer to helping the world experience the joy of making music." alfred.com

DENIS WICK | AWARD

DENIS WICK RECEIVES AWARD FROM QUEEN

Denis Wick was recently awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade 2013. This award is one of Britain's most coveted business awards, and offers recognition for some of the U.K.'s most successful companies.



Announced on the Queen's birthday, April 21, the award was given to Denis Wick for its achievements in the export market. Over 80 percent of the company's production is sold overseas.

"It's very exciting to see the recognition that Denis Wick is earning," said Richard Galime, Denis Wick product specialist. "I'm proud to be working with a company based in a country that is one of our own nation's best trading partners." deniswickusa.com



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NAMM | PERSONNEL

NAMM NAMES NEW DIRECTOR OF TRADE SHOW OPERATIONS

NAMM has appointed Cindy Sample director of trade show operations. Sample comes to NAMM from her previous position as operations director for Nielsen Expositions, where she worked on more than 100 trade events with Outdoor Retailer, ASD and Interbike amongst others.

“Cindy’s reputation as a creative, innovative and visionary professional, as well as her 18 years of trade show operations experience will bring real value to our global membership and the industry,” said Joe Lamond, president and CEO of NAMM.

Sample will oversee the production and implementation of the annual NAMM shows and the daily operations and operational contracts negotiations for those shows. namm.org



APPOINTMENTS

ADJ Names New President

Toby Velazquez has been named president of American DJ, Elation and Acclaim Lighting.

Velazquez, who joined the company shortly after it was started in 1985, has served the ADJ Group in a wide variety of capacities.

“Toby has been a key part of our company from its earliest days,” said Chuck Davies, founder and CEO of the ADJ Group. “He’s demonstrated extraordinary talent and leadership qualities in every job he’s done, and his passion for excellence is second to none. Based on his abilities and track record, I’m extremely confident that he’s the right person to lead ADJ, Elation and Acclaim Lighting into the future.”

“Our company has been built on innovation,” Velazquez said. “I welcome this opportunity, and I’m thankful to be surrounded by such a dedicated group of talented co-workers.”




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Hal Leonard has promoted Mark Mumford to the newly created position of managing director for Europe. Mumford will now oversee all aspects of the company’s business in the U.K. and throughout Europe.

Elena Ryan has been named national education marketing director for **ChordBuddy**.

Waves Audio has expanded its professional team with the appointment of three additional product specialists, including Kevin Stanley, Johnny Mann and Michael Pearson-Adams.

Alfred Music recently named Andrew Surmani chief marketing officer. Surmani will lead Alfred’s global marketing and sales strategy and growth, focusing on creating synergy between the sales and marketing teams, product line teams and international offices.



Musikmesse Russia show floor

NAMM | SHOWS

NAMM'S RUSSIA SHOWS SEE INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE

NAMM Musikmesse Russia and Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia 2013 welcomed 130 companies from nine countries to the second annual event held May 16-19 at the IEC Expocentre in Moscow.

The shows saw a 49-percent increase in attendance over last year's debut effort. The increase in attendees of both shows comprised 9,281 unique visitors, many returning for multiple days, making the total number of visits 12,601.

Exhibitors included Taylor Guitars, Roland Music, Hal Leonard, Music Sales, König & Meyer, Karl Höfner, MixArt (Dean Guitars, Marc Bass), Artimusic (Casio, Sigma Guitars), Arsenal Music (Jupiter, Hercules, Schecter, Ashton), Pearl River, Grand Mystery (KAWAI, Ernie Ball, Music Man), and Avallon (ESP, Blackstar, Buffet Crampon, Miraphone, Paxman).

The three-day Prolight + Sound NAMM Russia, which

focuses on technologies and services for production and events was held May 16-18 in the Expocentre, and featured such exhibitors as Panasonic, Clay Paky, Sonoruss (L-Acoustics) and RutonS (ElectroVoice).

"This is a big, new market for us, so this is a great opportunity to talk to the customers and present our great guitars to this market," said Taylor Gui-

The shows saw a 49-percent increase in attendance over last year's debut effort

tars' Frank Stevens. "The big advantage of the show is definitely to demonstrate our guitars to the dealers and distributors in person. They can touch the guitars, they can smell the guitars, they can actually see them. It's very important to touch and feel them. That's different from seeing a picture on a website."

{namm-musikmesse.ru}

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IDEAS

Inside **IDEAS** > Lessons Learned Page 32 > My Turn Page 34

IN THE TRENCHES | BY MYRNA SISLEN

LEAVE YOUR STORE!

When I bought Middle C Music 10 years ago, I didn't know anything about the music business, music products or even print music. I had a lot to learn, and I had to learn it quickly. I decided to listen to Tony Robbins, who says that you don't have to reinvent the wheel: If you want to know something, go to someone who is doing it well and copy what they do.

As I've noted before, attending our industry's events made all the difference for me.

My first year in business I went to Summer NAMM, Retail Print Music Dealers Association's (RPMDDA) annual convention, Winter NAMM and National Association School Music Dealers (NASMD) convention, with a visit to the annual New York International Gift Fair thrown in for good measure.

And for all these years I have wondered how store owners manage without attending these shows and classes. I have always speculated, but never been able to put my finger on the answer, until I was speaking with Gayle



Attending conventions can have a positive effect on your business smarts as well as your bottom line

Beacock of Beacock Music at the fall RPMDDA board meeting. We were discussing musically themed jewelry accessories in her store, and I asked her how she got new products without going to the gift shows.

She told me, "I don't."

Well, that sure answered my question. Without leaving our stores and attending our industry shows, there is no way we can know what is new and innovative in our industry. How can we find that one item that will sell like crazy and excite every customer? And don't even get me started on attending the classes offered at these conventions. I credit a large portion of my success to what I have learned at our conventions and classes.

THE PAY OFF

I can hear your objections already: "I've already been in business for so long. I used to go to the conventions, but there is nothing more that I can learn."

I admit that I think that way, too. But then I go anyway and invariably, within the first day, I will find the answer to a question that has been bothering me, or solve a problem that I thought couldn't be solved.

A good example of this was a few years ago at the RPMDDA convention in Milwaukee. The first activity was a trip to the Hal Leonard headquarters. We all got on the bus, and I said to Beacock, who happened to be sit-

ting in front of me, "I am having real trouble sending out e-mail newsletters because they are all bouncing back as spam." She said, "Use Constant Contact." That was the answer I needed, and my problem was solved. And quite frankly, that paid for the trip. All in the first day.

If I had not left my store and gone to that meeting, I don't know when or how I would have solved that problem. I can't tell you how many times that has happened. Even when I don't have a specific problem to solve, I always, and I mean always, come away with important information that makes my store better and makes me more money.

You have to leave your store to improve it. It was legendary Hollywood costume designer Edith Head who said, "If you want to make a million, you have to look like a million." Spend the money, take the time, and take advantage of the many conventions and shows that our industry offers.

In fact, Gayle Beacock and I will be attending the New York International Gift Fair next summer. **MI**

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

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Giving It 110 Percent

How hard do you work at your business? Do you put in the same amount of effort that you'd like to see from the people working for you? Are you all that you can be?

Twenty-first century business dictates the need to maximize the efficiency of your business. You are rightfully trying to get the most from the fewest people ... insisting that they work at full capacity in order to maximize your return on the investment you make in them. As we fight for every last dollar of profit, we can ill-afford people wasting time or being focused on anything except making money for your company.

The question is: Do you hold yourself to the same standards of efficiency?

Before you decide that this is the article where you will choose to disagree with me, let me share one simple, but embarrassing fact. When I owned my own company, I often described myself as being my own toughest boss. I said it because I believed it. I worked long, hard hours. I never stopped thinking about my business, even when I was at home. There was nothing I wouldn't do for that company.

And then, a funny thing happened. I went to work for someone else, and discovered that I had a whole other level of work ethic. It's not that I put in more hours than I used to, and it's not that I'm any more consumed with the job. But my focus is notably sharper and the efficiency with which I dispatch my work is demonstrably improved. Working for someone else has improved my game and has me working at 110 percent, exceeding what I previously believed was my maximum output.

Here's an analogy that you may find helpful. I remember joining a health club and being trained on all of the Nautilus equipment. Once I finished the orientation, I began working out on my own, and I did it religiously — never letting anything interfere with my routine. I was proud as the weeks and months ticked by, and I was able to increase the weights on each machine. It was remarkable how I was progressing. Then one day, the guy who originally trained me stopped me as I was working on one particular machine. He noticed that I was pulling my elbows in and had shifted my body on the

machine. Once he adjusted my form, I was somewhat shocked to realize that I could no longer lift all that weight, and that my lifting capacity was back in the range where I had started. I was spending a lot of time, but not making a lot of progress ... and really not doing very much good.

What are the equivalent bad habits that you have developed over the years? It's human nature to take the course of least resistance, without much thought for the ultimate impact of such involuntary actions. You're putting in your time, but are you accomplishing your mission? Do you choose to work on internal policies instead of focusing on how to increase profits? Do you default to spending your time speaking with your stock broker or your real estate agent, instead of finding ways to nurture relationships with your customers?

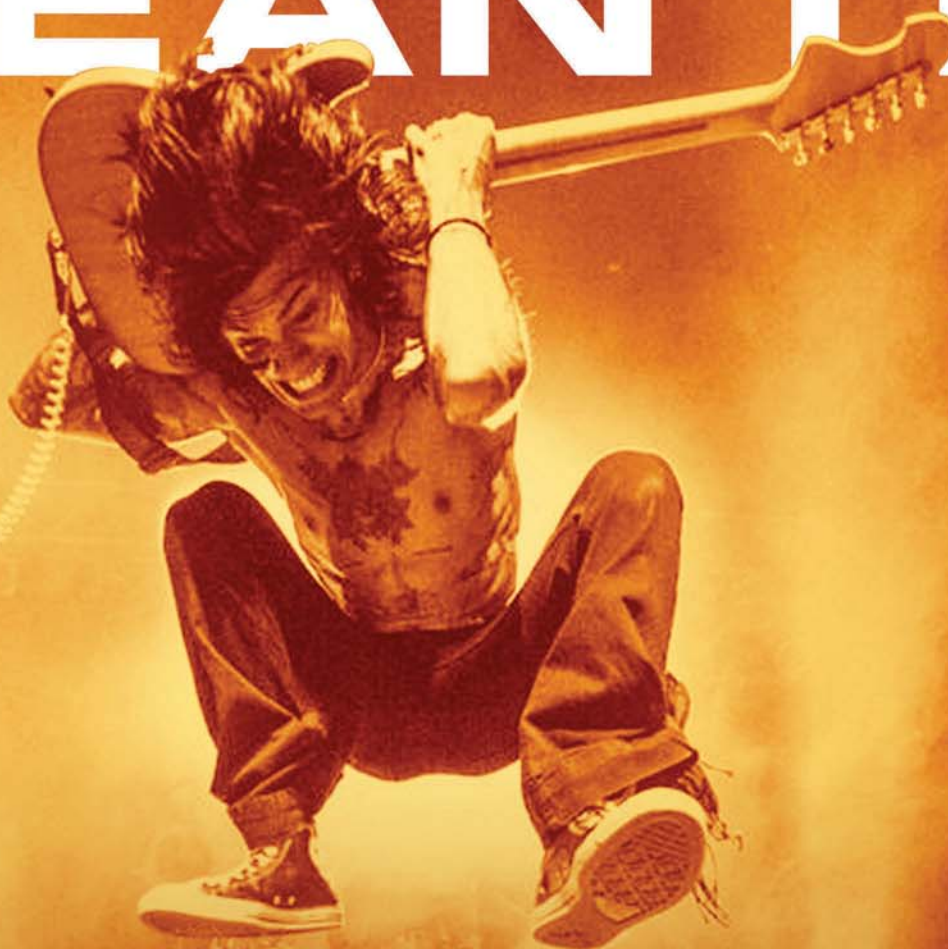
It takes a lot of personal discipline to force yourself to focus on the things that will benefit your business the most, rather than spend your time on the things you prefer to do that may have less impact. But like exercise with bad form, misguided work only wastes time. Investing your time wisely on the things that matter the most will help tone your bottom line. **MI**

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



It's human nature to take the course of least resistance, without much thought for the ultimate impact

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MY TURN | BY TRACY LEENMAN

Start 'Em Young

One challenge we face as a relatively new company is getting our name out in the community — creating visibility, and the “buzz” that will generate interest and bring potential customers into our store. Especially during the summer months, when laying the groundwork for back-to-school sales is paramount, our goal is to promote a feeling that *something’s always going on* over there at Musical Innovations. This involves seeking creative ways to promote our “brand” — to promote our company as a family-friendly place that is actively engaged in area schools and in our community-at-large. And, to differentiate Musical Innovations from other music retail stores in our area.



This past year, we have had a number of successful promotions that have improved our name recognition, increased our store traffic and helped us show almost a 100-percent increase in rentals over the previous year. These are not promotions that generate immediate sales dollars; rather, they are events that are geared towards building long-term relationships with families with young children, who can potentially become loyal customers as their families become increasingly involved with music.

