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FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

NOVEMBER 2012
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"From day one, you have to get the bands to begin to own the process."

PEAVEY OPENS HOLLYWOOD FACTORY SHOWROOM

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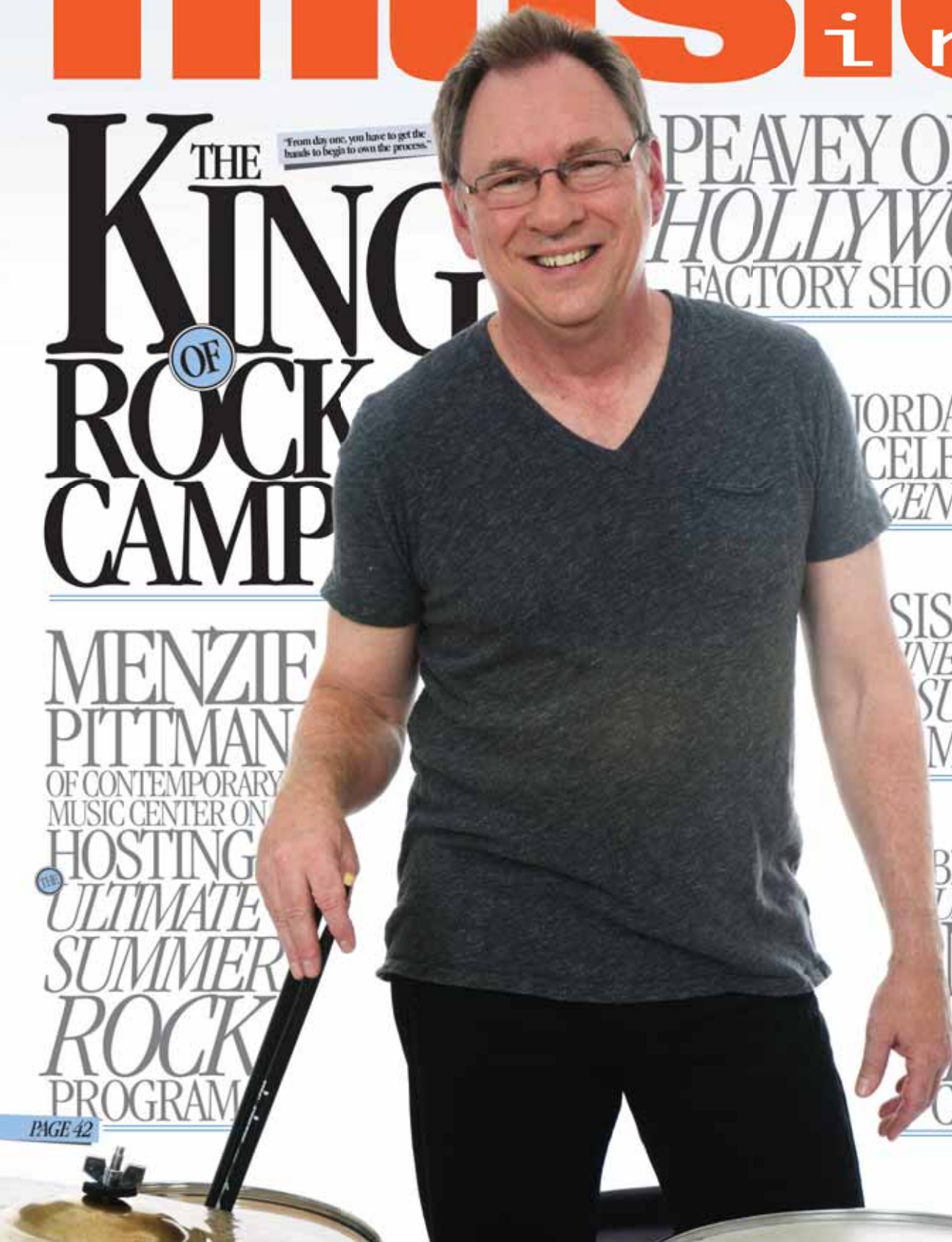
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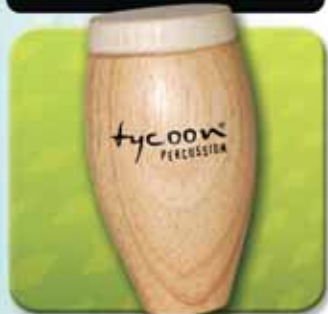
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Photo by Panos Trivoulides

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PERSPECTIVE

PERSPECTIVE | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

RETAILERS UNITE

This year, I found further proof that we work in the greatest industry in the world.

Mind you, I knew we worked in a unique industry, one where fellow retailers openly shared best practices, if for no other reason than to lift all ships. But what surprised me was to see examples of retailers, even rivals, partnering up to better their communities, customers and, in many cases, businesses.

Two months back, we profiled the Portland Drum Fair. Two competing Portland, Ore., drum dealers, Revival Drum Shop and Rhythm Traders, co-hosted the event late last year. The idea was to combine forces and throw a fair that grew the local drum market. Revival Drum Shop, which is only four years old, raised its profile and embedded itself deeper in the drumming community. Rhythm Traders saw a double-digit rise in sales that month, compared to the previous year.

Kathi Kretzer, owner of Kretzer Piano in Jupiter, Fla., also recently called to tell us about her inaugural Physicians Talent Showcase. She got the idea from fellow piano retailer and *Music Inc.* columnist Greg Billings. He not only encouraged her to use the concept but actually served as her

advisor throughout the project. I asked Billings why he helped Kretzer, and he simply said that a lot of people helped him in his career, too. The showcase let Kretzer make inroads in the lucrative physician market. (See the story on page 14.)

A less warm-and-fuzzy but often effective retail partnership is the rental-affiliate relationship. This month's cover story, Contemporary Music Center of Haymarket, Va., is a rental affiliate for school music chain Music & Arts. For Menzie Pittman, owner of Contemporary Music Center, the partnership gives him a turnkey way to compete in the complex rental business and access to the "best brands" in the industry.

"They do all the in-house bookkeeping," he said of Music & Arts. "We both handle inventory management, so we have two people managing inventory. And they're *really* good at it." (The story begins on page 42.)

Here's a final thought: If you need help, ask for it. There are more than enough good people in this business with more than enough great ideas they're willing to give away.

If I sound sentimental, it's because this is my last editorial with *Music Inc.* The good news is I'll still see you in my next life as a member of NAMM's team. In departing, I'd like to thank *Music Inc.* President Kevin Maher for his belief in the magazine, Publisher Frank Alkyer for his ongoing guidance and sense of humor, and the rest of the team for being the best darn magazine-makers in the business. Most of all, I thank you, reader. It's been an honor serving you and an industry that I love. **MI**



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LETTERS

Fischer's Not Slowing Down

Thanks so much for the thoughtful feature "Still Going Strong" on Carl Fischer's 140th anniversary (October 2012). Truly, we would not be where we are without the support of our wonderful retailers and customers, as well as such publications as *Music Inc.* that so faithfully report the goings-on of our industry.

We are honored to be in business after all these years, and we hope to serve the educational music community for years to come.

Sonya Kim
CEO
Carl Fischer

'Xie Xie' From American Lighting

Our resident lighting maven, Aussie-by-nature and China-resident-by-choice Jeremy Mair, would like to pass along his appreciation for *Music Inc.*'s October profile "Mile-High Launchpad" about the new Neo-Neo entertainment lighting project.

Mair will be making his first-ever visit to the United States for this year's LDI Show and looks forward to making good on our company's commitment to bringing competitively priced, state-of-the-art entertainment lighting within reach of America's independent retailers (or at least as close as a couple days' truck ride from Denver — where we are headquartered).

Learning what we can do better as a factory-owned operation to structure our sales strategy into a win-win for ourselves and American-owned brick-and-mortar music stores is something

we also look forward to — as well as possibly having some fun in Las Vegas, where the LDI Show is being held.

Up until recently, I personally had been reading *Music Inc.* for the past eight years from an office in Taipei, China. It's always nice when someone notices you're back home.

Jason Echols
Director of Sales for
Entertainment Lighting
American Lighting

Congrats & Thanks

We'd like to extend a huge congratulations to *Music Inc.* on being named Magazine of the Year by the American

Society of Business Publication Editors (ASBPE).

It's always great when recognition goes to really nice people. Your publication has been so good to our store, Ward-Brodt Music, over the years, and I have had the privilege of getting to know *Music Inc.*'s president, editors and staff writers.

We'd also like to thank Zach Phillips and the staff at *Music Inc.* for covering the remodeling of our store in the article "Remodeling Smart" in the September issue.

And we can't thank our own staff enough for all the sweat equity that went into the project.



I'm proud of the work everyone did and the results from their efforts. The ultimate reward has been the positive customer feedback we've been receiving on a day-to-day basis.

Mick Faulhaber & Connie Smith
Ward-Brodt Music
Madison, Wis.

Kawai's Higher Education

I would like to thank Katie Kailus for profiling the Kawai Keyboard Academy in the article "Kawai Higher Learning" (August 2012).

I'm particularly proud of this event. My co-workers and I are passionate about our products, and we're pleased with the large number of retail sales personnel who journeyed across the country and put in the long hours to learn what makes the Kawai line of pianos unique and saleable. That passion is contagious, and we enjoy hearing success stories often upon the very first day of the attendees' return.

Many lifelong friendships have been formed at the Kawai Keyboard Academy, and I look forward to that aspect each and every year.

Music Inc.'s coverage and acknowledgement of this event is much appreciated.

Sean O'Shea
Retail Training & Digital Piano
Marketing Specialist
Kawai America

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»» ■■■■ RETAIL

JORDAN KITT'S MUSIC | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

KITT'S AT 100

On Sept. 16, Jordan Kitt's Music co-owners Chris Syllaba and Ray Fugere welcomed more than 100 employees, vendors and guests to the Strathmore, a mansion in Rockville, Md. During the gala, Syllaba explained that all four Jordan Kitt's stores, year to date, had posted "significant" sales increases.

Two years ago, he would've been telling a different story.

Syllaba and Fugere, both longtime employees of the Rockville-based piano dealership, took over Kitt's in June 2011 after the company fell under hard times. In the first six months of that year alone, Kitt's had shrunk from 11 to four stores. Now, under new owners, business has "improved greatly," according to Syllaba.

"The week of Labor Day alone we sold 91 pianos company-wide — and 23 the week after Labor Day," said the Jordan Kitt's president.

It's not the first time new leadership has brought Kitt's back from the brink. Former owner Bill McCormick took over the company in 1971 as it was on the verge of folding. (By the mid-'90s, he'd built it



Ray Fugere (left) and Chris Syllaba at Jordan Kitt's anniversary gala

into the largest U.S. piano retail chain.) Previous leaders also had to steer the company through the Great Depression and World War II, when many manufacturers stopped producing pianos altogether. ("All of a sudden, you had dealers who couldn't buy inventory," Syllaba said.)

And he and Fugere have had their own challenges since the buyout. Namely, they've faced a sluggish piano-market recovery and the task of refreshing an ailing organization. Being Kitt's insiders, according to Syllaba, has helped them tackle these issues.

"Ray and I had a pretty good idea of what parts of the culture needed to change and what parts needed to stay," he said. "And we have many employees in the company who have been with it 10, 20, 30 years and are very capable."

REVITALIZING KITT'S

Boosting morale turned out to be key to refreshing the company.

Syllaba mentioned that the buyout itself helped reinstall employees' confidence in Kitt's. "They were so excited that the acquisition was successful," he

said. "People have such terrific loyalty to Jordan Kitt's. They were ecstatic that it wasn't going down the tubes."

After the acquisition, the new owners charged employees to take more initiative with tasks that were previously handled by "the old bureaucracy." Ironically, Syllaba said everyone was happy to do it.