JOIN STUFF

Do you have a local chamber of commerce? If so, join! Our town has a very active chamber, whose members make a point of doing business with other chamber members. Several times a month, the chamber hosts Business After Hours events at various members’ businesses; these events are always well-attended and are a great way for members to learn about each others’ companies.

Last August, two weeks before school began, we hosted one — a family-oriented evening that was co-sponsored by a local fast-food restaurant. We had a hot dog bar, free face painting and an instrument “petting zoo” inside the store. Inflatables, a bubble machine and even a “Tater Tot” character out in the parking lot drew passers-by into the store. As with every community event in which we participate, we handed out music advocacy information, MI logo pencils and

coupons for future visits to our store. Our relationship with the Chamber has brought us many new customers, and has certainly increased our visibility in the community.

HELP GIVE A HEAD START

Our Start Right! Band and String Camps are held in early August for students starting band or strings in the fall. We begin promoting these camps in the spring, sending home fliers to rising 6th graders via our county’s elementary music teachers. Over the summer, the middle school band and string teachers continue sending out our information to their future beginners. Since the teachers have seen the positive effect our camps have had on retention, they are extremely supportive.

These camps run from 9 a.m. to noon, for one week; campers have the opportunity to try out all the instruments that will be offered to them as beginning band or string players, and to learn the basics of music notation and theory, instrument assembly and care, posture and holding position. Refreshments and game time break up the morning for campers. By the end of the week, each student can play the first few notes on his chosen instrument, giving him a little “head start” as he enters school in the fall. A mini-recital on Friday morning gives the students

Since the teachers have seen the positive effect our camps have had on retention, they are extremely supportive

»»» IDEAS

a chance to demonstrate what they have learned, and gives parents confidence that their child can succeed in music, and will enjoy their musical pursuits.

We hand out coupons to encourage campers to return to us for their back-to-school needs. Each year, 100 percent of our campers have chosen to rent or purchase from us — and many take private lessons with one of the instructors they met during camp week.

SUPPORT YOUR SCHOOLS

Our county's elementary music teachers hold monthly department meetings, which offer these teachers the Continuing Education Units needed to keep their teaching certifications current. There are six meetings per school year, and each teacher is required by the school district to attend at least three. At the request of the department head, these meetings are held in our store, so that teachers can meet at a central location. Then, we also have an opportunity to present new products and teaching materials to the teachers, and to help them get acquainted with our store.

At times, meetings have featured national-level clinicians, such as Sharon Burch (Freddie the Frog) and Myra Murray — at no charge to the teachers, of course. Best of all, it gets teachers into our store on a regular basis, and helps them feel comfortable coming here. These events have resulted in increased sales among the elementary music teachers — and offered us access to many young children (our future band and string customers) as well.

ONE TIME, AT BAND CAMP

During high school Marching Band Camp weeks in July, we offer free pizza lunches for area marching band members. Band camps usually run from 9 a.m. until noon, and then 2–5 and 6–9 p.m., for the last two weeks before school starts. We invite the students to come by from noon to 2 p.m. for a free lunch, along with the opportunity to try out a selection of step-up

and pro instruments.

Because the afternoons are so very hot here in South Carolina, students enjoy the respite indoors, in air-conditioned comfort.

All of the families who come to these events end up renting or leasing from us

And of course, they love the free pizza and sodas! We host a different section each day (Monday: Flutes Gone Wild, Tuesday: Sax Attack, and so on), and offer discounts on music and accessories for that day only, for that

particular instrument. At times, we invite guests — such as our manufacturers' reps, or guest artist/clinicians — to talk about instruments, and introduce new products. Each summer, these events bring us a number of step-up sales, and also help us build relationships with young musicians who will have musical needs all year long.

OPEN YOUR DOORS

To reach out to rising band and orchestra beginners, we hold open house events all spring and summer, geared to students from specific schools. The school mascot and school colors are featured in the store decorations, and we offer extra discounts for wearing school colors. We provide mouth-piece testing and instrument fitting, and give out coupons along with information about the benefits of studying music. Middle school directors are happy to help promote these events (and several often attend!), and parents gain additional reassurance that signing their children up for music was a good idea. As with our summer camps, 100 percent of the families who come to these events end up renting or leasing from us, and many sign up for private lessons, too.

DO IT NOW

Why wait until fall? Why not reach out to families with school-age children all year long? Why not present your company as an exciting, engaging place where hands-on musical experiences are always available and where *something's always going on?! MI*

Tracy Leenman is the owner of Musical Innovations in Greenville, S.C.

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A man with short dark hair, wearing a red t-shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up. He is looking towards the right of the frame with a thoughtful expression. His arms are crossed, and he is wearing a black watch on his left wrist. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The lighting is soft, coming from the left, highlighting his face and the texture of his shirt.

A NEW WAY TO WIN?

*BILLY
CUTHRELL'S
RADICAL
PLAN TO
TAKE PRICE
OUT OF THE
BUYING
DECISION*

Times are tough, no matter what the pundits say. Customers are checking prices right on your retail floor — high-tech showrooming that threatens entire categories of business. The encroachment of Amazon into the music product space continues unchecked.

And **Billy Cuthrell** — owner of Progressive Music Center in North Carolina, and a regular columnist for *Music Inc.* — is not going down without a fight.

He spoke at length with **Frank Alkyer** about some of the things he is doing to reinvent his business. The ideas are intriguing, maybe controversial, certainly radical. But as he put it: “The way things are going, something’s got to change.”

MUSIC INC. So you’ve figured it out, huh? How to combat showrooming and price wars and the vanishing of margin?

BILLY CUTHRELL I wouldn’t necessarily say figured it all out, but our industry, especially retail, needs a facelift. This program started last December, as kind of a holiday promotion. I’ve been beta-testing this thing for a little over a year now. It has gone from beta-testing into regular practice.

Essentially what I did was look at the way the cell phone industry worked with contracts and subsidizing equipment and tweaked that model to fit what we wanted to do in our industry, in regards to moving drums and guitars. The United States is the only country where you have to buy your cell phone and service agreement from the same place. When I went to buy my new Apple iPhone, I told the guy I don’t really want to buy a service contract. The guy said if you don’t buy a service contract, the phone is going to cost you about \$900. If you sign a two-

year service contract, the same phone will only cost \$199.

About a week later, I was in my shop, and a lady comes in interested in a drum set for her kid. She said he was kind of a beginner, and she couldn’t see putting a lot of money into a drum set.

MI Yeah, that sounds pretty familiar.

BC I just looked at her and said, “How about if you pay \$399 for it?” She said, “But the price tag says \$1,099.” I said “Yes, but if you sign a 12-month lesson commitment contract, I’ll give it to you for \$399.”

MI Where did that number come from?

BC \$399 is what I paid for it. That’s our dealer cost.

So I signed her up instantly. There was no more negotiating. It was like a switch turned on and the haggling went out the window. There was no “Let me search online” or “Let me look around.”

You do not have to retrain the

thinking process of a customer. The cell phone industry already trained them to understand the subsidy model.

I was talking to our sales rep from Mapex, Mike Carter. He was a rep for another drum company that we carried before he started at Mapex. Mike told me that we have sold threefold our entire relationship with DW Pacific — in one year. He said, “I don’t know what you’re doing with Mapex. I don’t really care what you’re doing. But keep doing it, because you are killing it.”

MI Sure. You’re turning like crazy. But what about the margin you’ve eliminated? I mean, you’re making nothing at all on the sets, right?

BC In some instances. Let’s say we get a great deal on closeouts plus freight allowances, then we can still make some small margins, but we also look at making margins with add-ons. When a customer spends a fraction of what they initially think they will have to spend when they walk in, it makes add-on sales

much easier. The thinking is, “I just saved almost \$900, so of course I can spring for upgraded cymbals, a nice amp or a hard case.”

It’s not just drums — it’s guitars, basses, amps, keyboards. Any instrument, if they commit to a one-year lesson agreement. We even have some equipment where, if they commit to an agreement, we give it to them for free.

MI You ... you do what?

BC Dean had some clearance guitars that they were just blowing out, getting rid of them for the next year’s model, and we got them for 80 bucks a pop. They were still retailing for almost \$300, but we got them for \$80. So if you signed up for a 12-month lesson commitment, the guitar was free. We gave you the guitar.

MI That kind of dollar figure seems a bit more easy to swallow.

BC More sales follow. You’ve gotta buy an amp. So all we’re doing is subsidizing the big pur-

chase. What it's done is actually given us our margins back, just spread out over the course of 12 months. There's lots of room here to make the program customizable and scalable for just about any situation.

For example, we can do a rent-to-own on gear that has been sitting around for too long. Rent the gear to the customer, then when they are ready, we roll them from the rental contract into our Instrument/Lesson Package Program. We still sell it at cost minus what they paid in rental fees with a 12-month lesson agreement. In that scenario, we get the rental money up front and then we have a 12-month lesson commitment after the rental agreement.

We've not lost a penny up front in inventory — and what the program has done is driven our retention rates for students to almost 99 percent.

MI That high? Why is that?

BC They're in a contract. They don't have to come, but they still have to pay for it. It's just like a cell phone — we even have an early termination fee. We had a kid come in last week and buy out the remainder of his plan.

The beauty of that is the teacher still gets paid for the lessons he didn't have with the student, plus we turn around and rebook that teacher with a new student in the same time slot, hopefully on another 12-month lesson contract. He can double his money.

MI So you must be charging a rate for your lessons that makes it work for you and for the teachers.

BC That's the thing — you've got to figure out what the cost per lesson is. You have to know, across the board, whether it's a guitar teacher or a drum teacher,

just what your cost to give a lesson will be.

In a quick glance, I can look at a student's situation, and know if this student stays with a particular teacher we're still gonna be profitable over 12 months, but we're gonna be only 40 percent. But all the teachers negotiate different rates. So I know that if I put him in there with another teacher we're gonna be 60 percent profitable. So the hope is that I can put the student on contract with the teacher that gives us the 60-percent profit on the lessons.

MI I take it that your teachers are independent contractors.

BC Absolutely.

MI Does it impact your relationship with them very much?

BC Recently we had a teacher who was asking about a raise. I sat down with him, pulled up another teacher's schedule and said I will show you how many guaranteed one-year commitments this teacher has. That guy had 48 students. Now, of the 48 students, 37 were one-year lesson contracts. They're not going anywhere. So that means during the summer, his students may not be here, they may be on vacation, but they're still paying tuition.

This guy looking for the raise had three students, and I explained to him that his rate was too expensive for us to keep putting 12-month lesson commitments with him. When we sell a Casio keyboard, and we have to recoup the loss in profit margins on that keyboard over 12 months, we can't recoup it with the rate we were paying him.

Now, I said, if you want to renegotiate for a lower rate, I will guarantee you that we will start putting more contracts with you.

Then you'll be guaranteed the income plus the students — even in the summer. They say OK, 90 percent of the time.

MI What has been the reaction of the students to all this?

BC When people come into Progressive Music Center, we're not going to just say, "Well, if you're a student here you get a special student discount." What you get is a hell of a discount! You can buy equipment below what you can find it for on the Internet or anywhere else for that matter. Plus, you get all the other things

only the instrument lesson packages program. I'm advertising some things as 70 percent off so there is absolutely no advertising of a Fender Strat pack that I buy for \$129, and the MAP is \$199. There is absolutely no advertising of \$129, anywhere. You can't find it.

MI There's no price on it.

BC That's right. We just put percentages.

MI It's not dissimilar to the pricing you see on daily deal sites.

BC Yeah, I hear from reps all

NOT ONLY ARE WE MAKING A PROFIT ON THE LESSONS, WE'RE ALSO MAKING A PROFIT ON ACCESSORIES

that go along with it.

Freemiums, is what I call them. We had some Pacific Z5 drum kits for the holidays — free if you sign up for a 12-month lesson plan.

MI No way everyone is going to get on board with that.

BC No. Some manufacturers hated it off the bat. They said, "You can't do that — you're violating MAP." And I said, "Show me where we are violating MAP?" They responded with, "Well, you're advertising." But I'm not advertising the price —

the time that MAP is the "new street" price.

MI Any other interesting developments with suppliers?

BC We have done fantastic with this program. I used to have to go out and try to get manufacturers to even talk to me, because I was a school. I've had several in the past that I couldn't even get on the phone, much less get their voicemail.

I've got manufacturers calling me now, through word of mouth. I have reps from major manufacturers on the phone, saying,

"Hey, I want to get my stuff in your shop. I've heard about your program. It's really cool. I'd love to do something with you guys."

MI What's been the overall impact on the lessons program?

BC Word getting out works both ways. Now what's happened is some kid's saying, "Man, check out this drum set I've got." Blows away the drum set his buddy's got. And his buddy says we had to pay \$500 or \$600 or \$1,000 for mine, and this kid says well, I only had to pay \$399 for mine, plus these cymbals. Oh, and by the way I'm taking lessons. Check out this awesome roll or fill I'm doing here.

So that gets out and then we get phone calls like, "Hey, you've got some kind of lesson deal going on that we can get a free instrument if we sign up for lessons?" So then we explain it to them.

We're also hearing, "You know, we heard that Chuck was really good. Is he a good teacher?"

So, not only are you getting the word about the equipment out ...