"Everyone was willing to pitch in a little bit more and on things that, in the past, were done by corporate. Now, a lot of those things are being done at the store level. That can be motivational, too, because you're kind of empowering the salespeople to do things they'd never done before."

The piano market has also been coming back, albeit slowly. As Syllaba noted, "Everyone has gone downstream," too. A recent upsurge in used pianos at the Washington, D.C., stores is the most obvious example of this shift. Syllaba estimated that used pianos now make up 15 percent of unit sales at Kitt's two D.C.-area stores, a big change from previous years. These days, the D.C. stores get two to three calls daily from residents trying to sell their instruments.

"My guess, off the top of my

head, is that our used piano sales, especially in Washington, are at least 50-, maybe even 100-percent higher than in our history,” Syllaba said.

“In the Atlanta market, we don’t have as many used pianos. But each of our stores in Washington has at least 15–20 used pianos at any given time — maybe even 25. Then there are always five or 10 in the warehouse that are in the process of being prepped.”

ATLANTA FACELIFT

The new owners tackled one additional challenge after taking over Kitt’s: an Atlanta location that looked like “a dollar store in really bad condition,” Syllaba said with a laugh. The store’s outdated look was espe-



cially problematic since it traded in more new pianos than the D.C. store.

In September 2011, Kitt’s completed a two-month-long remodeling of the dealership. The project included new carpeting,



laminat flooring, updated lighting and a look that resembled the more stylish Alpharetta, Ga.,

location. The outside also got repainted dark red.

“It didn’t cost that much to do it,” Syllaba said. “We worked with a local contractor who one of our employees knew. It was just him and his family.”

Since the facelift, Syllaba pointed out that the Atlanta store’s sales have increased by more than 30 percent, year to date. The challenge going forward is keeping sales rising in a tough piano market.

“The only frustrating thing is that it’s not soaring,” he said of the piano business. “It’s still a little bit up and down.

But the up is going generally in the up direction instead of the down direction.” **MI**

signal matters...





Kathi Kretzer (top row, middle) and performers in the Physicians Talent Showcase

KRETZER PIANO | BY ZACH PHILLIPS

MUSICAL DOCTORS FIGHT HOMELESSNESS

On Aug. 21, 18 physicians moonlighted as musicians to fight child homelessness.

The Physicians Talent Showcase, hosted by Kretzer Piano of Jupiter, Fla., featured 13 acts with docs rocking out, getting soulful and showing off their classical chops. Held at The Harriet Himmel Theater in West Palm Beach, Fla., the event raised \$38,000 for Adopt-A-Family and, specifically, to benefit homeless children. Kretzer Piano owner Kathi Kretzer added that Adopt-A-Family also received a matching grant, bringing the total amount raised to nearly \$80,000.

During the finale, performers gathered onstage to sing “Seasons Of Love” from “Rent.” One physician, Dr. Tim Abou-Sayed, even wrote and performed a parody of “I Will Survive” about his life as a surgeon. Participating doctors rehearsed for two months prior to the concert with Kretzer’s assistance.

“It was a tremendous amount of work but well worth it,” she said. “The doctor friends and contacts I made during the five-month

journey will benefit me for years to come.”

Kretzer modeled her program after the Physicians’ Talent Showcase created by Greg Billings of Steinway Piano Gallery in Naples, Fla. She credited Billings for advising her during the process. “His expertise in this area was invaluable to me,” Kretzer said.

She noted that she didn’t host the Physicians Talent Showcase to generate



immediate sales. The program was designed to seed the market and promote her company’s name in the community.

“It’s not like doing a college

sale,” Kretzer said. “It’s building your name constantly in the community, so when those people are in the market for a piano, you get the call.

“I know that in the long run, the publicity and goodwill I got will make it worthwhile. [Physicians are] already calling me about next year. They were calling me the next day.”

GIST PIANO CENTER | VENTURES

Gist Opens Steinway Showroom

Gist Piano Center announced the grand opening of its new Louisville, Ky., Steinway & Sons showroom in September as part of National Piano Month and the retailer's 40th anniversary.

The showroom features a variety of handmade Steinway pianos and selections from Steinway's Boston and Essex lines. Located inside Gist Piano Center's 14,000-square-foot facility, the showroom also lets customers browse the company's digital library of Steinway materials and watch a movie and television show about the piano company.

"For over 150 years, Steinway & Sons has been the world's finest example of American craftsmanship and artistry," said John Gist, the dealership's president. "We felt it was time to give Steinway & Sons the elegant display space their reputation deserves.

"We want to give everyone who aspires to own a Steinway the chance to explore these instruments' unique personalities in a comfortable and upscale space. Purchasing a Steinway is different from purchasing a car or even a house. It's more like finding a friend to share your love of music."

"Steinway & Sons is the most carefully documented musical instrument builder in the world," said Steinway & Sons District Manager Dan Onnen. "We are delighted to have all of these materials available at Gist Piano Center."

Gist Piano Center's new Steinway showroom lets clients browse a digital library of the piano maker's materials

FRANK & CAMILLE'S EAST | AWARD

Kawai Honors Frank & Camille's

Frank & Camille's East recently received Kawai's Top Dealer Award for the Northeast territory. It marked the second year in a row that company owner Camille Scheidemann and her staff received this recognition. Bryan Harvey,

Kawai's Northeast regional sales manager, presented the award.

"Being recognized as a top Kawai dealer is a testament to the hard work of a most dedicated and knowledgeable sales staff," Scheidemann said.

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SWEETWATER | TECHNOLOGY

SWEETWATER REVAMPS ONLINE GUITAR BROWSER

Sweetwater of Fort Wayne, Ind., has debuted Guitar Gallery 2.0 on sweetwater.com. The upgraded, feature-enhanced gallery lets customers search and browse thousands of guitars by viewing high-resolution photos of almost every model in Sweetwater's warehouse.

Guitar Gallery 2.0 offers such new search options as specific color, pickup type, body style and tonewoods. The results can be filtered to match different budgets. Product pages feature as many as 10 different photos of

the same guitar and include guitar case photos. Customers can even purchase individual guitars by serial number. According to a statement from Sweetwater, each instrument is evaluated through the company's 55-point evaluation process, which is performed by a team of guitar techs before the photos are taken.

The gallery's look has also been enhanced. Customers can configure the view to see only what's important to them and save their favorites for future reference. A new comparison



tool helps make informed decisions between multiple guitars.

"A first in the music industry, the original Guitar Gallery brought the thrill of a guitar showroom to the comfort of your home, letting you see the actual guitar that you're buying from every angle," said Chuck

Surack, president and founder of Sweetwater. "Our newly enhanced Guitar Gallery goes far beyond that, letting you filter through thousands of instruments to quickly find your dream guitar. There's nothing anywhere else online like the experience of shopping on Guitar Gallery."

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Inside Guitar Center's new Ocala, Fla., store

GUITAR CENTER | OPENING

GC ROLLS OUT OCALA STORE

Guitar Center hosted the grand opening of its new Ocala, Fla., store on the evening of Sept. 20. It marks the company's 235th retail location.

To celebrate, GC offered exclusive savings, gear giveaways and free events. The Ocala store features Guitar Center Studios, the company's in-house music lessons facility, and GC Garage, an on-site guitar repair service.

The store also boasts GC's new multichannel "endless aisle," which includes not only Ocala inventory but also access to the company's \$400 million in new and used inventory in stores and warehouses nationwide.

Along with special programs at the Ocala store, GC will offer nationwide programs that Ocala residents can participate in.



Best in Music's anniversary bash

BEST IN MUSIC | ANNIVERSARY

Best in Birthday Bashes

Best in Music celebrated its 23rd anniversary the weekend of Sept. 22–23 with a parking lot bash. The annual event also turned out to be the best sales day in the company's history, according to Marcus Hight, general manager of the Orem, Utah-based full-line dealership.

As with previous events, Best in Music held drawings for 10 guitars,

worth more than \$10,000. A Fender American Standard Stratocaster served as the grand prize. The company also gave away more than \$2,000 worth of strings and accessories to the crowd.

According to a company statement, sales rose 87 percent compared to last year's anniversary-celebration weekend. Saturday's sales alone were up 58 percent.

RETAIL



HOT LICKS GUITAR SHOP | CHARITY

Hot Licks Donates to Catholic Schools

Hot Licks Guitar Shop of Waldorf, Md., recently partnered with the Catholic Business Association (CBA) to aid Charles County Catholic schools. Company owner Paul McDermott and his six siblings created a scholarship for St. Mary's School in honor of their parents, Tommy and Patricia. McDermott and his siblings worked with CBA President Tom Agostinelli to create a combined \$6,000 scholarship, which was presented to the school's principal, Sharon Caniglia, on Sept. 17.



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Note from Joe

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“The path to increased influence, impact and leadership effectiveness is paved with personal growth...”

– Best-selling authors **Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller**

Earlier this year, Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller released their new book, *Great Leaders Grow: Becoming a Leader for Life*. One of many titles by this power team of authors, this parable takes an honest look at the journey of a young man as he discovers the importance of continued growth—as a leader and as a human being. The story directly connects the ability to grow with the ability to lead, as the man works through a four-step plan to achieve his highest potential.

Thanks to such a vibrant Membership made up of industry professionals like you, NAMM has been at the crossroads of industry growth and leadership:

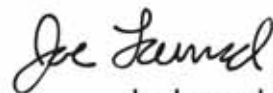
- Our Board of Directors come from many different backgrounds, yet they share the goal of growth and prosperity as they make decisions on behalf of the entire industry.
- We interview our industry leaders for the Oral History Program to capture unique anecdotes about their journeys, while focusing on the historical aspects of how they weathered ups and downs, pioneered new ideas and maintained their status as key players in the music products world. This collection grows more priceless with every interview and will influence our industry for decades to come.
- NAMM U sessions are offered free at the shows and online, breaking down the barriers of time and expense. Best of all, they feature respected industry peers and outside experts who present ideas and fresh approaches to everyday business in a concise, action-oriented manner so you can apply them to your business immediately.

November marks a significant change for our education program at NAMM. Our Director of Professional Development, Ken Wilson, is retiring and a familiar face, Zach Phillips, will transition into Ken's role from his post as editor at *Music Inc.* and *UpBeat Daily*. While previously moderating and speaking at NAMM U sessions, Zach will take the lead in creating professional development opportunities. We see it as a move to NAMM U 3.0—the next chapter of our idea-generating sessions and seminars—while staying true to our objective of providing relevant and high-value educational programs for our Members.

The sessions being planned for the upcoming NAMM Show shed new light in the areas of store management, online sales, social media, time management and more. The theme of this year's Breakfast of Champions will focus on leadership, with industry icons sharing their own stories of challenges and solutions in today's growing, changing marketplace.

Industry professionals from around the globe who are focused on charging ahead as leaders will make the trip to Anaheim for NAMM U to take advantage of this key benefit of Membership, and you should too.

Make a commitment to learning and growth, and join us in Anaheim. You'll leave informed, inspired and ready to as you lead your business to future success.



Joe Lamond
NAMM PRESIDENT AND CEO



NAME NAMM News November No 2012

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SUPPLY



Left: inside the new Peavey Hollywood Showroom; middle: Alex Strio; right: Hartley Peavey

PEAVEY HOLLYWOOD | BY SARA FARR

PEAVEY GOES HOLLYWOOD

The new Peavey Hollywood showroom is a place of musical wonder for consumers and MI dealers alike.

The company hosted a weeklong celebration from Sept. 1–5 to mark the facility’s grand opening. This event included appearances by company founder Hartley Peavey and big-name musicians, as well as live performances.

Hartley Peavey’s idea behind

Peavey Hollywood was to create a factory showroom, artist relations headquarters and multimedia dealer education center that brought together Peavey’s high-end product lines in a high-traffic musician’s destination.