MI You're getting the gear, the teacher and the brand.

BC That's right. They've got to get on board because they're locked into a year. Instead of kids coming in and getting three or four weeks into it and deciding they don't like it anymore and leaving, they are actually forced to do it. In other words, the whole instant gratification thing is out the window. They've got to stay long enough to figure out "I DO like this, I CAN play this."

Now they're vested in it. They've got that contract, they've got to be there, they're paying for it no matter what. I've got to show up.

Karate schools have been doing this for years. Hey, come in, take karate — we'll give you a free uniform. And then you come back every month for a black belt. All we're doing is the same kind of thing. We're just giving you equipment. We're making sure you have a quality piece of gear, and are taking a quality, high-end lesson in order to play your gear the best you can. Learn, play, perform.

MI How is it being received by staff?

BC You don't even have to retrain your

staff. Just like the cell phone customer, your staff knows it already. When we got together and I announced the program, I said, "Everyone knows how the cell phone industry works, right?" They all said, "Yeah, of course." I said, "We're going to do the same thing in this industry."

They immediately responded with some questions. Mostly, "We're going to substi-

dize instruments? How does that work?" My training was cut in half because they already knew the fundamentals of how the program would work from the years they have been doing cell phone contracts.

MI And the teachers?

BC Our teachers love what it's done for their bottom line. It has solidified their student

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base. All those holes they used to have here and there. They don't have that.

MI What do you do about make-up lessons?

BC We still have a make-up policy. We offer make-ups for students with a death in the family or weather conditions or if the teacher is out sick. The only thing we don't offer make-ups for is our group classes, and

we don't do a recital for our group classes because they're so cheap — they're \$15 for a one-hour class.

And that's also a selling feature for private lessons. If you do the private lesson for \$28.50 for half an hour, then you get your regularly occurring voluntary recital, and you get your make-up lesson policy. You get a tailored program specific to you.

Another cool thing: Let's say you've got a 4-4:30 student, and then you've got a 4:30-5 student. Well, your 4-4:30, he's on a 12-month lesson. Your 4:30-5 was just a monthly student, not on any lesson commitment, and he'll leave. So now you've got that open slot. How long has that kid been here that has a contract? Well, he's been here seven months now. Really? Is he playing on a pretty good level? You think he could do an hour? Yeah, I think he could definitely do that.

Well, let's talk to the parents and tell them, "Hey — you've been here seven months, you've got a couple months to go on your contract, and we think he's advanced enough where he can handle one-hour lessons. He's playing the material enough, we think he can handle that, and we think he's at that point where we can bump him up. Plus, you get a discount if you move to a one hour lesson." They bump that kid into the one hour slot and we just filled a gap — with a 12-month lesson commitment student no less.

MI Nice.

BC Once they're in it's easier to get them to come in.

WHAT ABOUT PROFIT?

MI I'm still bothered by the trade-off. You don't have that profit. Seems like a big risk.

BC It can be, but let's look at the profit margins. Let's just use Mapex Voyager kits as an example because we sell a lot of those. The kits come with cymbals, seat, drums and all your hardware — everything in the box. Our dealer cost is \$399. I think they MAP around \$699, so it's a \$300 profit, if we can sell it for that. A lot of people come in and they found it somewhere online and we've got to match that price or whatever, and we're not guaranteed to get them as a student, or they may buy the drum kit, play for a few months and then leave.

So, what we've seen is if we can lock them in on that 12-month contract, with \$399 up front, we've already recouped. We're even at that point.

MI You've turned the inventory.

BC Right. Then we charge a registration

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fee of \$25 when they sign up. So now we're \$25 up. Then, they've got to buy a practice pad and drumsticks. Throughout the 12 months teachers are saying, "Man, you know what — your drumsticks are shot. You know what — your drumheads are shot. Your drumheads need tuning."

MI They're selling.

BC So not only are we making a profit on the lessons, we're also making a profit on the sale of the accessories. The disposable razor blade of the industry, we're selling the hell out of them. We're actively pushing the accessories. We're not going to sell you a drum set like that and then let it go to crap. You've got to change the oil in your car. Same thing — gotta change the oil in the drum set.

And there again, we know what the cost for a lesson is going to be every time that teacher meets that student. We are actually grossing more in that half hour, on average, over 12 months at \$114 per month. Over 12 months we're doubling what we would make off that one set in profit up front.

MI How do you work the buyout program? Let's say that they get to the seventh month, the kid says, "That's it, I'm done. It's football season, I'm gonna be a football player and I'm done with guitar." Those last five months — do they have to buy it all out?

BC It's prorated depending on where we are with the cost of the instrument. With the free instruments, if we get to a point in the contract where they have not paid enough to cover just the dealer cost, they have to pay the remainder of that plus the lessons. If they paid upfront, we just prorate the length of the contract, and that's what they buy out.

But that has been very rare.

And what has been real eye-opening is how many of these kids were already taking lessons with us. They've already been there a year or more. And then the parents see this lesson deal and they go, "Well, you know what — he needs a better guitar, he needs a better drum set." And we convert them. And then we sell them the equipment, and we also know we've got them locked in another year.

We've got a couple pieces of equipment

we're doing 24-month contracts on because they just get so expensive. With this one, we've figured out you'll be paying more like \$899 for a 12-month contract, but if you don't do that you're talking almost \$2,100 up front. This way you're getting it under \$1,000.

MI Any difference with that time frame?

BC We are spreading the profit out, over the

term of the contract, but we're guaranteeing we're going to get the profit.

DIALING IN AN IDEA

MI So how did all this really get going?
BC We send out a regular newsletter to an email list with about 3,600 people on it. We sent that out, got some initial interest there,



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and then we had little postcards printed and made sure that all the teachers handed them out. Then we put it on Facebook, as an instrument lesson package deal. It was just kind of here-and-there advertising — it wasn't really one concentrated area. It wasn't, "Hey, let's blow this up on social media."

What happened is that people started forwarding it to people. We started back in October 2011, and what pushed us was going into that Christmas season. And I really had only planned on running it through January. But I tell you, we got into January and we

your lessons. Your forecasting has been so good, because you know every month you've got guaranteed income, so your lessons have just been the driving factor. That's really what's going on, because your sales have stayed pretty much about where they were."

It isn't that we turned more inventory, we just turned what we've got in it.

We've got teachers who haven't been this full in two years because of the economy. Now they're completely packed. And for me, it's peace of mind because I know they're not leav-

some of you guys are on contract. We've got another guy coming in that's going to be just as good." And that guy came in and met with them, reassuring everybody that it's going to be OK.

So it's been great. This has been the greatest program I've ever done.

MI What about the objections from some of the manufacturers? How are you dealing with that?

BC I dumped 'em. I said, "You know what? There are other manufacturers out there that want to get in. If you don't want to get in, that's fine. I can show you sales reports from vendors. Look at what we've ordered from Mapex in a year versus what we've ordered from others in the past four years." Our rep from Dean called me the other day and he said, "Man, what the hell are you guys doing up there?" I said, "Trying to reinvent the retail wheel."

I think really it was not so much that some of the big guys had a major issue with it as much as the other dealers in town that carry them had issues with it. I think that's really what was happening.

MI Sure. You're rocking the boat. People are saying, "Hey, they've got a deal over there that they're giving me a guitar for \$399." You know they're not telling the whole story.

BC I think that's what happened. I mean, I ran into one of my competitors in the airport. He said, "Man, I heard about your program." He didn't seem real happy with it. I said, "Really, how did you hear about it?" He said, "Well I had somebody shop me. They came in, they were

talking about, you know, you've got these guitar packs down there for X amount. I said, 'Man, that's actually what we pay for them.'"

So I was telling him about the program. I told him, everybody can do that. This isn't a program exclusive to me.

I said, "You can do that too — you've got lessons at your place." He says, "Well, I just don't know if I want to get involved with that. It sounds too much like the cell phone industry." I said, "Well — it is the cell phone industry. I basically copied the entire model, and put it into play."

Mobile wouldn't be mobile without that plan. Period. iPhones would not be iPhones if they weren't supplemented. Period. The cell phone industry figured out how to be a billion dollar industry. What would be smart is if the manufacturers would figure out a way to subsidize and help the retailer, and figure out a new model as well.

I think it might be a great model for a lot of small retailers. They can use it, they can tweak it. Maybe some manufacturers will see it and say, "You know what — great idea. Why don't we roll out a selection of products for that kind of program?"

I figure, if you can get some of these high-end guys — I mean, so many kids would love to get their hands on the equipment. Make a Gibson guitar like an iPhone. I've got kids who come into my shop that have iPhones. They are six and seven years old with a \$900 iPhone 5 in their hands. Do you think the parent would blink an eye if you said, "Well, I'll put this \$2,000 Gibson guitar in your hands for X amount of money if you sign a 2-year lesson deal."

And we've proven they aren't blinking an eye. I mean, we're selling them drum sets and gui-

I SAID, "LOOK — I'VE GOT TO FIGURE SOMETHING OUT. I CANNOT CONTINUE TO BE AMAZON'S SHOWROOM."

were still selling and still signing people up, in one of the slower months, and I said, "My God — keep it going!"

And I tell you what, it's been so good for us. Last year marked our 20th year in business. And it was the most profitable year we've ever had.

MI When did you guys open up?

BC October, 1992. I started right out of high school in 1992 and been going ever since. Our accountant said, "Your sales are steady; it's not in sales. It's

ing. I'm not figuring that he will just get up and leave, he's got 50 students, it's going to be a mess if this guy goes, he's really popular. Now I don't have to worry about that — he's locked in.

MI That's in their contract?

BC That's right. We've only had one, he left in January. He went back into the computer field.

MI And that's not somebody who is going to take the customers.

BC He talked to his students and parents and said, "Hey, I know

tars all day long. It's like putting a kid in a Porsche before they get a permit.

So my competitor didn't seem too happy about that. But as I told the manufacturers that cried foul, "I'm not breaking or violating any dealer agreements. I had an attorney look over it. We're not breaking any agreements. I'm not advertising prices until you walk in the shop."

MI That's not advertising a price. He cannot tell you what you're allowed to sell your gear for.

BC That's right. And one of them even said, if you want to give it away, give it away. I'm just telling you, you can't advertise it. You can't put that online.

I said, "I'm not. If you can pull it up and show it to me, I'd love to see it. I know that's not out there. I can't prevent a customer from putting it online, so if you have seen it online, it didn't originate from us. It could've come from a customer. I can't police that either."

MI That does happen.

BC I said, "Look, man — I've got to figure something out. I cannot continue to be Amazon's showroom anymore — or Best Buy's." I had a lady pull out her phone while I was talking to her, take a picture of a Fender guitar, grab the barcode off of it, go on Amazon, and turn around and say, "Can you meet this price right here?"

I said, "No, I can't meet that because that's even below what I paid for it."

So she said, "I hate to do it, I can give you the lesson business but I can't give you the business to buy this guitar from you." And I told her, "I can't blame you! I cannot blame you, because if I was a customer, I would do it too. I want the best deal I can get."

MI You see that kind of thing everywhere. That's the hard thing these days.

BC I'm trying to convince this customer into a 12-month lesson agreement, and she pulled the guitar up for less than what we even paid for it. I said I can't even sell it to you and do a lesson agreement because I'll lose money up front.