PEAVEY’S PLAYHOUSE

located in the middle of Guitar Row on Sunset Boulevard, the facility is designed to bring in foot traffic and provide a beefed-up West Coast presence for the

manufacturer, which showcases its own family of amplifiers and recording and P.A. equipment, as well as its Budda Amplification, Composite Acoustics guitars and Trace Elliot lines. Peavey Hollywood also features products from the MediaMatrix and Crest Audio lines, along with exclusive Jack Daniels and Marvel Super Hero guitars and accessories.

“We chose the products based on a desire to show as complete a product scope as possible within

the space,” Peavey said.

The showroom, which is compact but not crowded, presents the product offerings with clean, eye-catching displays. It also boasts a fully functional concert stage setup that allows for live performances. During the grand-opening party, Peavey artist Alex Skolnick performed with his jazz trio on the front stage, while Metalachi performed on a stage outside the back of the showroom.

Different displays throughout the space focus on showcasing each of Peavey's strengths, and the high walls feature framed artwork from signature artists.

BRAND EXPERIENCE

As the manufacturer developed the idea for Peavey Hollywood, it morphed into a way to give musicians, audio professionals and retailers a 360-degree view of Peavey's philosophy and approach to business.

"It is a unique showroom experience, which makes it the perfect dealer resource," Peavey said.

Peavey Hollywood has a multicamera high-definition video setup that can stream artist performances, clinics, product highlights and industry tips online.

Peavey also plans to broadcast sales training clinics to dealers with live-chat capabilities to enhance the session. *Music Inc.* columnist Kenny Smith is managing the store and also developing an extended-stay intern program for qualified dealers, who can send employees to learn firsthand about Peavey's products, sales, marketing, displays and promotions.

Peavey said he hopes staff "will then be able to take those skills back to their hometown stores and help Peavey dealers become even more successful. Customer and dealer outreach have been essential to our success."

While not every Peavey product is physically available in the space, the company has ensured every product is represented. For example, dealers can use in-store touchscreen technology to choose what family of loudspeakers they want to test out and use their own music to do so. There are also ways that dealers and consumers can demo Peavey's newest product offerings, such as amplifier modeling software ReValver and sound module MuseBox.

"We think that being able to demo professional recording tools and pro-performance tools will open a lot of eyes to the innovation that goes into Peavey products and how those products can enable musicians to achieve greater heights in their music and performance," Peavey said. "It's a great way to learn about the products and the technologies that make them better than anything else on the market." **MI**





BLACKSTAR | BY KATIE KAILUS

Ian Robinson (left)
and Paul Hayhoe

FAB FIVE

In March 2007, Blackstar introduced its first product lines in a saturated amp market. The company rose quickly, and today, it celebrates its fifth anniversary and introduces new technology with the ID:Series of programmable guitar amps.

Although the company didn't release any product until 2007, Blackstar was founded in 2004 by four former Marshall Amplification employees.

With 50-plus combined years of experience, the team made its debut with the Series One and Artisan lines of amplifiers, as well as the five-tube overdrive pedals, at Musikmesse Frankfurt five years ago.

"Since then, we have moved out from the shed and into our own premises with a purpose-built lab and added more than 30 talented people to our team," said Paul Hayhoe, sales and marketing director for the

U.K.-based company and one of the original team members. "We have continued to grow, but one thing remains true: We're all musicians and truly passionate about what we love, which is making great guitar amps for players around the world."

STAYING POWER

Hayhoe attributed Blackstar's quick rise in a crowded market to the fact that the company has brought distinct innovations to each of its products.

"As musicians ourselves, we always focus on ensuring that our products actually address the needs of guitarists," he said.

Blackstar's hiring strategy has also contributed to its success. According to Hayhoe, the company's execs go out of their way to get the right people for the right positions.

"Even now, nearly every member of the Blackstar team

plays an instrument and is extremely passionate about music and our industry," Hayhoe said. "Without their hard work, drive and creativity, we wouldn't have been able to achieve half what we have."

Hayhoe said he would like to see the company become the go-to brand for guitarists around the world.

"In 2013, there will be more new products coming and more exciting innovations," he said.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

One of those innovations is Blackstar's new ID:Series. Slated to hit stores in November, each amp in the series (15-watt combo, 30-watt combo, 60-watt combo, 2x60-watt combo, 60-watt head and 100-watt head) has a control set like a traditional amp, coupled with versatile programmability, effects and USB connectivity.

"We're really excited about the leap forward it represents for programmable guitar amps," Hayhoe said. "Having Blackstar amps even more accessible to players is something we've been working towards since the beginning."

Blackstar's True Valve Power technology is one of the amps' standout features. It reproduces six distinct power tube responses — EL84, 6V6, EL34, KT66, 6L6 and KT88. When engaged, True Valve Power technology delivers the response, dynamics, sag and breakup characteristics of a tube amp, as well as the same power output as an equivalent tube power amp.

"This means that for the first time in an affordable, programmable amp series, guitarists will have an amp that can deliver, during a live setting, the same loudness and feel as a tube amp," Hayhoe said. **MI**

LOS CABOS | DISTRIBUTION

LOS CABOS ADDS ANOTHER

Los Cabos Drumsticks recently added St. Louis-based MMB Music as a new distributor.

"We're excited to be working with MMB," said Matt Carter, director of marketing and artist relations for Los Cabos Drumsticks. "They are extremely focused on promoting our products, and we're looking forward to building a strong relationship with them into the future."

"Los Cabos Drumsticks and MMB Music are a perfect fit," said MMB Music's Michelle Brady. "MMB has a long history of choosing high-quality products, and here we have another winner. We encourage dealers to take a look at our special launch promotions and see why we are looking forward to a long-lasting relationship." [\[loscabosdrumsticks.com\]](http://loscabosdrumsticks.com)

Pete Townshend

Photo by Ross Helfin



TEC | EVENT

TEC Foundation to Honor Pete Townshend

Pete Townshend, lead guitarist for The Who, will receive the Les Paul Award at the 28th annual Technical Excellence & Creativity Awards, which will be held during The NAMM Show 2013. Presented by the TEC Foundation for Excellence in Audio, the TEC Awards recognizes outstanding achievement in professional audio technology and production.

The Les Paul Award is presented annually to honor individuals or institutions that have set high standards in the creative application of audio and music technology. Russ Paul, son of Les Paul, will present Pete Townshend with the honor on behalf of the Les Paul Foundation, the award's sponsor.

"Following in Les' footsteps, Townshend personifies both guitar wizardry and technical prowess in both studio and live music performance," said Michael Braunstein, executive director of the Les Paul Foundation. "He is a true original and a natural choice for the Les Paul Award honor."

The awards ceremony will be held Jan. 25, 2013. tecfoundation.com

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PARTNERSHIP

Tri-Tech Acquires CCE

Tri-Tech has acquired Computer Consultants Exchange (CCE). The Boulder, Colo.-based company is the developer of Consignment Ease and Consignment Success software, industry recognized retail solutions for consignment and resale stores. CCE has more than 1,700 installed users who will be added to Tri-Tech's customer base.

"We feel our expertise in inventory management will also benefit the consignment industry, and we are pleased to welcome CCE and its valued customers to Tri-Tech," said Paul Acton, president of Tri-Tech.

technology4retailers.com

AWARD

Black Receives PAS Honor

The Percussive Arts Society (PAS) recently awarded Dave Black, vice president and editor of school and church publications at Alfred, with the 2012 Percussive Arts Society President's Industry Award for his leadership and impact on the music community. This award was established to recognize individuals in the percussion industry and



beyond who have demonstrated significant achievement in their fields and outstanding support of PAS.

"We are so proud of Dave's career achievements," said Ron Manus, Alfred's CEO. "His legacy is unparalleled."

alfred.com

PROMOTION

Hohner Debuts Affiliated Customizer Program

Hohner recently launched the Hohner Affiliated Customizer Program at the 49th annual Society for the Preservation and Advancement of Harmonicas (SPAH) convention in Irving, Texas. Harmonica Product Manager Ryan Wear awarded Joe Spiers formal certification.

"Joe Spiers is a fine craftsman whose work will always make Hohner proud," said Joe Filisko, master customizer and 2001's SPAH Harmonica Player of the Year. Affiliate customizer certification is awarded to Hohner harmonica customizers. To be considered for this certification, a customizer's products are independently examined by Filisko. hohnerusa.com

MUSIC GROUP | VENUES

Music Group Plans to Construct \$50 Million Campus

Music Group has revealed plans to build a new campus that will house the company's operations in China. The new 50-acre complex will include R&D, manufacturing, a residential village and green space cultivated around the site's natural wetlands.

The company has committed \$50 million to the project and expects it to be completed by 2014.

"This new home will bring together our people from several different sites — our world-class manufacturing and integrated logistics teams — into one environmentally sustain-

able location woven into the natural local landscape," said company founder and CEO Uli Behringer. "My goal is to make this a place where talented people can attain their life goals without compromise."

The new campus will be home to nearly 5,000 employees and will include more than 3 million square feet of automated factory space housing over 100 surface mount machines, automated transducer lines, injection-molding and hydro-forming facilities, and a total clean-air wood products and painting pavilion. behringer.com



Karmin performs at Beyond Sound

CASIO | EVENT

CASIO HOSTS BEYOND SOUND

Casio hosted Beyond Sound, an event to celebrate the evolution of its Privia digital piano line, at the Edison Ballroom in New York on Sept. 11.

During the event, Casio also launched four new models: the PX-150, PX-350, PX-750 and PX-850.

"Casio prides itself in continuing to evolve the Privia line, as well as all

of its musical instruments, in order to meet the needs of today's musicians and provide them with quality products to express their passion of music and performance," said Stephen Schmidt, vice president of Casio's electronic musical instruments division.

The event included performances by Karmin, Tom Brislin and Enferno. casiomusicgear.com



Members of Arcade Fire with guitar recipients

GODIN | CHARITY

Godin, Arcade Fire Donate Guitars to Haiti

Godin Guitars recently announced its continued support of fellow Montrealers Arcade Fire in the band's sustained efforts and charitable contributions to Haiti following the 2010 earthquake that devastated the country.

Godin has donated a second round of acoustic guitars to be distributed in and around the Central Plateau region of Haiti by Kanpe, an organization dedicated to rebuilding Haiti.

Similar to the initial donation of 33 guitars back in March 2011, this second round features 40 acoustic guitars, including steel-string models from Godin's Simon & Patrick line, along with nylon-string models from the Lapatrie line. The donation also includes a stand-up bass provided by Arcade Fire.

During a visit to Haiti early this year, members of Arcade Fire had the chance to see the guitars, which had already been distributed, in the hands of some of the musicians in the area.

"In Haiti, we witnessed such a remarkable and pure artistic sense," said Marika Anthony-Shaw of Arcade Fire. "The guitars from Godin are bringing a tremendous amount of joy to everyone we've had the pleasure of passing them on to, and we really want to give thanks on behalf of all these people for this gift of music." [\[godinguitars.com\]](http://godinguitars.com)

JAMHUB | PHILANTHROPY

JamHub Donates to Music & Youth

JamHub has donated many of its products to the Music & Youth initiative, which provides its Music Clubhouse program to effective not-for-profit youth development organizations, such as the YMCA and the Boys & Girls Clubs.

The new JamHub studio products will let teen bands rehearse in any after-school program environment.

"JamHub helps our program take beginning players and [allows] them to be part of a band almost instantly," said Music & Youth Program Manager David Bickel. [\[jamhub.com\]](http://jamhub.com)



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— Valentina Jotovic – Hunterdon Academy of the Arts

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INSIDE TRACK | OPENING

SKOPP'S NEW VENTURE

After overseeing Seymour Duncan's global OEM sales efforts for 20 years, Evan Skopp has transitioned from vice president of business development and artist relations for the pickup company to independent sales rep. His new company, Inside Track, is a rep firm specializing in global sales of OEM musical instrument products. Inside Track will handle worldwide OEM sales for Seymour Duncan, along with its acoustic guitar-centric affiliate D-TAR.



Evan Skopp

ers," Skopp said.

"My years at Seymour Duncan have been a great and rewarding experience, and I've really enjoyed seeing the company's brands grow over the last 20 years, as well as the brands of many of our great OEM custom-

Also joining Inside Track as vice president and controller is Doreen Daley Skopp, who previously worked as an independent accountant with many nonprofits in the music industry. insidetrack.me

APPOINTMENTS

Loud Names VP of Operations

Loud has appointed Tony Del Gianni as vice president of operations.

In his new position, Del Gianni will lead the evolution of Loud's manufacturing and operations function into a service and support team designed to enable the company's product innovation and market-expansion strategies.

"As we set our sights on even greater success at an even faster pace, I'm thrilled to have Tony take the reins of our purchasing, procurement and support functions," said Mark Graham, Loud's CEO. "I am confident that he will improve our time-to-market on new products and customer order fill rates, while at the same time increasing quality across our entire supply chain."

Loud has also named Chad Batchelor as APAC director of sales for Mackie and Ampeg. loudtechinc.com



Tony Del Gianni

American Music and Sound has named Bryan Pistone national accounts manager.

Chris Hart has been appointed to the position of director of worldwide artist and public relations for Remo.

Harman Professional recently hired Nuno Sousa to the position of regional sales manager as part of the EMEA sales team in the southern European territories.

Paul Zahn has joined St. Louis Music's in-side sales team.

The Music Link recently named Brad Townsend senior vice president of sales for Palatino Pianos.

Apex has appointed Matthew Otto to division manager of its Chicago office.

Connolly has named Steve Greenfield regional sales manager and tapped Lance Rohrecker as inside sales specialist for the western region.

JodyJazz has named Colin Schofield vice president of sales and marketing.



Colin Schofield

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MIDI, AES | PARTNERSHIP

MIDI, AES Partner Up

The MIDI Manufacturers Association (MMA) has partnered with the Audio Engineering Society (AES) to support MMA's upcoming "MIDI Makes Music" 30th anniversary celebration, which is designed to educate consumers about the benefits of MIDI technology. The campaign will formally launch at The NAMM Show 2013.

"We are grateful to AES for helping all of us celebrate this important milestone," said Tom White, president of MMA. midi.org; aes.org

YAMAHA | CHARITY

YAMAHA TEAMS WITH DRUM CORPS

Yamaha recently announced an exclusive partnership with competitive junior drum and bugle corps the Sacramento Mandarins. Founded in 1963 as an activity for youth of Asian-American heritage, the Sacramento Mandarins has developed a national and international presence, with a commitment to youth development and performance excellence. With this partnership, Yamaha has been named the sole provider of percussion instruments to the corps.

"After an exhaustive evaluation of percussion instrument providers, the excellent service and support that Yamaha provides made this an easy choice," said Jim Tabuchi, corps director for the Mandarins. "So far, we have been absolutely pleased with the partnership that we have developed with the Yamaha team."

"We look forward to strengthening our relationship and continuing to provide the level of excellence they enjoy," said Troy Wollwage, percussion marketing manager for Yamaha's band and orchestral division. yamaha.com

SUPPLY

AUDIO-TECHNICA | PROGRAM

A-T OFFERS WIRELESS REBATE

Audio-Technica is now offering rebates on its professional wireless gear, including the 4000, 3000 and 2000 series wireless systems from Oct. 1-Dec. 31.

All customers who purchase these three series from an authorized U.S. Audio-Technica dealer during this period will be eligible for either a \$40 rebate on the 4000 series, a \$30 rebate on the 3000 series or a \$20 rebate on the 2000 series. audio-technica.com



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IDEAS

Inside **IDEAS** > Economic Rhythms Page 30 > Customer Whisperer Page 32 > Lessons Learned Page 34 > Retail Doctor Page 36 > From the Trenches Page 38

INDEPENDENT RETAIL | BY TED ESCHLIMAN

WHEN YOU HAVE TIME

Last month, I wrote about strategies for competing in the frenetic, modern sales culture, suggesting steps for offering effective service with minimal staff. Now, I'd like to address the opposite: what to do during those dead times of customer drought.

Extended staff downtime can be a challenge for store managers. At best, an employee's "project" will sometimes supersede customer needs. At worst, employees will let their guards down, and their idleness will turn into mischief.

We've all been on the other end of the checkout counter, standing in line while clerks talk with each other instead of focusing on customers. It seems harder than ever to teach the "me"-generation employee that he or she is on the clock to help patrons, not to catch up on the latest Facebook post. Our job is to instill optimal staff sensitivity — employee-to-employee chitchat that can't include customers is better left for another time and out of earshot.

Disneyland has a whole worker culture of cast and audience, and it's an outstanding



How to ensure customer care during periods of extended staff downtime

mentality for specialty retail. Once employees don a costume, they're onstage. It wouldn't hurt for our employees to follow that example. They're on the clock to present a show, to provide a positive gestalt directed at people walking the grounds. Relentless service is their performance from the moment they punch the clock to

when they leave.

In the same light, cast members must understand that their personal needs, including breaks, lunch hours, and talk of hunger or headaches, never trump those of the customer. Such phrases as, "I need to take my break," or "Man, I drank too much last night," should never be uttered near customers. It's equal to talking about your parents having sex. (You know it happens, but you never want to talk about it.) Yes, crew must eat, take breaks and use the bathroom, but this needs to be worked out offstage.

The customer is always first. Staff don't just wait on customers. Employees have floor duties — pricing, stocking shelves, straightening and an assortment of other tasks. There's an earnest battle between store productivity and customer attentiveness, but in the conflict, the customer must always come first. It's easy to get lost in projects, but bottom line: Store projects go away if customers go away.

It isn't always easy to judge the level of courtesy a customer needs. You've heard the saying, "They don't want to be sold something." But I believe that

we often take detachment to an extreme and aren't helpful enough. Working on a project near but just outside of a customer's space could actually put him or her at ease. From there, we can keep the radar on for signals that customers want help, especially when they're ready to purchase. (Hint: This also cuts down on shoplifting.)

Show undeniable body language. I studied drama in school. It was enlightening to learn how much time is spent on body motion. A large portion of a thespian's work is developing skills in controlling movement — and with good reason. Our bodies communicate more than our words do. When we walk a customer to an area of the store rather than point to a spot 300 feet away, it conveys much more care. We need to show, not just tell.

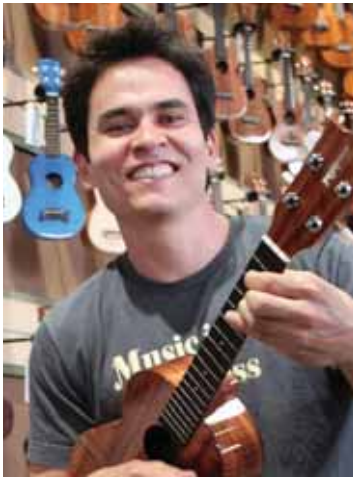
It can be argued that Facebook, Twitter, message boards and texting are robbing a generation of these social skills. We need to commit to training them back in. **MI**

Ted Eschliman is a 30-year veteran of music retail and co-owner of Dietze Music in Southeast Nebraska. Mel Bay published his book, *Getting Into Jazz Mandolin*.

ECONOMIC RHYTHMS | BY PETER DODS

How to Play Host

At my store, Easy Music Center, we strive to create a fun atmosphere for our customers and employees. This atmosphere has been a big draw over the years and has helped us develop quite a following. People visit our store to buy gear, but they also come to jam out and have a good time. This concept has let us triple our sales over the past seven years and expand from one location to a three-store operation.



That said, we've experienced growing pains along the way. Gone are the days of consistent customer flows with enough salespeople to service all customers at all times. More customers have been visiting the store just to hang out or attend a performance or clinic. In other words, customers aren't always here to purchase something, yet we're increasingly encountering large, unpredictable waves of them.

GETTING THE PARTY STARTED

I like to tell my crew that maintaining the right sales floor is a lot like being a party's host family. Before the party starts, the family lines up the drinks, appetizers and music playlist. In a music-store sense, this is the time when the employees arrive for work, but the store isn't open. They get ready for the party by stocking their sections, making sure product is priced and properly merchandised, and doing things that get the store ready for quick, easy customer facilitation.

When guests start trickling in, the host family has time for chatting and face-to-face interaction. This is no different than when the store is slow. I encourage tag teaming with multiple employees to give an outstanding demo or additional insight.

Then, the party starts to get going. There aren't enough family members to tag team anymore, and the host family starts to work the party as individuals. There are still enough family members to have generally meaningful conversations with guests, but there aren't enough hosts to let one guest monopolize too much of anyone's time. In the store, this happens when there are

more customers than salespeople but still enough to cover each customer's needs adequately.

HANDLING A RAGER

Now the party peaks. It's a rager. The time for meaningful conversation is at a minimum, as the host family needs to mingle around as briskly as possible to make sure all guests feel acknowledged. At a busy store, the only way to maintain a modicum of good service is for the sales staff to make sure the immediate needs are being satisfied and to tailor customer expectations with more complicated questions and demos.

Tell them: "It's a little busy right now. Do you mind waiting a bit for things to calm down before we set up this P.A. demo for you? I'd like to make sure you talk with our head audio salesman since he's our most knowledgeable person for P.A. systems." I'm amazed at how understanding customers can be.

There are different service strategies for different customer flows. Salespeople need to ask the right questions, so they can develop long-lasting relationships once the store isn't as busy. On the flip side, they also need to know how to conduct a sale quickly when the party hits its peak, so everyone can party on. **MI**

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

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THE CUSTOMER WHISPERER | BY GREG BILLINGS

Are You Better Off?

Are you better off now than you were four years ago? It's an interesting question, and the only people who ask it are those who want you to give a negative answer. It's a question we would never ask ourselves, but once asked, it resonates like a Ludwig snare drum. And it's a question music dealers and other small-business people should ask themselves every year, whether there's an election going on or not.



If you really want the answer, there are a few things you need to know. First, and obviously, how were things four years ago? Purely for the purpose of this column — and thanks to the miracle of QuickBooks — I printed out 8/31/08 financial reports and compared them to current reports. That's a lot of pages and numbers, so I narrowed my attention to five areas: sales, profit, inventory, debt and owner's equity.

PULL THE NUMBERS

Human memory is notoriously defective — so defective that innocent people get convicted of crimes based on eyewitness testimony, only to be released from prison thanks to purely objective DNA evidence. Our memories are so bad that judges now routinely caution juries that witness memories are not video recorders and aren't necessarily reliable.

Neurological research is discovering the complexity of memory. It's a fascinating subject, but for our purposes, let's just say that because of the way hormones react in our brains, we are more likely to remember how we *felt* about an event than the details of the event itself. For example, there are hopelessly conflicting reports from people who were in Dallas about how many shots were fired

at President Kennedy. But everyone remembers how they felt.

So unless we pull out a P&L and balance sheet from Q4 2008, we might not know exactly how things were four years ago. But I remember how I felt. It was a scary time. This is unusual because I don't frighten easily. The prospect of the national economy falling off a cliff, the collapse of the housing market

and how it could destroy the business we had spent 40 years building had a chilling effect.

ANALYZE THE NUMBERS

It turns out that compared to four years ago, we aren't doing that bad, especially when you consider the housing crash that hit Southwest Florida harder than anywhere else and a piano market that's off by about 50 percent. Our sales are about two-thirds of what they were in 2008, but because of changes forced upon us by the Great Recession, our profit is up 78 percent, debt is down 79 percent and equity is up 41 percent.