That's the hardest thing — combatting Amazon. On our Facebook page, we adver-

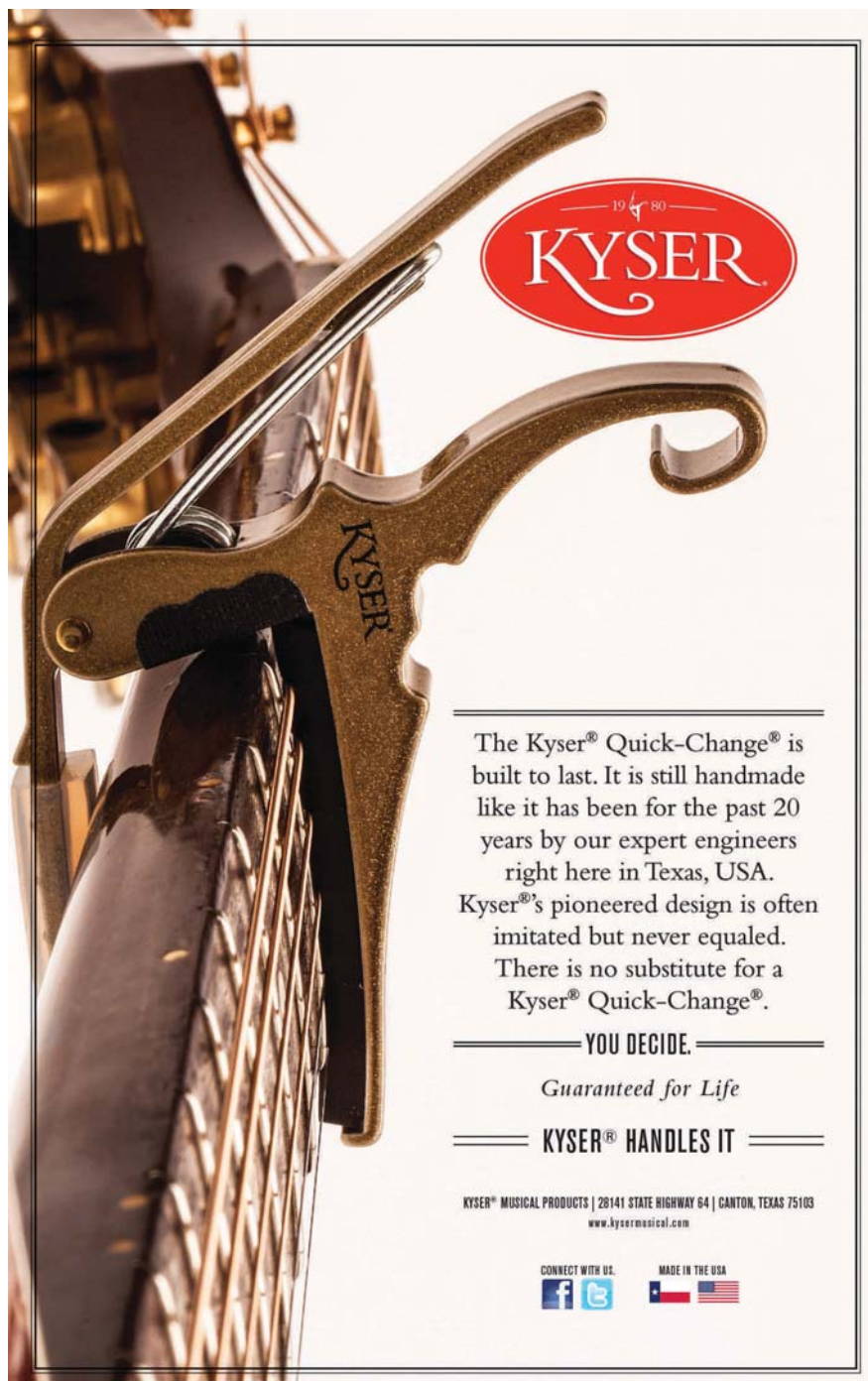
tised how we'd put together your drum set for you. You either get this, or this. And one was a drum set completely torn apart, all the pieces separated. Or you can get this — and it's a drum set completely put together. And we'll do it for free.

In all honesty, the way margins are now, the way things are going, something's got to change.

MI It just seems like there has to be some way to take the pressure off the price.

BC Everybody's selling online. We don't want to sell online, because then we're competing directly with Amazon. And I don't want to sell through Amazon. So, that's the thing.

We've got to figure something out. We've got to try to innovate. **MI**



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DAVE KOLTAI OF PIGTRONIX

Dave Koltai is co-founder and president of Pigtronix, a boutique analog pedal company based out of Brooklyn, N.Y. Also an avid guitarist, Koltai performs and records professionally in New York City.

INTERVIEWED BY MICHAEL GALLANT

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY?

With a tall cup of coffee, black. I go around the shop and say a quick hello to everybody, just to acknowledge their presence, show appreciation, and see what everyone's working on. Once I've made the rounds with coffee in hand, I sit down and hit the send/receive button on my email, which then usually occupies the next few hours of my time.

WHY IS PIGTRONIX HEADQUARTERS THE "SHOP" AND NOT THE "OFFICE"?

Our products are built and tested by musicians. These guys have spent their lives using their ears to make money. The attention to detail that's involved is intense, and it's very much a craftsman atmosphere here, so that's why we call it "the shop."

WHY NOT "COWTRONIX"?

I had a good friend when I went to Middlebury College who was nicknamed Pigpen and was an excellent musician and a physics major. During our senior year, he was encouraged by his physics professor to do an independent project and build a guitar pedal, so he built an envelope control phase shifter, which is highly unusual and was very difficult, and he asked me to demo it for the physics department.

WHAT DID YOU THINK?

It was the coolest sounding effect I'd ever heard. After that, we worked together on an optical compressor with another envelope phaser and relay bass switching, and he basically showed me the ropes of building pedals. I had a roommate, Brian Bethke, who ultimately became my business partner, and the three of us used to joke about starting an effects company called Pigtronix.

WHAT HAPPENED TO PIGPEN?

He got his Ph.D and was never involved past the original joke. After college, I worked at a record label and saw the industry begin to collapse in the early 2000s. I had been building pedals on my own and knew that if Brian and I were going to start a pedal company, we had to do something that would be totally niche and new.

WHAT WAS THAT NICHE?

Other companies were doing high-quality analog reproductions of classic effects, or digital modeling of those same classic effects. There was some futuristic stuff happening, but it all sounded like tin foil. It seemed to me that there was a clear path for someone to push a futuristic analog approach.

It's common knowledge that we live in a digital world and to argue that the future could be analog was about as crazy as saying pigs can fly. I'm here to tell you that pigs aren't just flying — they're going to outer space. That's the genesis of the Pigtronix

motto. F.A.T. — Futuristic Analog Technology. That approach has served us very, very well.

IF YOU AND BRIAN WERE IN A BAND TOGETHER, WHAT INSTRUMENTS WOULD YOU PLAY?

We'd both be on lead guitar, no question about it.

HOW WOULD YOU NOT GET IN EACH OTHER'S WAY?

We are two sides of the same coin — I'm playing Les Paul and he's on a Strat. We both love Pink Floyd, hence the pig logo, but where Brian's lead guitar is much more inspired by David Gilmore, mine is more Jimi Hendrix. Whereas Brian would thoroughly compose every note of his solo, I'd never play the same thing twice. Whereas his pedal board would have just a few choice pedals on it and a couple of refined sounds, mine would have twenty pedals, along with a complete synth rig and three amps. I'm a guy who likes every color, and Brian likes vanilla ice cream.

HOW DOES THAT DYNAMIC PLAY INTO HOW YOU RUN PIGTRONIX?

We disagree on pretty much everything. But when we meld our approaches and are both happy with the result, what we come up with is very likely to satisfy a large segment of the market.

DO YOU DESIGN ALL OF THE PEDALS YOURSELF?

Howard Davis has done the analog design with me of every Pigtronix pedal except for the very first one. He was the chief engineer for Electro-Harmonix in its analog heyday, and he designed their famous pedals that were used by artists like U2 and The Police. He's a combination of Rain Man and Yoda, a true virtuoso who is able to turn musical concepts into an original electronic design.

DO YOU DELVE INTO DIGITAL?

We have a new product called the Infinity Looper that skins high-end digital signal processing with unique analog circuitry. It's led to tremendous growth for our company and increased respect in the industry.

IF NOT THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

When I was young, I thought I'd be a doctor, since my father is a doctor, but that got derailed when I worked in his office and realized that nobody wants to be in a hospital except for the doctors — but everybody wants to be at a rock concert. I joke with my wife that I'd be selling used cars, but I'd like to think that I'd be selling airplanes. Really, I couldn't imagine myself not being in the music industry. Having dialogues with musicians that I've looked up to since I was a kid, interacting with them to achieve creative new designs, and helping to spark their creativity — that's a dream come true, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. **MI**

Turning the Page?

A lively RPMDA convention hinted at some revitalization in the segment

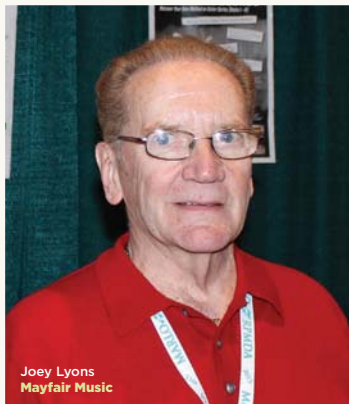
At one of the lunch sessions at the RPMDA convention in downtown Columbus, Ohio, I had the good fortune of sitting next to Carol Wilbur, assistant manager of Pender's Music in Dallas, and current president of RPMDA. It gave me a chance to ask one of the conference's most pressing questions: "What is the future of RPMDA?"

"That's what we're working on," Wilbur said. "In recent years, there has been some concern that print retailers would have a greatly diminished role in the marketplace with the onset of digital delivery. But the publishers, who are typically on the leading edge of technology, are trying in many ways to get retailers in a position where they are able to incorporate and embrace the new technology so we can all move forward together."

Technology, and the future, were certainly among the main topics being talked about, as print-on-demand services grow, software interfaces become easier to use, and customers become more and more accustomed to instant delivery. NAMM Chairman Kevin Cranley moderated a lively afternoon discussion entitled "Future View." Father and son dynamos Richard and Steven Gore of Pender's gave a two-part presentation entitled "Your Digital Future" (see page 48).



Laura Rodie,
Bob Kohl and
Christie Smith
Long & McQuade



Joey Lyons
Mayfair Music



Laura Chu Stokes and Lucy Chu
e-z notes



Jessica Burcher
Morningstar Music



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Perry Pinto
AIM Gifts



Ron Manus
Alfred



Nancy Oliver-Vallely
Mel Bay



Mary Alice McDonald,
Carl Fischer, and
Tom Buchanan,
Beethoven & Co.



Rebecca Ashe (left) and
Tracy Leenman (right) of
Musical Innovations, with
Kevin Cranley, Willis Music

► **SHOWING UP**

Wilbur said that the convention had registered around 210 participants, with around 45 being first-timers — a strong showing of interest from around North America. “The goal of RPMDA has always been to foster good relationships between publishers and retailers, and to advance music education across the board,” she said. “This year we had so much good feedback saying it was one of our best ever.”

In keeping with that mission, this year convention organizers added presentations on best practices in lessons departments (see page 54 for more).

Among other positive signs? “A lot of the newcomers this year were under 35,” she said. “And we saw a lot of excitement about what we can do in the future.”

► **NUMBERS**

There’s that “future” word again: It’s definitely coming, but no one can say with certainty what it will bring. The RPMDA balance sheet for the nine month period ended March 31, 2013 showed that the group had \$32,021 in the bank — enough to continue with the convention for the near future, but perhaps not enough for those who care about the print business to relax in their efforts to share good ideas and offer support.

“People say they have a hard time justifying the expense of sending someone to the conference,” Wilbur said. “But the margins on print are very good. And print sales actually rise in times of economic slump. People will always be in need of print music.”

True that. But few could disagree with the elder Gore’s assessment of the state of the marketplace. “I’ve been in the business for 30 years,” he said. “There have been scary times, and times when all you had to do was show up to work and sales would jump 10 percent. And there have been times when you had to go out and hustle. This is one of those times.” **MI**

For more coverage on the convention, visit musicincmag.com.

Future Shock? Nah.

Technology will be what helps small dealers slay dragons

Steven Gore, from Texas-based print titan Pender's Music Co., gave a presentation entitled "Your Digital Future," and it lead off with a promise — and a challenge. "We are here to talk about your digital future, and whether it will be your future or someone else's," he said. (For a detailed report on Richard Gore's portion of the two-part program, please visit musicincmag.com)

Gore detailed three lessons he believes the recent past has taught us.

1. When unmet demand is present, solutions will come from either inside or outside the industry.

2. Digitization can either be used by, or unleashed on, the industry.

3. It's hard to bring back customers when they're gone.

▶ ON DEMAND, ON THE RISE

The rise of print on demand music services is an undeniable reality, and Gore suggested that retailers should find ways to install them in their stores. The three main services at the moment are Total Sheet Music, an Alfred property; Sheet Music Direct, from Hal Leonard; and Sheet Music Now.

"These are great to have, because right now it gives you the ability to have someone walk into your store and get something," he said. "It's immediate gratification. Customers could go shop these themselves, but they have to wade through different viewers."

▶ THERES AN APP...

One of the more interesting topics in the



presentation was the discussion of a two-year-old app called Tonara. In 2012, both Hal Leonard and Alfred licensed some content to Tonara. Designed for tablet use, among its more unusual innovations is its ability to turn pages of a score automatically. "Pretty phenomenal," Gore said. "It listens to the person playing in any environment, whether it's an ensemble or in a busy room. If you're playing the flute, it listens to the flute. It listens to the tempo."

This and other products emerging now indicate that the industry is not nearly finished with innovating. The ability to upload PDFs, and then annotate them, is one example.

"That's one thing that I think will be important in digital, moving forward," Gore said. "We need to see music not just as a piece of paper. You can look at it on a screen, you can look at it on a wall if you want to, but what you really need is to be able to utilize the features you have on a computer.

You want to be able to make comments, and share comments with your friends. If we really understand what our customers want, we can use digital in a great way."

▶ THE FUTURE ... IS NOW?

Gore closed his portion of the presentation with a speculative look ahead.

FIRST POSSIBILITY: Digital takes over the entire industry. "It's a scary thing to think about, and I don't think it's possible," he said. "Though it could occur."

SECOND POSSIBILITY: Digital goes away, and everyone comes back into our stores. Steven paused for effect.

THIRD POSSIBILITY: We find a new equilibrium between digital and print.

"I feel that this is the most possible. Print is probably not going to go away. I think we've already kind of figured that out. But digital is going to grow. Right now it's at 10 percent, but it is growing a market and that is good for stores. **MI**

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Get in Touch

Social media marketing is word-of-mouth on steroids — and easier than you might think

If you haven't started yet, Steve Robinson of Constant Contact seemed to be saying, it's not too late. And it's not as difficult or time consuming as you might think.

Still, though: it's time to use social media in your business.

In a well-attended two-part session entitled "Engagement Marketing: How Small Business Wins in a Socially Connected World," Robinson delivered a briskly paced mix of theoretical approaches and practical tips designed for independent retailers. The afternoon session concentrated on social media in all its manifestations, with a focus on Facebook and Twitter.

"What you need to always keep in mind is being where your customers are — where your prospects are," he said. "It's not important what tool you like the best. What's important is where are the people you want to do business with."

Robinson mentioned the results of a national survey that determined 51 percent of the respondents had purchased a product based on an online recommendation. A Nielsen survey noted that 78 percent of the population trusted third-party consumer recommendations, typically the type found on Amazon, Yelp, Facebook, Trip Advisor and numerous other websites, not to mention friends and family. Social media, Robinson noted, operates like "word-of-



mouth marketing, but on steroids."

"If I have a small business I really don't need to know much more than that," he said. "This is a tool I need to be participating in."

Steering the presentation back to the day-to-day practicalities of operating a store, though, Robinson issued a warning that was greeted with knowing smiles.

"If you don't offer a great customer experience — if you don't 'wow' your customers when they come in the store — do me a favor: Don't worry about social media marketing," he said. "Fix it. Because if someone comes into your place of business and has a bad experience, what are they gonna do? They're gonna tell everybody about it. They're going to go on Facebook and talk about what a terrible job you do. The good thing is that it happens the other way as well. If you can 'wow' them, [and] give them that great customer experience, they're going to go to Facebook and post about that. So always concentrate and focus on what makes that

great customer experience. There is no fix or cure for a bad experience."

▶ WHO IS OUT THERE?

When using social media to market to people, Robinson put them into five categories.

1. Raving Fans

The raving fan is already a customer who loves you and loves your business. "They are perfectly willing to take information and content and share it with people they are connected to," Robinson said.

2. Customers

"Customers and raving fans are very similar," Robinson noted. "The one big difference between customers and raving fans is that a good offer will have them look elsewhere." Customers, in this categorization, still like your business and are willing to share information.

3. Prospects

Prospects are not buying from you right now, but will probably need your product or service in the near term. Prospects are looking for information on their purchase, and may or may not be willing to share your social media information.

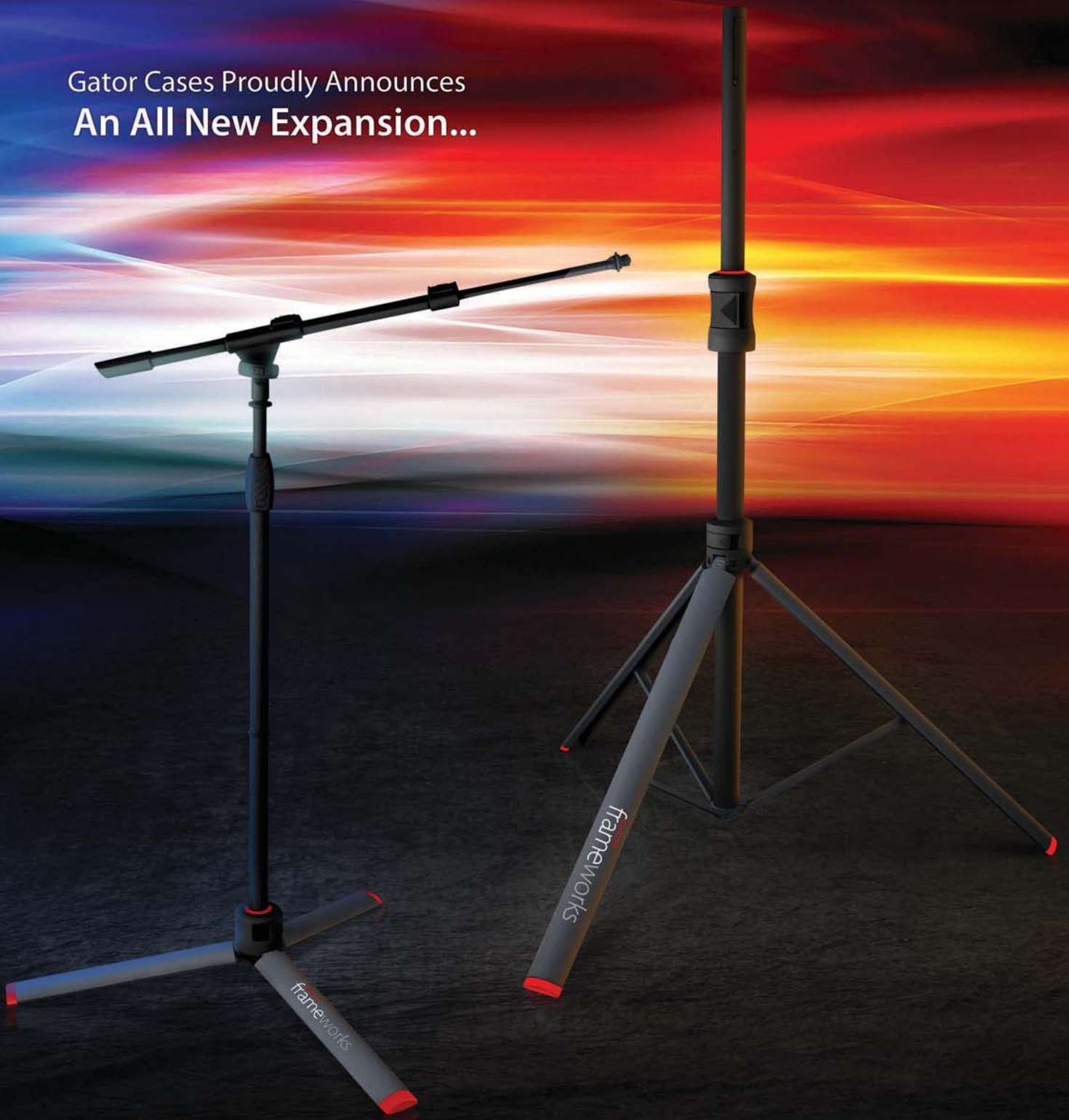
4. Suspects

Suspects are similar to Prospects, though one of the biggest differences is that the Suspect is probably going to buy from you, but not in the near term. The way to build a relationship with this group is to provide content that's valuable and relevant to them.

5. Mister Grumpy

These individuals are never going to buy your product or service. "Do I want to use social media to market to him?" Robinson asked. "A lot of people say 'no,' but I say 'yes.' His needs may change over the course of time, and he's probably got people he's connected to who fall into one of the

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other categories. It won't cost you anything more to market to him along with everyone else, and it could benefit you."

▶ *DOLLARS AND SENSE*

"Is there anybody here wondering how social media leads to revenue?" Robinson joked.

Once the laughter died down, Robinson framed out a strategic approach to social media marketing. "The way you get [it] to generate revenue is to have your customers and your raving fans share your valuable and relevant content with prospects and suspects," he said. "All of that is brand new revenue, and I want

you to always think about how can I get brand new revenue for my business."

And the content doesn't need to be brand new to achieve that. Sharing relevant material from other sources is a legitimate way to reach out to your own contacts. To reduce the amount of time spent updating social media, Robinson recommended concentrating on one tool at a time.

"Why do I know that this is going to work for you?" he said. "Because of what you [already] have. Is there anybody in the room that doesn't have loyal and happy customers? No, you all do. And that's a great place to start." **MI**

SOCIALLY SAVVY

More advice from Steve Robinson

Don't sell yourself short — people follow you because they think you're an expert. Your job is to share your knowledge. People love to do business with experts.

- ▶ Branding is just as important on social media as it is on email or your website — make sure it shows through. Use your logo and your color scheme in everything you do.
- ▶ There's nothing you can give away on social media that will keep people from doing business with you.
- ▶ If you're getting the same questions over and over again from customers, that's really good content.
- ▶ With email marketing, if you put a video in, where you're linking to it and people can see the video in the preview pane, your open rate is going to skyrocket.
- ▶ Great content is something I can write once and break up into little pieces. Shorter is better, especially with social media.
- ▶ Be transparent — everybody should know who you are and what you do.
- ▶ Don't worry about negative posts. If somebody posts on your page, comment back. If somebody asks a question, answer it.
- ▶ Don't try to defend yourself — try to satisfy and delight them, and give them a reason to turn the negative into a positive.



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Lessons to Be Learned

Contractors or employees? Teacher status remains a critical tax issue

In a talk that marked his 15th time speaking at RPMDA, CPA Alan Friedman gave a lively presentation on issues surrounding the classification of in-store teachers.

“This has become critically important in our world,” Friedman noted. “How you treat your music teachers — and not just them, but anyone who works for you that you have opted to treat as an independent contractor — has become a real hot topic.”

Friedman began his presentation by noting the main pros and cons of the different classifications. Treating teachers as


independent contractors, naturally, saves business owners a great deal of money, at least on first glance. An owner does not have to pay payroll tax, social security, Medicare, federal and state unemployment, or workers’ comp — significant outlays for any employee — related to an independent contractor. The savings are compounded, Friedman said, by the fact that employers can’t discriminate. “If you are offering health insurance to your sales staff or your administrative staff, well guess what? You have to offer the health insurance and other benefits to your other employees as

well.” Many retailers simply forgo all of that in favor of classifying their teachers as independent contractors.

Friedman cautioned the audience to not lose sight of the fact that other kinds of employees can be subject to the issues more commonly found in relation to teachers. Retailers should be mindful in their taxation and benefits relationship with repair technicians, or someone employed to do web design, for instance. Even seasonal labor, or students in extended internships, need a close look.

▶ GROUND CONTROL

The upside of treating teachers as employees is less about money and more about control. “You can control their teaching methods, you can control their rates, you can control their compensation,” Friedman said. “And you basically shouldn’t have issues with any tax authorities because you are now responsible for withholding tax on their behalf and remitting it.” **MI**



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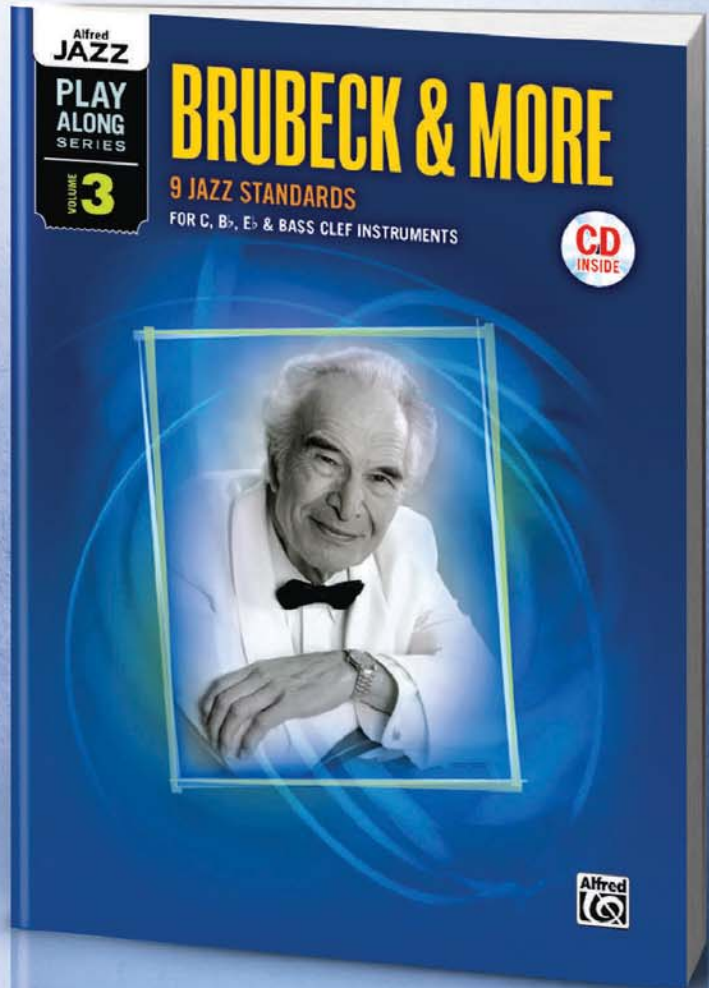
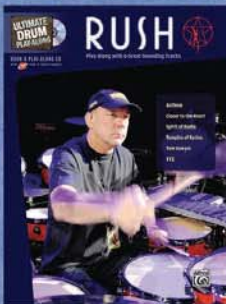
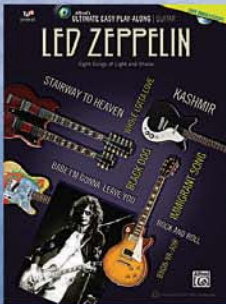
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Modest Master

George Quinlan Jr. quietly revealed some sophisticated tricks of the trade

George Quinlan, Jr., current head of Quinlan and Fabish, a seven-location dynamo in Indiana, Illinois and Michigan, started his well-attended session with a healthy dose of modesty.

“The title that I was given for this presentation was ‘master retailer,’ and honestly we’re not really much of a retailer,” he said. “Our stores are hidden away in industrial parks, and I don’t think we’ve ever done a traffic count, and we hardly spend any money on advertising.”

He then clarified the joke.