Looking back four years, though, is a bit arbitrary. Music stores don't react to broad economic trends in real time. They lag. We continue to close deals and deliver previously ordered merchandise as the economy slows, but we come back slower when it recovers. My 2008 financials are a look backward at the final days before the bubble burst. The Dow is up just 16 percent from four years ago, but it's double where it bottomed out after the crash that fall. So, I repeated my analysis, this time using 2009 as a base year.

Oh my God!

Compared to the year the crash set in (and excluding a big, non-repeatable institutional sale), 2012 sales are up 91 percent. We have a healthy

It's time to ask yourself whether business is better than it was four years ago

profit rather than a loss and very little debt. And because of continued low interest rates, the mortgage cost on our building is nearly \$40,000 less than it was in 2008 and '09.

QUESTION THE NUMBERS

The final thing we need to ask is: better than what? Are we talking about business or personal finances? Security, health, family or attitude? Four years ago, my wife and I had two kids in college, one struggling with her career and one starting a business. Things are calmer now, and there are two additional grandchildren. Four years ago, we had a few aggravating competitors who are gone.

Are we better off than we

‘Unless we pull out a P&L and balance sheet from Q4 2008, we might not know exactly how things were four years ago.’

were four years ago? Speaking for ourselves, we would have to say “yes,” and more important, the changes we’ve been forced to adopt put us in good shape as our market continues

to improve. Ironically, we are better off because of the pain we went through.

I’d guess that most of the music retailers who survived the turmoil of the Great Re-

cession have a similar story. But they won’t really know if they’re better off unless they revisit their financials. As for those who didn’t make it, maybe it was more than economic conditions that caused their demises.

Even the largest of us are small fish swimming in a big ocean with sharks who would swallow us in a moment. The economy gets better and it gets worse, but our attitude, how we manage our financial affairs and how well we serve our customers have more to do with our long-term success or failure than economic conditions. **MI**

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

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LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

You're Always Open

Last month, I discussed the merits of starting your day early. This month, we'll look at ways to keep selling long after you lock your front door.

Like so many lessons that I've learned along the way, this one sort of found its way to me. During my formidable years, I played out in clubs and studios when I wasn't working in the store. Invariably, people would ask about products, prices and availability. And I generated a heck of a lot of business. Lesson learned: There's a lot of business that can be generated outside the physical confines of your store. Waiting for customers to show up in the store became only a part of my quest for sales.



Incidentally, there's a corollary lesson learned. When approached about products or services outside of the store, *do not* hand out a business card. I learned this by realizing how few people actually call after taking a card. Appear slightly inept and tell the other party that you don't have a card with you. Get their names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. That way, you're in control of the relationship and can be sure the discussion continues.

HIT THE CLUBS

Because of my success outside the store, I encouraged my staff to use their own out-of-store time to promote business. They were incentivized to visit bands playing in clubs and used their own outside playing engagements as a promotional opportunity.

Giving someone the latest cool piece of gear to try out at a gig was always an effective tool, especially when you took the gear back after a set or two.

HIT THE WEB

Current technology lets you sell around the clock. I'm shocked by how few dealers use available technologies. Most incredible to me is the dealer with no Web presence whatsoever. If you think customers are looking for you in the phone book, you're sorely misguided.

Next comes the website that is, in essence, an online *Yellow Pages* ad. Having a Web presence without e-commerce capabilities

drives people to your store only during business hours. But seeing as people are used to shopping at their own convenience, you are missing opportunities. They will find someone else who's open for business when they're ready to shop.

I get it: A full e-commerce website is not a trivial undertaking. But setting up an eBay shop is inexpensive and easy. You can use it as part of your online presence by linking your website to your eBay store.

I recently corresponded with Jim DeStafney of Blues Angel Music in Pensacola, Fla., about various ways to drive business.

"There are many ways to create positive results for store owners today," he said. "As a matter of fact, one of the guitars I posted last night sold this morning. It was a super-profitable deal. That guitar might have sat on my wall for a year or more and sold for less money.

"My wife monitors eBay on her iPhone, and when an item sells, a cash register *ka-ching* sound goes off. It's always cool to be at home in bed hearing the sound of sales being made while the store is dark and empty."

Sounds like sage advice to me. **MI**

Gerson Rosenbloom is managing director of Wechter Guitars. He's former president of Medley Music and a past NAMM chairman. E-mail him at gersonmusicinc@gmail.com.

'There's a lot of business that can be generated outside of the physical confines of your store.'

Photo credit: Robert Downes Photography



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THE RETAIL DOCTOR | BY BILLY CUTHRELL

Retail First-Responder

My cell phone rang as my wife and I pulled up to the bed and breakfast for our anniversary. It was the security company; the alarm had gone off in one of my shops. We were two-plus hours away, and it was Saturday evening. I couldn't get my managers on the phone, so we turned around. When we got to the shop, I learned the central motion detector had malfunctioned and needed to be replaced. My getaway was shot.



Soon after, I awoke in the middle of the night to a phone call. The security service wanted to let me know the alarm had gone off yet again. I raced to the store, which is 45 minutes from my home. The window had been smashed out, but luckily, the alarm did its job and scared off the looter. Unfortunately, my workday began at 4 a.m.

After that incident, I decided to create an emergency action plan for employees. You can't predict everything that can go wrong, but you can get some piece of mind knowing you and your staff are prepared. A manual seemed too complicated. (Can you imagine a first-responder looking through a manual to decide if he needs a Band-Aid or a bed sheet to stop the bleeding at the scene of an accident?) I thought it more important to have updated contact information in one central place.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

I began creating my retail first-responder kit by asking the glass company employees for at least 10 business cards that listed a 24-hour emergency service number. Each of my employees received that card, and we taped one laminated card to the sales counter, so staff could easily find it.

That area of the sales counter also became our emergency meet-up area — similar to the area your family picks to meet at (a mailbox or oak tree) in case your house is on fire and you scatter. The sales counter now has a list with every staff member's contact information, along with numbers for our plumber, general contractor, HVAC repairman, IT person, security company, locksmith, police department, fire department and so on. The list does not include

vendor numbers — only contact info for people who make the business work and keep it safe.

If I'm abroad and the roof starts leaking, I don't want employees waiting for me to stop the water from coming in. (And there's not much I can do from 5,000 miles away.) This gives my staff the authority and means to solve the problem.

KEEPING BACKUPS

We also ask each employee to keep a copy of the list on his or her smartphone or tablet, along with a backup copy on a home computer. Managers are given the answer to our security-code question. This way, if they set off the alarm by accident, they can communicate with the security company when it calls the police.

Of course, you want to get permission to have everyone's contact information so readily available. Also, even if you don't list manager and employee contact numbers, you still need a list of anyone who can replace glass, stop the toilet from overflowing or figure out why your entire network crashed. Having a first-responder plan of action in place may save your business from serious loss. It may just save your anniversary weekend, too. **MI**

Billy Cuthrell owns and operates Progressive Music Center, based in Raleigh, N.C. Contact him at billy@raleighmusiclessons.com.

Keeping updated contact info in one central place could save you from serious headaches

November is International Drum Month

Are you ready for NEW customers?

The Percussion Marketing Council continues to create new drummers for the entire industry and this means NEW CUSTOMERS for you. This November we're providing special incentives for all beginners to visit your store by offering a FREE Beginners Pack to help them get started.

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Coupons for the free Beginner's Pack will appear in various publications or may be printed from PlayDrums.com and redeemed directly through the PMC.

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Beginner's Pack courtesy of Alfred Music Publishing, Hal Leonard Corporation, Hudson Music, Vater, and Zildjian.

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Signature _____

Show the retailer this ad and ask for the store's business card. The store's business card must accompany the completed coupon. Your free Beginner's Pack will arrive in 5-8 weeks.

Deadline Dec. 31, 2012. Mail this coupon to Percussion Marketing Council, P.O. Box 33352, Cleveland, OH 44133. Offer valid in Continental US only. One coupon per household, please. While supplies last. Coupon can be downloaded at PlayDrums.com

The PMC Members indicated below are your partners in helping to grow your percussion business. We've created educational programs that connect with students, teachers, schools, teens and parents.

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For direct links to all our members and their products visit the PMC's website: www.playdrums.com



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FROM THE TRENCHES | BY MYRNA SISLEN

Price Properly or Perish

If you don't attend Summer NAMM, you should. The pace is slower, and there's more time to speak with vendors. Since exhibit space costs less than it does at winter NAMM, there's always opportunity to discover new products. And I love new products. I am proud to say that during the past 10 years, I have been the first customer for many first-time exhibitors and have watched with pride as their businesses took off.



That said, I ran into a number of new producers this year that offered some very interesting new products but missed the point in a fundamental way.

My main issue — and I have written about this before — concerns pricing.

The scene usually goes like this. I am walking through the show and come upon a new product. Let's use one guitar-related gadget I saw as an example. I stop and look at the product. It looks interesting enough: a square plastic thing. I ask how to use it. It still seems interesting, so I ask about pricing. I am told the price and ask, "What is the dealer discount?"

That's when the trouble starts.

The inventor looks me straight in the eye and says, "It's a 30-percent markup."

"That won't work for me," I say. "At 30 percent, I am losing money on this product. I have to display it, pay my employees to explain what it does and sell it to the customer."

"No you don't," says the new producer. "This product sells itself."

I toss the squarish, nondescript piece of plastic on the table. "I don't think so."

THE BOTTOM LINE

Why do new producers believe a 30- or even 40-percent markup is good enough for us? Their pricing covers their costs and makes a profit for them, and they want to sell at the lowest possible price to benefit the customer. They forget that someone has to actually sell and display that product.

Quite simply, I believe that we are all in this equally: the

manufacturer, the retailer and the customer. Each one needs the other — none is more important than the others. Please understand: I would never ask a manufacturer to lower his or her price. They should ask what they need to ask for a product. I do ask that they make the retail price high enough to let the seller stay in business, though. And they must understand that virtually 100 percent of these new products are discretionary for retailers. As we all know and experience every day, there are many items — too many, in my opinion — that we must carry in our stores at a 30- to 33-percent margin, and over which we have no control. These new products most certainly do not fall in that category.

Let me be more direct. If your new product does not offer a 50-percent or higher margin for me, I can't and won't have it in my store. There's no way that I will work for you and not benefit equally from the effort. I will go further and recommend that all music retailers adopt the same philosophy. If we work together to educate new presenters, I believe everyone will win. And it certainly will eliminate a lot of arguing on the convention floor. **MI**

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

'Why do new producers believe a 30- or even 40-percent markup is good enough for us?'

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THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

Raise the Fuzzy Factor

I was passing through my local Jack in the Box drive-thru around 9:00 the other night when I received surprisingly great customer appreciation. The drive-thru employee asked me, “How are you doing tonight? Do you want me to fix your coffee the way you like it? Here’s a coupon for a free taco.” I left feeling really good and somewhat shocked that it was from a trip to Jack in the Box.



The next morning, I went to a nearby Office Depot to stock up on supplies. An employee asked me how the back-to-school season was going, and I left with the same feeling.

Later that week, I went to the Chevron gas station to get a fill-up and buy a coffee, and the same thing happened. “How’s things at the music store?”

Then I remembered a Summer NAMM session I once sat in on that looked at the importance of being personable with customers. My big takeaway was we need to be warm and fuzzy. These fuzzy feelings help retain customers and create new ones through word-of-mouth and “mouse.”

So, how warm and fuzzy is your store? When was the last time you stood back and looked at what interactions were going on with your staff and students?

START A CONVO

I felt fuzzy while visiting these other businesses because it was unexpected. I felt as if they knew and appreciated me. So, I got thinking about the hundreds of music stores that I’ve visited. Offhand, I can only list about 10 that delivered the fuzzy feeling. Most music store employees ignore students when they come in, even if there’s no business going on.