“What I think our business is, is really

a relationship-based sales organization. We have 19 reps that cover schools in three states and we try to build and nurture and enhance relationships with band and orchestra directors, with the infrastructure of the repair shop and the print music department. But retailer? No. No, I don’t think so.”

► THE SELLING POINT

Quinlan shared a number of anecdotes and observations from his time working there, nearly all of it with his father, who kept coming to the office day after day out of “love for the game.” (Editor’s note: Shortly after

the convention, Quinlan’s father, George Sr., died, after a long life of service to the industry. See page 19.)

“It’s a requirement for everyone from Chicago to mention Michael Jordan,” he said. “You have to have fun in the music business. And business is a game. And like in any other game you have to compete, and you should try to win. We do keep score, in the form of expenses and profits and sales. And you want to play to win. As Jordan used to say, ‘There is no ‘I’ in team but there is an ‘I’ in ‘win.’”

And winning means selling. Quinlan spoke at length about the art form — nearly universal, in his mind. “Whether you’re a doctor or an attorney or whatever, you are in the business of moving people,” he said. “And that’s one of the things we work on when we bring new people into the company — to make sure they understand that the work we do is noble and important, and that they are part of the process.” **MI**

\$ The Buck Stops Here \$

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THE GUIDE

2013 SUMMER NAMM

SUMMER NAMM 2013 | BY KATIE KAILUS

NEW HOME, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Summer NAMM, to be held July 11–13 in Nashville, Tenn., at the new Music City Center, is offering attendees some new opportunities to both network and enjoy live music.

The home of this year's show will be the recently completed Music City Center, which is located in the heart of downtown Nashville. The building features solar panels and a green-landscaped roof.

"The brand new Music City Center is beautiful and will make our members feel warmly welcomed when they arrive in Nashville," said Joe Lamond, CEO and president of NAMM. "The trade show floor is open and easy to navigate and the ballrooms will bring all our educational and networking events to a whole new level of professionalism."

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Along with the new venue, Summer NAMM has added new opportunities for retailers to network.

On Wednesday night before the show starts, NAMM will host the Grand Opening Party featuring a "Nashville Tribute to Jimi Hendrix" with the Billy



Cox Band of Gypsies Experience and Guests, as well as an appearance by Hendrix's sister, Janie Hendrix. Also on Wednesday, NAMM and the Independent Music Store Owners (iMSO) will hold an intensive sales and marketing session led by retail expert Bob Negen who will focus on the "Foot Traffic Formula" to help build your customer base.

On Thursday, NAMM will present "Insight: Hard-Earned Wisdom from Industry Icons," moderated by country music legend Vince Gill and Two Old Hippies' founder Tom Bedell.

Special events aside, Lamond said this year's NAMM U ses-

sions cover a wide range of topics for all store personnel.

"The focus will be on proven ideas to prepare for a successful third and fourth quarter," he said.

Sessions Lamond recommended include "10 Financial Rules Every Retailer Should Follow" by *Music Inc.* columnist Alan Friedman and his associate Daniel Jobe. The two financial experts will reveal 10 music retail financial musts for improving a store's profitability and cash flow. Also mentioned was "10 Cheap and Easy Ways to Better Your Business Now," which will discuss ten ideas for boosting the

bottom line and market share by Instrumental Music Center's Leslie Faltin.

Overall, Lamond said attending Summer NAMM is beneficial for all types of retailers.

"This isn't about whether you're a school dealer, combo dealer or keyboard dealer — making the trip is about becoming a better dealer period," Lamond said. "The way people shop and buy has changed, and the reality is that some [retailers] are getting it right and others are losing out. Those who are winning will be in Nashville to ensure they stay up with the rapid pace of continued change." **MI**

**THURSDAY, JULY 11
BREAKFAST SESSION**

8 a.m.
The NAMM Retail Summit Joe Lamond, NAMM President and CEO, with guests Davidson Ballroom, Music City Center Join NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond for an inside look at the people and companies that are thriving in this hyper-competitive business climate and their ideas for ending 2013 strong. You'll walk away from this session with a plan for the critical holiday season that will carry over into the new year. (Free breakfast served until 8:30 a.m.)

10:30 a.m.
Fifty Shades of Facebook Cris Behrens, store manager for Summerhays Music Center, presents creative ways to get more "Likes," "Shares" and traffic on your Facebook page. Behrens wears many hats at the store, so he'll share ideas that don't require tons of time and money to implement.

11 a.m.
What to Do When You Have Too Much to Do Donovan Bankhead of Springfield Music will help retailers stay on top of their business by sharing his favorite resources from Google Calendar to the latest apps.

11:30 a.m.
Tips for Increasing Your Business by 25%! Sales consultant Bob Popyk delivers simple, but often overlooked, ideas for cranking up the cash register right away without spending a dime. This session focuses on the greatest source of new business you may not be aware of, how to get more add-on business and ways to boost your referrals.

Noon
How to Plan Holiday Promotions That Work Danny Rocks of The Company Rock hosts a panel discussion with retailers who will share their secrets for success when planning and executing holiday promotions.

12:30 p.m.
5 Ways to Boost Your Lesson Sign-ups Beacock Music's Gayle Beacock explains how she has grown her award-winning lesson program. Beacock will share creative promotions that you can try in your store right away.

1 p.m.
How to Host the Ultimate Rock Camp Menzie Pittman, founder of Contemporary Music Center, shows how he hosts a summer program that drives growth and new business by getting students to take total ownership of their bands.

1:30 p.m.
10 Cheap and Easy Ways to Better Your Business Now Leslie Faltin of Instrumental Music Center shares ten simple, inexpensive ideas to boost your bottom line and market share. Learn the most cost-efficient ways to revitalize the sensory experience in your store, make consumer connections through email and online marketing, slash unnecessary costs and processes, turn stagnant inventory into cash, and reach new customers.

2 p.m. (Double Session)
10 Financial Rules Every Retailer Should Follow Listen in as industry accountants Alan Friedman, CPA, and Daniel Jobe, who handle dozens of music retail clients, explain the "Top 10 Financial Retailing Musts" for improving a store's profitability and cash flow.

3 p.m.
10 Ways to Buy Smart and Sell Smarter! Tracy Leenman of Musical Innovations helps attendees get started by taking them through the process of maximizing profits and have exactly what the customers want, when they want it.

3:30 p.m.
Effective Training Ideas That Won't Break the Bank Colleen Billings of Billings Piano Gallery explores dozens of ways that retailers can provide the develop-

ment activities your employees crave, while keeping the checkbook in mind.

4 p.m.
How to Train Salespeople and Influence Customers Ernie Lansford, Purple Shoes Leadership Industry veteran Ernie Lansford of Purple Shoes Leadership will reveal his "secret sauce" for getting your sales staff up to speed. You'll learn to build a team that turns "lookers" into buyers and influences customers to make informed decisions.

4 p.m.
The Power of Purposefully Focused Leadership Mark Goff of Paige's Music Room 407C & 407D, Music City Center NAMM YP hosts a two-hour event where Goff will discuss a variety of topics and conclude with a networking reception.

4:30 p.m.
Simple Secrets to Managing Your Cash Flow David Wilson of GE Capital speaks on the top 10 reasons why businesses fail, why cash flow management is important and what you can do to manage your cash flow.

**FRIDAY, JULY 12
BREAKFAST SESSION**

8 a.m.
Take the Stairs Rory Vaden, co-founder of Southwestern Consulting, *New York Times* best-selling author of *Take the Stairs* Davidson Ballroom, Music City Center Vaden shares key insights and erases common misconceptions about how to build lasting self-discipline. Attendees will learn how to disregard fear and take immediate action, develop an awareness of their creative avoidance, stop making excuses, adopt an overall results-oriented attitude, and be more disciplined — so they'll learn to "take the stairs" more often in life. (Free breakfast served until 8:30 a.m.)

10:30 a.m.
Navigating the Social Media Maze

Grant Billings, Billings Piano Gallery From Facebook to Twitter to Google+, Grant Billings of Billings Piano Gallery will walk you through the social media maze. Learn how to easily develop the best social media strategy for your store and how to use that strategy on a daily basis to connect with your customers and grow your brand.

11 a.m.
How to Sell Your Toughest Customers — 90% of the Time Bob Popyk is back offering simple ways to close a high percentage of those tough customers who beat you up over price, tell you they're "just shopping around" and walk out the door without buying. Putting even a few of these ideas into place will take your sales up a notch right away.

11:30 a.m.
How to Stay on Top of Your Priorities Rory Vaden returns to discuss priority dilution, a dangerous form of procrastination. He will discuss how to rethink your calendar, feel more confident about what to say "no" to, control your workflow, procrastinate strategically to protect your priorities, shift your thinking from urgent to relevant and redefine how you prioritize.

Noon
Music Lessons: Are You Prepared for Back-to-School? Pete Gamber of Music & Arts and columnist for *Music Inc.* shares an easy plan for building your lesson program during back-to-school time.

12:30 p.m.
What Do I Do About My Website? Moderated by Danny Rocks and featuring panelists Brad Boynton of Rhythm Traders, Leslie Faltin of Instrumental Music Center and Whitney Grisaffi of Ted Brown Music, this session discusses how to make a website work for you. Learn from these panelists' best practices.

1:30 p.m.
Take the Hassle Out of Hiring *Music Inc.* columnist and

Unless otherwise noted, all sessions will be held at the Idea Center, booth 1254.

owner of Easy Music Center Peter Dods shows how to cut to the chase. He'll explore how to learn about potential applicants with minimal effort and weed out unqualified candidates faster than you thought possible.

2 p.m.

40 Tips for Music Professionals 40 and Under
NAMM Young Professionals' CJ Averwater, Ryan West and Cris Behrens present their unique and fresh outlook on the music industry and share tips, online resources and book suggestions that have been proven to work for these up-and-coming music industry pros.

2:30 p.m.

How to Turn Facebook 'Likes' Into Sales
Rick Camino of Hello Music presents tried-and-true tips, tricks and tactics to turn Facebook 'Likes' into sales.

3 p.m.

Use Google to Bring Customers Inside Your Store
Myrna Sisten will walk listeners through the steps to add this feature to their Google page, company website and social media.

3:30 p.m.

Easy Purchasing Tips to Save Money
Mississippi Music's Mike Guillot explains simple ways to save money during the buying process by partnering with vendors, maximizing rebates and taking advantage of freight savings programs.

4 p.m.

How to Increase Sales With Contrast Selling
Listen in as Mitch Brashers of Springfield Music talks about using comparative selling strategies to quickly establish yourself as an expert, get the right products into customers' hands and increase upselling.

4:30 p.m.

Converting Social Media Into Sales Using Video
Learn how to create powerful, inexpensive videos that help convert social media

efforts into sales. Nick Failla of Collected Concepts will explain how to take advantage of the simple tools.

SATURDAY, JULY 13

BREAKFAST SESSION

8 a.m.

Best in Show

Frank Alkyer, Publisher, Music Inc., with panelists

Davidson Ballroom,

Music City Center

Six industry experts reveal their picks for "Best in Show" at Summer NAMM. Join *Music Inc.*'s Frank Alkyer and his panel of respected gearheads and retail buyers who scour the show floor to find the stand-out and trendsetting products and services. (Free breakfast served until 8:30 a.m.)

10:30 a.m.

I Like This Product—Should I Buy It?

Join gearhead and CPA Alan Friedman for the ultimate answer to such critical questions as, "Should I purchase this product?" "How many should I buy?" and "Will I have enough cash to pay for it?"

11 a.m. (Double Session)

Best Social Media Examples From Music Retailers

In this double session, Jen Lowe of BoomBoom Percussion reveals the best social media examples from within the industry.

Noon (90-Minute Session)

Practice Personalities: Effective and Efficient Ways to Practice According to Your Personality

Join Thornton Cline and a panel of music educators as they discuss strategies to motivate and inspire you and other musicians to practice more effectively and efficiently based on personality type.

2 p.m.

Drums Across America: Your Biggest Source of New Customers & Students

Percussion Marketing Council kicks off Drums Across America, while a panel explains how to use this program to create more drummers, develop more customers and sign up more students for lessons.

What is your dream tone?