If the Jack in the Box drive-thru can make me feel appreciated, how come a music store can’t? Students and their families visit your store each week. You can look at a schedule and see their names in case you can’t remember them. So, initiate a conversation. Ask them, “How are the lessons going? What are you working on? How’s school? What’s on your iPod?”

Start with these questions, and see where the conversation goes. Do the same with parents.

Did you recently hold a student event or concert? If so, let students know what you thought of their performances. Tell them, “Dude, you rocked last Friday!” Or, “I really loved the way you played that Bruno Mars song at the showcase!” Compliments are a great way to make students feel appreciated. We all like it when someone tells us we played well.

MAKE FRIENDS

It sounds silly to ask, but are your students and their parents your friends or just customers? Do you know your students’ names? Personally, I want everyone in town to know me, my name and what I do. So shouldn’t I know the students who come through my store?

I get a fuzzy feeling when I’m out in public and someone tells me I should run for mayor because I know everyone or when students at a local school tell me I’m like a rock star.

Everyone enjoys compliments, so hand them out to your customers. And don’t forget to thank them for their business — thank your students and their families for taking music lessons at your store. Start a convo, make new friends, and raise the fuzzy factor. **MI**

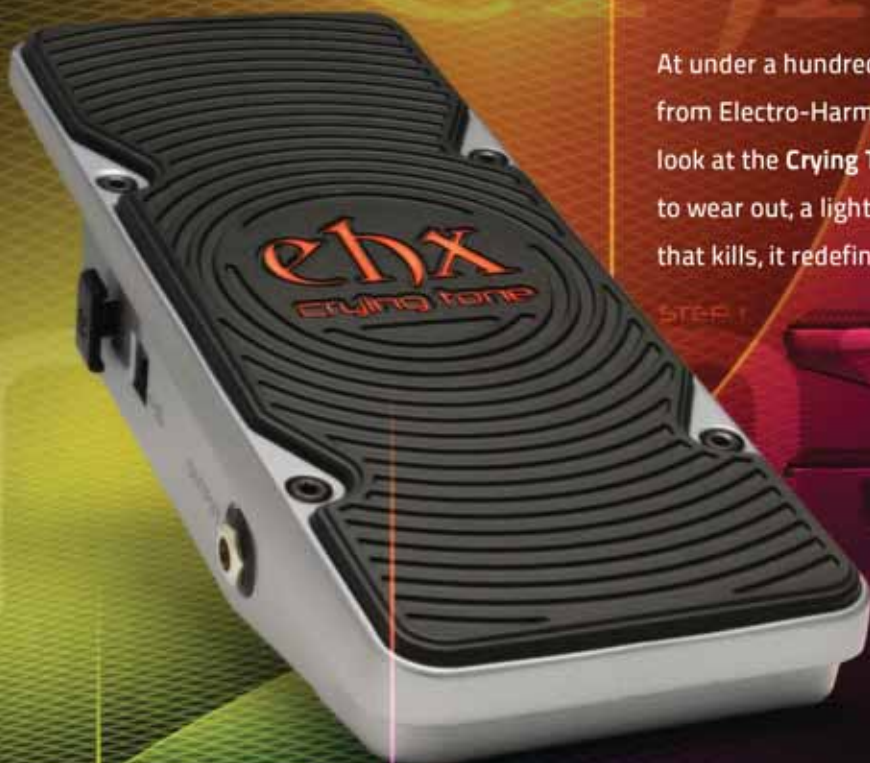
Pete Gamber is an educational sales representative for Music & Arts in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., and the former owner of Alta Loma Music. He welcomes questions and comments at pgamber@musicarts.com.

Creating a ‘fuzzy feeling’ is a crucial aspect of customer service

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HOW MENZIE
PITTMAN OF
CONTEMPORARY
MUSIC CENTER
BUILT THE
*ULTIMATE
SUMMER
LESSONS
PROGRAM*

THE KING OF ROCK CAMP

On a Sunday in August, a 16-year-old guitarist took the stage before a packed house of 250 concertgoers. He shredded through a pitch-perfect rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner” featuring long, tremulous notes and finger-tapping embellishments. Afterwards, a band of youngsters plugged in. They barely looked old enough to hold down a paper route, but they blasted through an inspired cover of The White Stripes’ “Icky Thump” without breaking a sweat.



Menzie
Pittman

Menzie Pittman, founder of Contemporary Music Center in Haymarket, Va., waited for the performers as they walked off-stage. “You are so good,” he said, as if praising The White Stripes themselves. “You are so good.”

“These kids don’t know how good they have it today,” said a guitar teacher. “I’d love to play in a place like this.”

That place was the posh Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas, Va., a suburb of Washington, D.C. The occasion: the final performance for

Contemporary Music Center’s Rock Camp. The preparation: two weeks of learning everything from ensemble playing to creating a Facebook page, an educational format that pushed students to take total ownership of the process.

“This is the real deal,” Pittman said. “That’s the difference, I think, between our program and people who say, ‘We’re gonna do a rock camp thing. Dump your kids off, whatever.’”

And that afternoon, nobody dumped their kids off. So many

parents came out that Pittman ran into last-minute ticketing problems for the second show, which was held later that day.

“If you’re not coming back, please hand in your ticket stubs,” he announced. “We need those stubs. Both of these shows are completely sold out.”

The capacity crowd was a reason for concern, but also celebration. This marked the fifth anniversary of Contemporary Music Center’s Rock Camp. Participation skyrocketed from 35 to 63 students.

The final performance found a new home at the Hylton theater. More manufacturers offered support in the form of donated gear. NAMM’s Jennifer Paisley-Schuch came out to emcee the event. And enrollment in the retailer’s private lesson program increased 46 percent from the previous year, according to Pittman, a spike driven in large part by the group programs.

“There was an excitement building that was hard to deny,” he said after the final performance. “Importantly, there was one other factor that also added to our growth, one that I think speaks directly to the quality of the CMC experience: We had some families in 2011 try other programs, and this year, they returned to Contemporary Music Center. They now had a direct comparison, so it wasn’t us telling them.”

MENZIE PITTMAN ON ROCK CAMP EXPENSES

🎸 The biggest fixed expense would be the payments to teachers. I personally believe you get what you pay for, and Contemporary Music Center is known to pay instructors very well but has high expectations.

🎸 Your second biggest expense is the show, and the show defines the whole experience. In my first years, everyone said I was crazy for all the extra things I felt were important. I knew from my experience and background of 20-plus years of performing that there was only one way to do this — and that was just like the pros do it.

In the early years, I found whatever funky outdoor places I could to hold the concert, and it always worked out well. However, this year, as we noticed registrations on the rise, we took the gloves off and tolerated the expense of the Hylton Performing Arts Center. It was worth every penny. What we were able to provide in experience was off-the-charts in comparison. So, the risk paid off.

🎸 Every year with the show, we strive to take it up a level. The expenses climb but so does the excitement and the experience for the musicians. That’s hard for bean counters to get their heads around, but not artists. It takes the full Contemporary Music Center staff working all week and summer with a dress rehearsal, photographers, outside professionals, all the clinicians, parent volunteers, the 20-plus person staff of the Hylton, multiple meetings, cooperation with manufacturers, and hundreds of phone calls and e-mails to pull this off.

🎸 Unfortunately, it is easier to promote a program once it has achieved some success. Promotion is expensive but critical, and importantly, promotion reflects your style. This year, I developed a logo specifically for Rock Camp. I have never loved the generic name “Rock Camp,” but no matter what I called it, everyone always defaulted to calling it Rock Camp. So if you can’t beat ‘em, at least craft a good logo.



Photo by Craig Hunter Ross

BRANDING A PROGRAM

Pittman began his career as a drummer and drum teacher. He took over Contemporary Music Center in 2001 when he bought out his two original business partners. Still, he’s a teacher at heart, and his company reflects that. His two northern Virginia stores, located in the relatively affluent towns of Haymarket and Chantilly, house enormous teaching studios and cozy showrooms of carefully stocked combo gear. Revenues can be broken down as 44 percent lessons, 34 percent retail and 22 percent rentals, according to Pittman. (The company’s a Music & Arts rental affiliate dealer.) Anywhere from 600–750 students pass through weekly.

Pittman launched Rock Camp so kids could experience the same joys he had as a gigging musician. In its relatively short life, it’s become Contemporary

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Music Center's marquee program and follows a similar model to such pioneering camps as Skip's Music's Stairway to Stardom and Alta Loma Music's Rock Project. Students, ages 6–18, gather at Contemporary Music Center during the summer to learn the ins and outs of playing in a band with a professional coach. Tuition is \$650 per person.

"Lessons are profitable for us," Pittman said. "The maintenance of running the program is demanding, though."

Not surprisingly, the program isn't the only game in town. Pittman's surrounded by several other rock schools, one of them being the Bach to Rock chain.

"The ultimate takeaway for us, in a word, would be branding," he said. "You can definitely copy the format, but you can't copy the quality. You can't copy the vision of what we're doing."

That vision revolves around delivering the most authentic experience possible — and producing authentic musicians. Many of the 12 groups in the final performance sounded like bona fide rock bands, despite the occasional flubbed note or out-of-tune guitar. Postcards From Mars, a band of high schoolers featuring Pittman's daughter, Summer, even tackled the intricate four-part harmonies on fun.'s "Some Nights." The kicker: Bands only had 40 hours to rehearse.

"From day one, you have to get the bands to begin to own the process," Pittman said. "Since students only have two weeks, everything is on steroids."

THE REAL DEAL

Rock Camp delivers that authentic experience by steering clear of teaching methods that don't, well, rock. Students are thrown into groups on the

first day and forced to react to one another musically, as opposed to spending lots of time on cerebral processes (e.g., technique and theory). The first two days are especially frantic. Pittman and the program's coaches use this time to identify a band's strengths and weaknesses.

"You have to find out what they don't have and get away from it, then find out what they do have and try to figure out how to make that work," he said. "You look for extremes."

Kids aren't given time to think. "I just want them to react to a particular idea," so they can be evaluated, Pittman said. "I believe technique eventually takes care of itself. If we get a kid emotionally invested in the experience, technique will follow."

Bands usually have what he called an "oh wow" moment within those two days. This marks their first musical triumph. At the recent camp, a young singer's approach to AC/DC's "Back In Black" was too

workmanlike. Pittman and the band's coach kept pushing him to add some grit to his voice. Finally, he belted out a Brian Johnson-esque growl. The rest of the band loved it, and the entire energy changed.

"That's when they start to realize that they can really own it," Pittman said. "And once they can play a tune and get all the way through it, the rest of it's pretty easy."

Creating bands of self-conscious tweens with changing voices can pose other problems with lead vocals. Once, a singer didn't step up at all. Pittman made everyone sing and clap to The Beatles' "Eight Days A Week" in unison for an hour and a half — an exercise that wore down their defenses. ("That day turned the rest of the camp around," he said.) Occasionally, a band doesn't gel by the third or fourth day. Pittman said he's solved this dilemma by sprinkling in a rock-star student from another group. That

player's excitement spreads, and band members get remotivated.

"Our job is to absolutely convince them that their musical part is a piece of cake no matter what and that they can do the part standing on their heads with no problem," he said.

Pittman likened his role in the camp to Walt Disney's role in his eponymous company. "I try to visit every park, so to speak," Pittman said. "I try to give each band at least two days if possible."

But a bigger part of his job is finding the right instructors to translate his vision. Mining his company's private lesson program of 55–60 teachers and hitting up local colleges has yielded the most talent. "They have to have a youthful energy because everything in Rock Camp is done on a higher octave," he said, noting that the camp had seven instructors this year.