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Rory Gallagher
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WHAT TO SEE

Totally Wired



MOD Kits DIY will highlight Pre-Wired Assemblies, a new line for guitar modification. Used

to upgrade existing guitar electronics, MOD pre-wired assemblies enhance overall tone and playing experience. Each MOD pre-wired assembly has a treble bleed volume pot mod, which helps retain clarity when you roll back on your volume knob and adds life to your pick-ups. **{modkitsdiy.com}**

Top Standard



RapcoHorizon's RAT 2 offers the classic RAT tone. Used as a primary distortion, it excels at arena rock rhythm tones and soaring leads. The RAT 2 can be used as a

boost for solos to get an extra kick. **{rapcohorizon.com}**

Star Cable

Lava Cable will display its Fountain microphone cable, a no-compromise star-quad cable. The Fountain uses American-made oxygen-free copper for use in audio cables for both the shield and its four 24 AWG conductors to achieve low resistance and high conductivity,

key to dynamic frequency response and efficient signal transfer. **{lavacable.com}**

Glow On

Option Knob has added the GloKnob Boutique, a glow-in-the-dark version of its Boutique OKnob. The new model has a blue luminescent color

for easier visibility, and even on the darkest of stages, its glow properties illuminate the

controls. The GloKnob fits boutique-style pedals. MSRP: \$11.95 **{gloknob.com}**

Musician on the Go

Pro Stage Gear will debut Pedaltrain Volto, a power supply for guitar effects pedals. The Volto is a rechargeable, lithium-ion based, 9-volt battery pack that features two outputs providing a total output current of 2000mA or power. It's specifically designed to easily mount underneath all Pedaltrain pedalboard models. The Volto is ideal for the musician on the go, since they will not need power cables running to the pedalboard. **{pedaltrain.com}**



Keepin' it Simple

Levy's Leathers' new PMB32NS model represents the ultimate simplicity in banjo straps. The strap is 2 inches wide and made with veg-tan leather top and soft garment leather backing and Chicago screw adjustment. The straps are available in dark brown, black, burgundy, brown, walnut, tan, russet, natural and cranberry. **{levysleathers.com}**



Brass Beauty

Phaeton's new FX-1100 trumpet offers multiple bracing options and includes three sets of interchangeable bracing machined from bronze, stainless steel and annealed brass. Every player has the option for fine tuning the instrument to suit his taste and performing requirements. The instrument boasts a brush brass with clear lacquer finish and comes with an all-wood oversized vintage tan tweed case. **{phaetontrumpet.com}**



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WHAT to SEE

Song-Packed

Hal Leonard will be showcasing its *Ukulele Fake Book*, which features more than 400 songs. Titles include "Ain't No Sunshine," "Always On My Mind," "Born To Be Wild," "California Dreamin'," "Imagine," "Layla" and "Let It Be." **{halleonard.com}**



Sweet Uke

Kala has added a new Honeyburst model to its arch top ukulele series. Regarded as one of Kala's signature models, the arch top series is a tenor-sized ukulele with a design that is reminis-



cent of a classic arch top guitar. The Honeyburst features a satin finish that accentuates its vintage appearance, while also enhancing the tonal quality. **{kalabrand.com}**

Vintage Vibes

Recording King will showcase its Dirty Thirties models. With a solid top and old-style matte sunburst finish, these instruments are ideal for singer/songwriters. The guitars are available in three historic shapes: dreadnought, OOO and single O. Each starts with a solid spruce top and rosewood fretboard with bone nut and saddle. **{recordingking.com}**



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WHAT TO SEE

Stellar Seagulls



Godin Guitars will highlight the new Seagull Excursion series. Handcrafted in Quebec, the models are rugged and available in parlor, folk and dreadnaught body sizes. The Excursion series features wild cherry tops, backs and sides made of a three-layer lamination of real hardwood, silver leaf maple necks, rosewood fingerboards and bridges, burn stamped rosettes and natural custom polished finishes. seagullguitars.com

True Blues



Alfred's *Learn to Play the Blues Guitar* by Steve Trovato and Terry Carter is a new book and DVD method ideal

for any musician with a basic understanding of the guitar and music theory concepts. It contains easy-to-understand lessons and written exercises that include solos in the styles of such blues legends as Eric Clapton, Albert Collins, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Albert King, and B.B. King. alfred.com

Gator Stands Up

Gator Cases will show its new Frameworks line of stands, which feature a sleek, matted black look, soft grip rubber knobs and handles, and rubber feet with removable red safety trim. The stands also feature one-handed height adjustment. gatorframeworks.com



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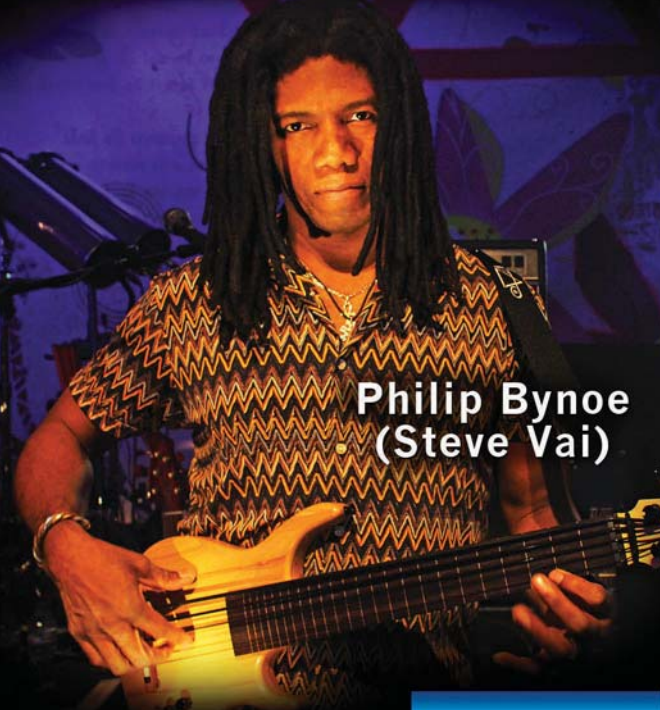
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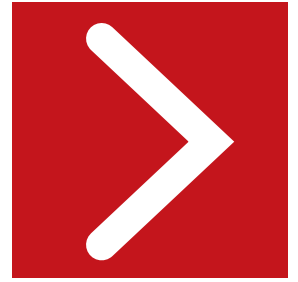


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GEAR



KALA | CEDAR TOP/ACACIA UKULELES

Striking Cedar

Kala's new Cedar Top/Acacia Ukulele series offers solid cedar tops, acacia back and sides, and rich gloss finishes. The instruments are available in concert and tenor sizes. A rosewood fingerboard, Aquila strings and Grover vintage open geared tuners are also standard on both sizes. kalabrand.com



> InsideGEAR

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AXL GUITARS | HAND-AGED
BULLDOG

Aged Axe

AXL's USA Hand-Aged Bulldog model has been limited to a first run of 50 pieces. The Hand-Aged models feature solid mahogany slab bodies, one-piece set necks, Lindy Fralin dog-ear P-90s, TonePros Featherweight wraparound bridges, CTS pots, Orange Drop Capacitors and TonePros Kluson vintage-style tuners. The models also include "Bite Switch," a push-pull pot to bypass the tone potentiometer for a biting mainline sound. axlguitars.com



MAXON | AD10

Small & Mighty

Housed in Maxon's new Compact series enclosure, the AD10 offers 600 milliseconds of analog delay with a warm, yet powerful delay tone. The AD10 features Maxon's proprietary low-noise circuit with minimal distortion on delay repeats. Short delay settings create rich, natural reverb effects, while longer settings offer a clear and brilliant delay sound. MAP: \$249.

maxonfx.com



Road Hog

RoadHog Series by RapcoHorizon is a unique design of cables for the touring musician. Designed Road Ready and Tour Tough, utilizing the most rugged of constructions while not sacrificing sound quality. Durable, thick, yet flexible PVC outer jackets and pure copper conductors and shields provide a superior sound and reliable operation night after night.

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GEAR GUIDE >

GUITARS, AMPS & ACCESSORIES



IBANEZ | ARTSTAR

New Star

Ibanez recently introduced Artstar, a new hollow body series. The new instruments feature a bone nut, smokey flamed maple tops and Ibanez's signature Super 58 pickup. ibanez.com

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MOD KITS DIY | RING RESONATOR PEDAL KIT

Fantastic Fuzz

MOD Kits has debuted the Ring Resonator, an octave-up fuzz effect pedal kit in an all-analog design that captures late 1960s octave up fuzz tones. Transformer coupled germanium diodes produce sounds that range from a subtle octave up to thick, rich sonic textures and synth-like tones. modkitsdiy.com

FENDER | NEW CUSTOM SHOP MODELS

Spring Collection

The Fender Custom Shop's new instrument selection includes four guitars and one bass. Models include the Limited Jazzmaster Pro, Limited Custom Deluxe Jazzmaster, and the Limited La Cabronita "Luchador" Stratocaster and the Limited La Cabronita "Gato Gordo" Jaguar, which both sport a TV Jones Power'Tron pickup. fender.com



LEVY'S LEATHERS | HEMP, DENIM GUITAR STRAPS

Hippie's Choice

Levy's Leathers' new hemp and denim guitar straps are printed with colorful 1970s stripe designs and finished with a suede leather backing. The line is available in six designs. levysleathers.com



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GEAR GUIDE >

AUDIO & RECORDING

RADIAL ENGINEERING | PRECOMP

Cool Compressor

Radial Engineering has added the PreComp, a combination preamp and compressor. The PreComp is a single-wide module designed to fit the 500 series rack format. Features include 180-degree polarity reverse for phase matching two microphones, a high pass filter to eliminate unwanted resonance and 48V phantom power for condenser mics. MSRP: \$400. {radialeng.com}



EARTHWORKS | 521 ZDT

From Zero to 500

Earthworks' new 521 ZDT brings the exacting standards of the Zero Distortion Technology preamplifiers to the 500 series format, providing a "wire with gain" option. The solid state ZDT 521 features switchable phantom power, polarity invert and peak amplitude clip detection, just as in the original 1021 single channel ZDT Preamp. {earthworks-audio.com}



YAMAHA | POCKETRAK

Pocket Full of Sound

Yamaha's Pocketrak PR7 is a portable, linear recorder. Equipped with newly developed XY stereo microphones, the PR7 captures high-resolution stereo recordings, achieving natural sound regardless of its surroundings. {yamaha.com}



AKG DISCUSSION SYSTEM CS3

AKG's Discussion System CS3 offers a wide variety of different gooseneck microphone options that can be expanded up to 120 units. The CS3 provides users with a plug-and-play, easy-to-use professional system. akg.com

UNIVERSAL AUDIO APOLLO 16

Universal Audio has debuted the Apollo 16 Audio Interface. Delivering conversion with 16x16 analog I/O, this FireWire/Thunderbolt-ready interface combines sound and flexible routing with powerful onboard UAD-2 QUAD processing. uaudio.com

L-ACOUSTICS LA4X

L-Acoustics has added the LA4X to its amplified controller series. The LA4X amplified controller combines the benefits of self-powered speaker packages with the flexibility of outboard DSP and amplification. l-acoustics.com



| HOST | RATE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 1 | 2 |
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| INT | 48 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| METER | 96 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IN | 176.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OUT | 192 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

LA4X

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GEAR GUIDE >

DRUMS & PERCUSSION

TAMA | LMP1465F STUDIO MAPLE

Studio Snare

Tama has added the LMP1465F Studio Maple. With a clean, round tone and no unwanted harshness, this 14-by-6.5-inch snare is ideal for the weekend warrior and studio stalwart alike. The 6-ply, 5mm all-maple shell is given extra clarity with the addition of Sound Focus Rings on both top and bottom. tama.com



MIKE BALTER | BIG SOUND

Mallet Mania

Mike Balter has expanded the tonal color palette for orchestra bells, glockenspiels and xylophones. Each mallet in the series features select rattan handles that are shorter in length for better dexterity and control. mikebalter.com



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Bob has deep roots in retail. He joined the SABIAN team in 2005.



Sabian.com

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GEAR GUIDE

BAND & ORCHESTRA



BACH ARTISAN TROMBONE

Bach's Artisan Trombone Collection takes the Bach Stradivarius trombone to a new level, offering three distinct valve options, three main tuning slide options, three bell options and three hand slide options. All models are outfitted in cases that combine classic Vincent Bach styling, contemporary materials and exceptional design. bachbrass.com

YAMAHA YTR-9445CHSII

Yamaha has updated the YTR-9445CHSII Xeno Artist model “Chicago” C Trumpet. Intended for use in orchestral, concert band and other brass ensemble environments, the new Artist Model Chicago C trumpet was crafted with the input of John Hagstrom, member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra brass section. The trumpet features a MalonePipe leadpipe design, which provides response and accurate slotting. yamaha.com

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GEAR GUIDE

DJ & LIGHTING

DJ TECH | DIF-1S

Scratch it Up

DJ Tech's DIF-1S is a professional DJ scratch mixer with integrated Mini inno-FADER from Audio Innovate. The DIF-1S's Timecode Mode makes it easy to switch between ordinary turntable setup and DVS setup. The DIF-1S serves as a full-feature two-channel mixer with three-band EQ and mic input. djtechprousa.com



AMERICAN AUDIO | ELS15A

On The Move

American Audio's ELS15A is a lightweight 15-inch active speaker designed for mobile DJs. The versatile ELS15A features both XLR and RCA line inputs, so users can plug in controllers, DJ mixers, laptops and mobile devices. americanaudio.us



CHAUVET DJ | FREEDOM PAR QUAD-5

Break Free

Chauvet DJ has expanded its portable Freedom series with the Freedom Par Quad-5. The new units are fitted with five 5-watt, quad-color LEDs for a bright, powerful output with color mixing and smooth, even washes. In addition to the standard black housing, Freedom Par Quad-5 is also available in a white casing, making it an ideal fixture for wedding venues. chauvetdj.com