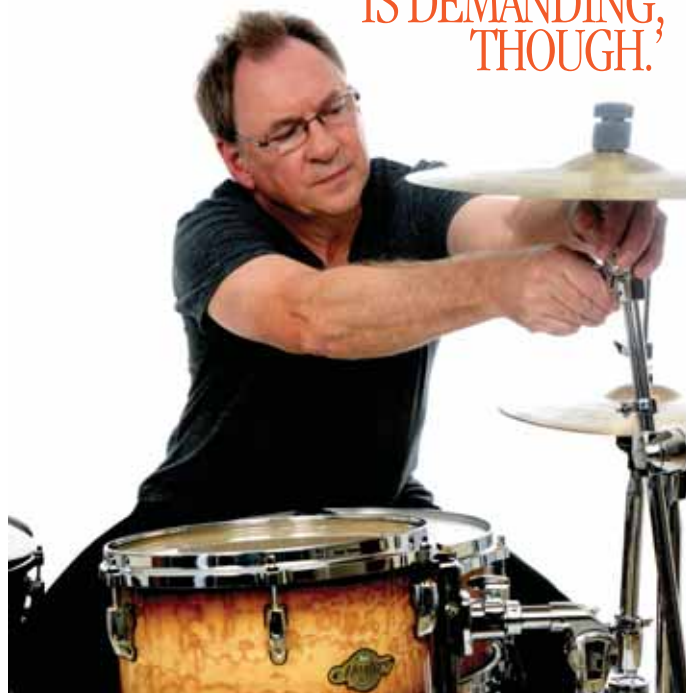
A COMMUNITY AFFAIR

Digg Wagner's grandson Zachary played drums, congas and keyboards at this year's event. Wagner, a local resident, was so taken with Rock Camp that he lent his truck and trailer to haul gear from Contemporary Music Center's Haymarket store to the Hylton on the morning of the performance.

"I just like Menzie's style of teaching," Wagner said. "It's amazing to me that all the kids in two weeks' time can become a band. It's unbelievable."

He wasn't alone. Out of Pittman's 15 assistants for the event, eight were volunteer parents. They helped with everything from tuning instruments to serving as the camp's street team. Getting parents involved has been good for business, too. Pittman noted that he's starting to see younger siblings of for-

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mer students enlisting in Rock Camp, boosting its enrollment. Parents trust him, and they're recharged up about getting their kids in the program.

"It's not as if [we're catering to] people who have never played and saying, 'Hey, you should take up an instrument,'" he said. "It's families that have two and three kids that have gone through the system. It's a very high-quality customer who will pay for education, who will pay for the experience and who will understand what the

experience will bring them."

Along with recruiting volunteer parents, Pittman also called on vendors for help. This year, bands got their photos taken in front of a 10-foot backdrop after performing. The backdrop plugged sponsors and "gave total legitimacy to the autograph area," Pittman said.

"The manufacturers realized that every picture that's going to be taken and published on Facebook will have their logos flashing in the back."

Plus, Contemporary Mu-

sic Center used the final performance to introduce Bedell Guitars to its clientele. Pittman recently picked up the line, which will serve as one of his company's main acoustic brands. (Epiphone is Contemporary Music Center's flagship line.) During the performance, he gave away a donated Bedell in a drawing, along with a Pearl snare drum and JamHub unit.

Maybe Rock Camp's most critical partnership was with the Hylton itself. The venue's manager gave Contemporary Music Center a roughly 35-percent discount on the facility after she learned about the program.

"Hylton is only two years old," Pittman said. "They are trying to build a community reputation. Her big thing was, 'We really want this community event here, where it should be.'"

FEEDING LESSONS

Burgeoning rockers in northern Virginia won't get much downtime after the performance. Many will reconvene later this year at Contemporary Music Center for more rehearsals. Only then, the players will monitor themselves through headphones, not speakers.

Last year, Pittman found another way to get more students in his company's system. Inspired by the JamHub silent practice device, he launched Sessions. Students in this winter rock camp meet for one hour weekly over 12 weeks. Tuition is \$138 a month — the same price as hourly private lessons — or \$414 for all three months. But the program differs from Rock Camp in one critical way: Practice is nearly inaudible to passersby. Bands play through a JamHub unit with drummers bashing away on Roland V-Drums, making it possible to rehearse during

normal business hours without disturbing other students. Pittman even credited Steve Skillings, JamHub's founder, for helping create Sessions.

"The program has a studio kind of quality to it because you're doing it with headphones," Pittman said. "The kids develop a larger social network because they're getting to know each other for 12 weeks." This also gives bands more time to develop chemistry and take on challenging material.

For Pittman, Sessions completes a 360-degree loop with Contemporary Music Center's lessons program. Sessions feeds Rock Camp; Rock Camp feeds new private-lesson sign-ups; and private lessons feed both programs. Sessions also offers another opportunity to brand the company's educational offerings and get parents on-board. Going into the winter season, interest in Sessions is already up 100 percent, according to Pittman.

"So we have a feeder system that is a little stronger than individual lessons," he said. "After our families tried Sessions and realized the benefits of the program, they were excited to move to another experience — Rock Camp."

And at the end of Rock Camp, parents were excited to get their kids started all over again. After the show, Pittman couldn't get offstage. He and a few teachers were nearly invisible within a crowd of parents, who praised the program and everything it did for their kids.

"The community really got it this year," he said. "The community looked at it and said, 'I want some of that.' I have to laugh because now I can't go into the grocery store and shop without a 20-minute conversation with somebody." **MI**



STUDENT-FIRST RETAIL

At Contemporary Music Center, retail serves lessons, not the other way around.

Students pass through a showroom at the Haymarket, Va., store (pictured above) to get to the teaching studios. The showroom features a cherry-picked selection that's targeted specifically to students' needs and tastes. Pittman acknowledged that he wants to expand his retail business but only with laser-focused products.

"I'm not trying to grow retail as my first business," he said.

"It's about getting the right tools in kids' hands first." Lately, he's psyched up about Bedell, which he picked up this summer as one of his major acoustic guitar brands. A deep, deliberate selection of Epiphone acoustics and electrics also hangs on the wall.

"Epiphone has been one of the best decisions I've made because of the depth of the product and its reputation as a manufacturer," Pittman said. "So that took a little while to get done, but for us, it marked a big difference in whether or not we were a legitimate retailer.

"I think we've got a good product mix. Our customers say, 'That's a good product mix.' They're not quite as quick to go online or to a big-box store."

Another reason local customers might forgo big boxes for Contemporary Music Center, particularly when buying drum kits, is the company's service. The way Pittman sees it, a lot of music retailers oversell and underdeliver when it comes to service. His company takes the opposite approach.

"Service is not being polite from behind the counter," he said. "That's not service. That's courtesy."

In contrast, he will personally deliver and assemble drum sets when customers buy from his store. He'll give mini lessons to new players. Sometimes, he'll even offer the same service to Contemporary Music Center students who buy their drums elsewhere. And ironically, Pittman's starting to attract customers who buy from him but take lessons at a competing studio.

"What's really funny is they come from other stores where they study, but they'll purchase from us because they know we'll set it up for them." — Z.P.

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SCHOOL OF ROCK®

A photograph of a young man in a black shirt and pants playing a light-colored bass guitar on a stage. He is facing right, looking towards a large, dense crowd of people in the background. The crowd is illuminated with blue and purple stage lights. To the right of the bass player, a drummer in a red shirt is partially visible, playing a drum set. The overall atmosphere is that of a high-energy live music performance.

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Such is the story for 15-year-old Waylon Rector. Waylon had a summer most musicians only dream about. He was hand-selected out of 8,000 School of Rock students to be part of an elite team of musicians known as the AllStars. Each summer the AllStars tour throughout the US. This year's tour featured 30 shows with stops at major rock festivals such as Lollapalooza, Warped Tour, and Summerfest, and iconic music venues such as Red Rocks Amphitheatre and the Hard

Rock Hotel in Las Vegas. "School of Rock continues to change my life and I have a whole summer of playing to lots of people to prove it," says Waylon.

Along with playing amazing shows, Waylon and the AllStars raised awareness for a very worthy cause. At each tour stop, they assisted Love Hope Strength, the world's leading Rock n Roll Cancer Foundation, in saving lives one concert at a time. School of Rock Allstars played an active role in getting concert goers on the bone marrow donor list. Who knows, maybe Waylon's tour will save a life?

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a common goal." says Chris Catalano CEO of School of Rock. "Our kids learn by doing. They learn to work as a team and become more self-confident all while forming bonds with other like-minded musicians. They have fun in a safe, positive and cool environment."

School of Rock is proving to be a rewarding business for franchise partners around the world. "This has been an incredible experience." says Mike Morpurgo, Franchise owner in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. "I get to share my love for music with kids through the best music program ever." School of Rock is looking for partners interested in fostering the next generation of great artists.

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TOP ACCESSORY DISPLAYS BY KATIE KAILUS

Music Inc. recently asked retailers about their most eye-catching, customer-friendly accessory displays. Here are a few of our favorites.

MUSIC VILLA



BOZEMAN,
MONTANA



Great Wall of Add-ons

Music Villa's accessory displays used to be cluttered and overflowing. It recently built a new accessory wall, which is located in the middle of the store near the registers.

The wall gives each product its own space and sign.

"The accessory wall is still in its infancy, but the concept is there," said Dustin Tucker, art and marketing director at Music Villa. "[The new display] helps with overall visibility and shop-ability. When items can breathe, they look more desirable. This has been proven by such retailers as Apple."

Music Villa's new pedal display was part of the store's two-month, \$10,000 remodeling initiative. The glassed-in case boasts LED lighting.



TOBIAS MUSIC

DOWNERS GROVE,
ILLINOIS

T-Shirt Time

Tobias Music spent \$250 on lights and a shelving unit from Ikea to spruce up its stock of Taylor and C.F. Martin shirts and accessories.

"We know T-shirts sell," said Paul Tobias, owner of Tobias Music. "It looks a lot better than having everything hanging on hooks."

Tobias chose to place the display near the front of the store after he noticed a lull in traffic. He said the bright lighting from Ikea catches customers' attention and directs them to the display.

Tobias also used lights to showcase the store's V-Pick stock. The pick company provided the display box, and Tobias found the LED lights at a hardware store.

"We do well with guitar picks in the \$4-10 range, and high-end picks sell well for the holidays," he said. "[We displayed them] almost like jewelry."

Tobias compared the add-ons to candy bars and chewing gum in a grocery store, saying that almost everyone checks them out.

"Sure, it's an impulse buy for most, but the picks are affordable and very cool," he said.



SAM ASH

ONTARIO MILLS,
CALIFORNIA

Counter Space

The chain's Ontario Mills, Calif., store boasts a new accessories counter located conveniently in the main thoroughfare. This spot gives salespeople the best vantage point for watching customers moving through the store from the mall and outside entrance.

Mike Aurigemma, director of merchandising and special project for Sam Ash, said the spot also puts the sales force in the best possible position to engage or be engaged in conversation. "So far, it has worked amazingly well," he said. "I suspected many customers would just pass by [the accessories] and not be engaged by salespeople because of the distance from where the counter was inside the guitar department to where it is now in the main [thoroughfare.] As it stands, it seems that was the way to go."



JUST DRUMS

TORONTO, CANADA



Eco-Friendly Exhibit

The team at Just Drums chose large car tires to display Evans' Eco Drum Practice Pads. They opted for tires since the pads are made entirely of recycled rubber, which is mostly from old car tires. A stand in the middle of the tires features a mounted pad for customers to try. D'Addario Canada helped out with customized signs that display product features and prices.

The display made its debut at the store's summer street sale and sat outside the front door. "It increased sales because customers asked why the practice pads [were] on top of tires," said Just Drums' Ryan Hamilton. "Customers have responded well with the idea that these products are green and made entirely of recycled materials."