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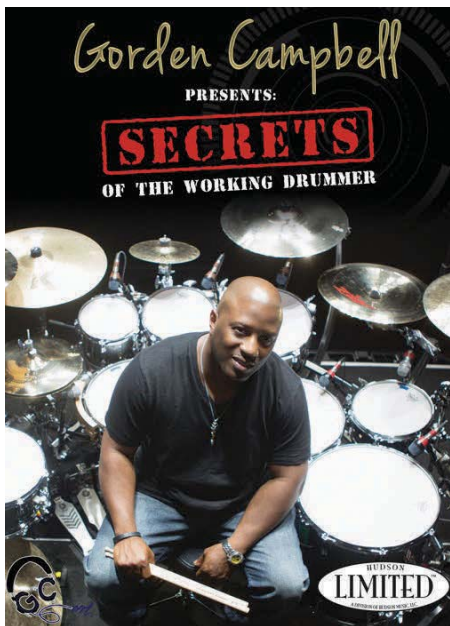


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HUDSON | 'SECRETS OF THE WORKING DRUMMER'

Secrets Revealed

Hudson Music recently released the educational DVD package from drummer Gordon Campbell, *Secrets of the Working Drummer*. Topics addressed in the package include the basic role of the drummer, basic song form, versatility and soloing in a musical situation. hudsonmusic.com

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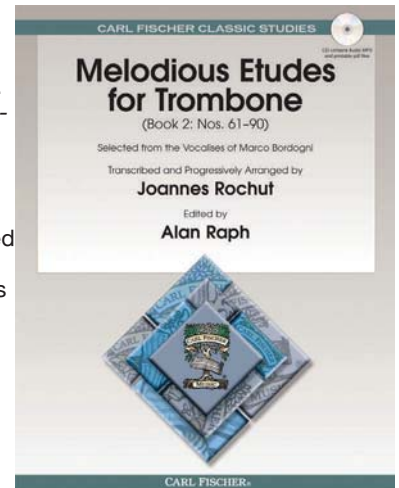
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CARL FISCHER | 'MELODIOUS ETUDES FOR TROMBONE, VOLUME 2'

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Carl Fischer Music's *Melodious Etudes for Trombone, Volume 2*, is transcribed and arranged by Joannes Rochut and newly edited by Alan Raph. In 1928, Joannes Rochut edited *Melodious Etudes for Trombone*, and, more than 80 years later, Carl Fischer asked trombonist and author Alan Raph to re-edit the book to fix errors that have existed since its inception. On the included CD, students will find PDF files of all of these piano accompaniments as well as MP3 recordings by pianist Rae Moses. MSRP: \$19.99. carlfischer.com

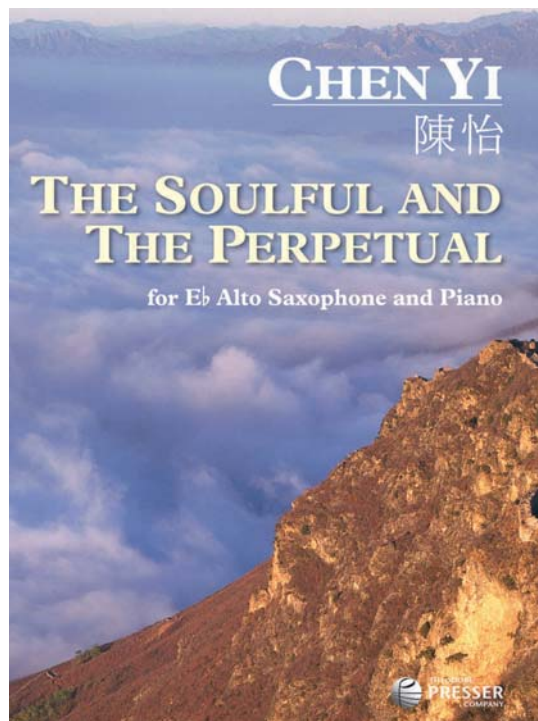


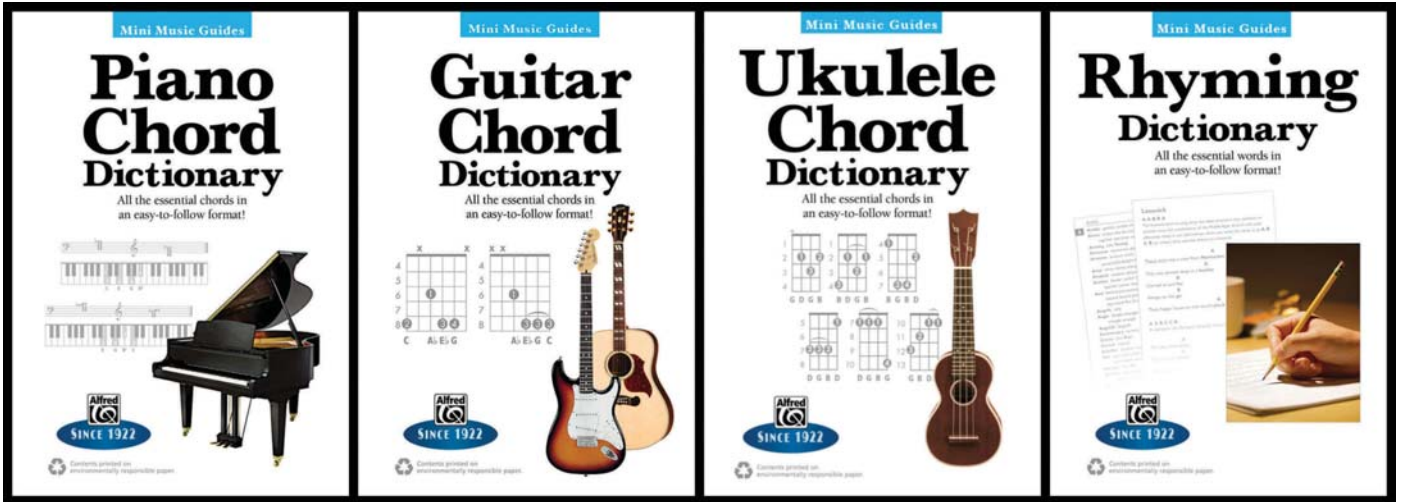
THEODORE PRESSER | 'THE SOULFUL AND THE PERPETUAL'

Music for the Soul

Theodore Presser has added a new work from Chen Yi for Eb alto saxophone and piano titled *The Soulful and the Perpetual*. The work takes form in two diametrically

opposed movements. "The Soulful" is lyrical, with moving and gripping melodies, while "The Perpetual" uses perpetual motion to symbolize consistency and perseverance. presser.com





ALFRED! 'MINI MUSIC GUIDES'

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Alfred's new *Mini Music Guides* provide essential information in a convenient size that will fit in DVD-sized racks. These books are printed in travel sizes for convenience. The first titles to be released in this series are the *Piano Chord Dictionary*, *Rhyming Dictionary*, *Guitar Chord Dictionary* and *Ukulele Chord Dictionary*. MSRP: \$9.99. alfred.com



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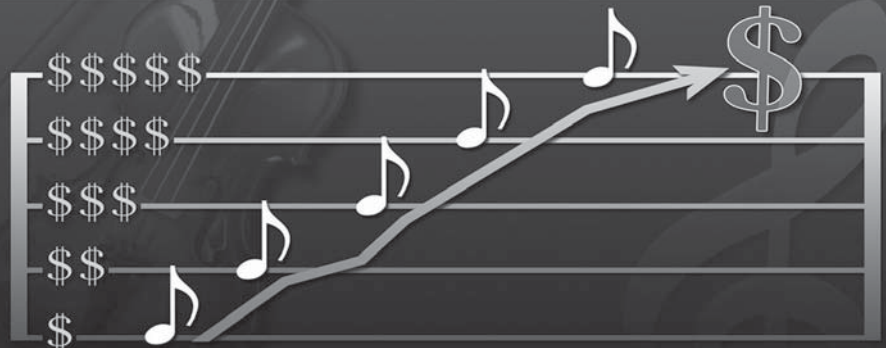


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Shawn Gerhart

Marty's Music Store
Anville, Pa.

It isn't always "jam session time" at Marty's Music Store. We limit playing time, but have to be discretionary about it. You don't want to cut off someone who is buying, but you also have to come up with a closer. I think it sustains the equipment more than anything.

The owner of the store controls inventory very well, so it comes up quite frequently that we only have one left. It's all about presentation, rather than me just grabbing a model from the floor and putting it up on the counter.

One thing you have to explain is that being a floor model doesn't affect the warranty. Bring that warranty up and say, "This is covered whether I get you a brand-new guitar in a box or you take this one." And if a customer is uncomfortable with a floor model, I'll get them a new one and swap.

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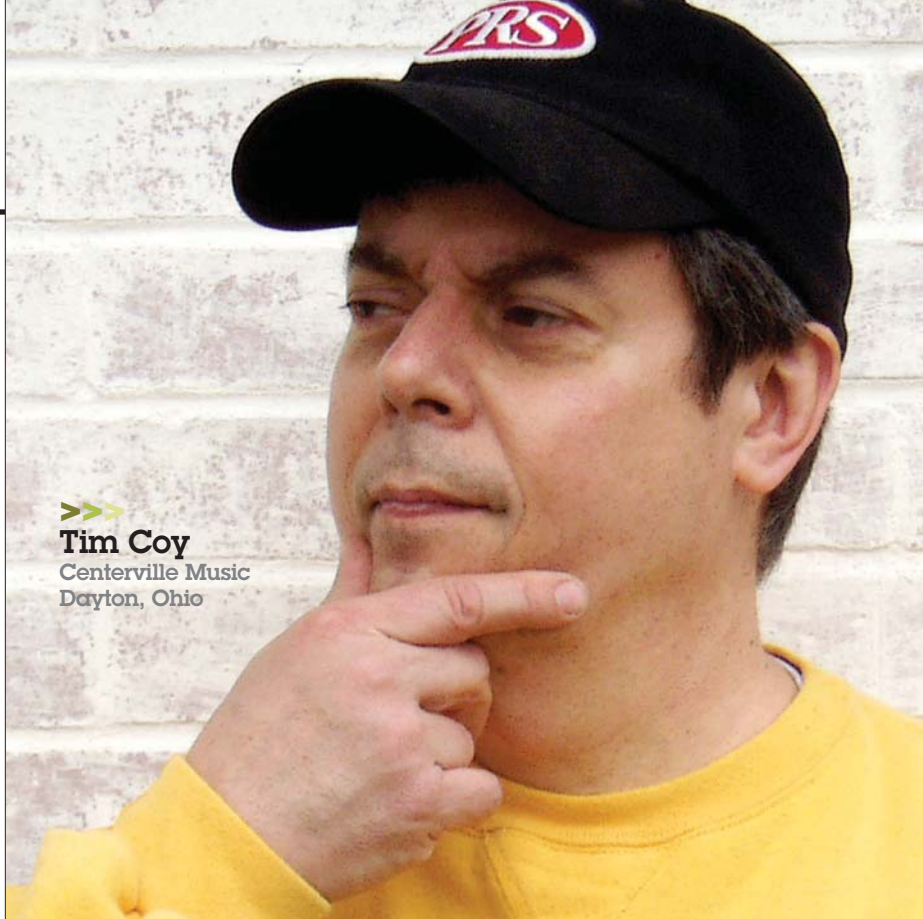
Phil Gause

Vance Music Center
Bloomington, Ind.

We do our own service here at the store, so most things that have any sort of damage we take care of, unless it's too egregious of a cosmetic wound. There's always a limit. The customer in our case is usually someone who is just looking for a bargain.

Occasionally, we get people that come through just to see if we have any vintage stuff coming in. They're the ones that will look for stuff that's wounded and see if they can get a good deal on it.

Naturally, we show them that it's damaged and let them know that at the reduced price, it's not going to be exactly the same as a new one that has no wear and tear. Cosmetic things such as strings, you'll just replace, but if it's a deep flaw, then that's something else. You can show how the instrument is still a viable instrument as far as playability and sound go.



>>>

Tim Coy

Centerville Music
Dayton, Ohio

How do you sell floor models or damaged gear?

It depends on what the problem or product is, but if it comes down to electronics or something like that, we offer a simple price reduction. For us, a discount varies anywhere between 20 and 40 percent off of what it would usually sell for.

Any new item that has never been sold still carries a full warranty. Even though it's a vendor warranty, we're always sure to tell people about stuff like that. If they're worried that they'll have a problem with it within 30 days, we assure them that they can bring it in within that time.

In this economy, everybody is interested in floor models, and

guitars are a different story altogether. I'm a firm believer that if someone's buying a guitar, they should be buying the one they just played, because guitar models vary. We also set [our rigs] up ourselves. If you play a guitar off our floor, I can't hand a customer one in a box and assure it's going to be exactly like the one they just played. Unless it's a Christmas guitar, I usually don't carry more than one or two models in stock that are identical, and we'll babysit them.

At some stores, the business model is that anybody can play anything that they want for

as long as they want, but that just means the store will wind up with a lot of beat-up instruments.

We take care of our floor models here. Customers are welcome to play anything that they want, but I'll get it down from the wall and make sure that they don't have something on that's going to scratch it. I'll ask them to take their coat off during the winter.

High-end floor models tend to sell quickly for us. We get a certain type of clientele looking for them because we're a guitar specialty shop, and we typically sell certain types of guitar products.

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