RICK'S MUSIC WORLD

RAYNHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Strapping Display

Robin Santos, vice president of Rick's Music World, needed a way to display Souldier Straps and make them stand out from the rest of the strap stock. "I also needed a way to display their cool, new wrist cuffs," Santos said.

So she talked with Jen Tabor, the owner of Souldier, who said the cuffs fit nicely on gridwall.

"Souldier shoppers are fashion-conscious people, so I added a mirror because customers were asking us if they could take the straps into the bathroom to see how they looked," Santos said.

The display faces the center of the store and is in full view of customers sitting in the café. Students pass the straps when they come in for lessons.

"We host an open mic every Thursday, and there was a feeding frenzy during the first open mic night that it was displayed," Santos said. "Now if we could just keep the rack filled!"



GUITARS BOUTIQUE

GUAYNABO,
PUERTO RICO

Superior Selection

Guitars Boutique created its FX display about a year and a half ago after deciding to invest heavily in the pedal market. "The display basically sells itself in terms of getting people's attention," said owner Randy Luna.

The case, which is located in the center of the store, currently features more than 140 pedals and includes everything from such popular brands as Electro-Harmonix and MXR to more boutique brands, including Keeley, Zvex and Xotic.

"We still have to do our job and demonstrate the pedals to customers, but they come to us because they know that if they're looking for a distortion pedal we'll have more than 20 to choose from," Luna said.



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The cable display features higher-quality cables at the top and color-coordinates all the tags to make it easy for customers to distinguish between different models. "Having everything organized helps customers find what they need, and it helps salespeople guide them through their options logically," Damm said. "Both of these things lead to increased sales and customer satisfaction."



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DALE'S DRUM SHOP



HARRISBURG,
PENNSYLVANIA



Tune Central

Dale's Drum Shop customers frequently ask how to tune their drums. So, the store recently took on the Tune-Bot, a tuner that recognizes drum frequencies.

The store's staff was so confident in the tuner that an entire display devoted to the product is located next to the front desk. The display was constructed of slatwall and features a special mount made by Ingles to hold the snare.



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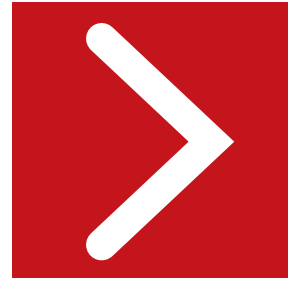
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Trophy Straps has introduced the Trophy Historic Lennon Peace Tribute guitar strap. It was designed with the assistance of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, where the original resides on permanent display. Zig zag and diamond shapes are woven into the webbing, making the strap reversible. The unit also features unique sunrise-stitched, double-layer leather ends and is 2 inches in width. MSRP: \$49.95.

trophystraps.com



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The new String Cleaner for bass guitars cleans 360 degrees of all strings simultaneously. It also cleans underneath strings where harmful debris collects. The bottom pad is extended through the bottom of the unit, so it cleans the fretboard at the same time as the strings. MAP: \$9.99. thestringcleaner.com

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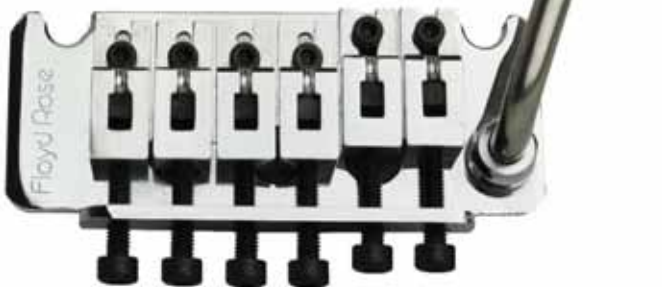
Levy's Leathers recently launched Freak Show straps. The new 2-inch polyester straps feature sublimation-printed "cirque du freak" designs, complementary leather ends and tri-glide adjustment. The straps are available in six original designs. levysleathers.com



FLOYD ROSE | NON-FINE TUNER REISSUE

Rose's Reissue

Floyd Rose has released the Original Non-Fine Tuner Reissue. This reproduction features the same specs as the first Original, including a vintage-style screw-in arm and locking nut. floydrose.com



D'ADDARIO | NYLTECH, TITANIUM

Strummin' Along

D'Addario's new Nyltech and Titanium ukulele strings are available for most popular ukulele sizes and tunings. The Titanium uke strings feature a dense monofilament material with translucent purple hue. Their smooth feel is similar to that of traditional nylon. daddario.com

EHX | CRYING TONE WAH

Cryin' Out Loud

Electro-Harmonix has introduced the Crying Tone Wah line. These three pedals have no moving parts and don't use a potentiometer, optics or magnetism. The Volume Pedal permits precise, expressive control over the volume of an instrument. The Expression Pedal delivers accurate, responsive control over expression or control-voltage-capable effects and instruments. The Pan Pedal offers meticulous control over the stereo imaging of an instrument. ehx.com



KALA | JTE-2TS

Vintage Uke

Kala has rereleased a modified design to its archtop ukulele series. The JTE-2TS tenor-sized ukulele features a satin finish that accentuates its vintage appearance, while also enhancing the tonal quality. The Kala archtop comes fitted with a custom active EQ system. Other features include a spruce top, mahogany back and sides, white pearloid binding, die-cast tuners, and Aquila strings. kala.ukulele.com





ALLEN & HEATH | ICE-16

Ice Ice Baby

Allen & Heath has introduced the ICE-16, an audio interface that captures multitrack recordings directly to a USB drive or interface with a computer. The unit is capable of studio-quality interfacing, converting and bidirectional streaming of 16 channels over high-speed USB or FireWire. allen-heath.com



FOCUSRITE | SCARLETT 2i4

Lady in Red

Focusrite has launched the Scarlett 2i4, the latest addition to the company's series of USB 2.0 bus-powered interfaces designed for Mac and PC. The Scarlett 2i4 is packaged in a rugged unibody aluminium chassis and features a pair of Focusrite mic pre-amps with mic, line and high-impedance instrument inputs. It has precision converters and delivers a real-world dynamic range in excess of 105 dB. focusrite.com

PORTER AND DAVIES | BC2RM

Streamlined & Lightweight

Porter and Davies recently debuted the BC2rm monitor system. Like the flight-cased BC2 and lightweight Gigger, the BC2rm system delivers stealth monitoring technology that enables users to hear their drums internally via the company's Bone Conduction techniques. It also includes Porter and Davies' patented transducer-loaded drum throne. porteranddavies.co.uk



NADY | MW SERIES

Wireless Wonderment

Nady's new Micro Wireless (MW) series now includes the MHT-16 for brass and woodwinds, the WHM-16 headset system and the Link-16 for microphones. All models are available with either the compact, portable pedal-style MGT-16 receiver or the pocket-size MRX-16 receiver. The systems feature 16 user-selectable PLL frequencies for interference-free operation and up to a 250-foot operating range. nady.com



JBL | PRX400

Undercover Speakers

JBL's new PRX400 bags are the official covers for its PRX speakers. The covers are made of tear-resistant nylon with thick foam padding throughout. The convenient handle access points make carrying and transporting easy. Covers fit PRX412M, PRX415M, PRX425 and PRX418S models. jblbags.com



COMMUNITY | VERIS 2

Versatile Veris

Community recently released the second generation of its Veris speaker series. The Veris 2 offers a new range of two-way, three-way and subwoofer designs. It's an expanded, evolved collection of 11 new models that range from small-format enclosures to mid-sized three-way systems. Veris 2 includes some significant enhancements, including a newly designed 1-inch exit HF driver. community.chester.pa.us



VOX | AMPHONES

Turn It Up

Vox's new Amphones are active headphones with built-in Vox Amplug guitar or bass amplifiers. The four available models include the AC30, Twin, Lead and Bass. Each model uses an analog design to model the circuit response of the original. Amphones can also be used as conventional headphones. voxamps.com



AURALEX ACOUSTICS |
PROPANELS

Auralex Goes Pro

Auralex Acoustics has expanded its line of ProPanels Fabric Wrapped Acoustical Absorption panels. The units provide an upscale look with the high-performance absorption qualities that reduce unwanted room reflections. They're now available in 12 standard color and fabric options and sizes, including 2- by 2-foot, 2- by 4-foot, 4- by 8-foot and 4- by 4-foot wall panels, as well as a 2- by 4-foot corner panel. auralex.com

KICKPORT I | KICKPORT2 SE

I Want Candy

KickPort recently released a limited-edition candy apple red KickPort2 SE. Like all KickPort models, the KickPort2 SE features the Firm-Flex collar and reinforcement ring for fast, easy installation. The unit provides the ability to improve frequency response and depth and dynamics for any style of music. kickport.com



PROMARK, EVANS | HOLIDAY PACK

Holiday Package

ProMark and Evans have teamed up to offer a bundle that's only available for the 2012 holiday season. For a limited time, drummers can purchase six pairs of ProMark Hickory 5A wood-tip drumsticks and get a free Evans Coated 14-inch G1 snare drumhead. ProMark's Hickory 5A drumsticks boast an oval-shaped tip that provides a full, dark sound. The Evans' G1 snare heads feature a single ply of 10-mil film. MSRP: \$86.40. promark.com; evansdrumheads.com



MARK DRUM | YES

Just Say 'Yes'

Mark Drum's new eight-piece drum kit Yes is the brainchild of Marco De Virgiliis, the creator of Markbass. The Yes kit boasts more than 10,000 recorded high-resolution samples, 512 levels of dynamics for each drum and cymbal in the kit, and the inclusion of sympathetic resonance and random samples. Other features include player immersion, which lets the drummer hear the sounds as recorded from the drummer's perspective. MSRP: \$1,999. markdrum.it



YAMAHA | DTX DRUMS

It Takes Two

Yamaha's DTX electronic drums now feature two new kits: the DTX450K and DTX400K. Both drum sets come with the DTX400 module, which offers 169 professional-level drum sounds, 128 instrument voices and 10 customizable kits. The crash and ride cymbals offer a realistic feel, and the 7.5-inch drum pads

have been redesigned for durability. Both sets are upgradable with the XP80 DTX-PAD snare.

MSRP:

DTX400K,

\$499.99;

DTX450K,

\$699.99.

{yamaha.com}



DIXON DRUMS | INVENTOR SERIES

Clutch Combos

Dixon Drums & Hardware has debuted the Dixon Inventor series with the Magnetic Drop Clutch and Ultimate Clutch Combo. The two-piece clutch is joined by magnets and attaches to the top hi-hat cymbal and pull rod like any conventional clutch. The player strikes the disk, causing the clutch to pivot and the top hi-hat to drop closed without missing a beat. This frees up the player's left foot for double bass or auxiliary percussion. {dixondrums.net}

TAMA | STARCLASSIC PERFORMER B/B

Superstar Set

Tama has added two new versions of its Starclassic Performer B/B kits. The new jazz kits feature vintage lacquered oyster finishes. The other retro style's bass and tom shell sizing boasts shallower depths than usual, reminiscent of the classics. Bubinga and birch make them ideal for sonic response.

{tama.com}



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ON-STAGE GEAR | LED509 CLIP-ON

Shed Some Light

On-Stage Gear recently debuted the LED509 clip-on LED orchestra light. It features nine LED lights, which provide a wide area of coverage and illuminate up to four pages of sheet music. The power switch offers two brightness settings to adapt to ambient light levels. The back shade blocks glare from the audience and is suitable in any performance scenario. MSRP: \$65.99. onstagestands.com



PROTEC | PRO PAC CASES

Deluxe Luxury

Protec has added Deluxe Pro Pac models to its line of violin and viola cases. They feature a strong wood-shell frame and velvet-lined molded interior that securely suspends the instrument. Interior features include an accessory compartment, two bow holders, shoulder rest storage strap and microfiber blanket that can be used to clean the instrument. MSRP: violin, \$189; viola, \$199. protecmusic.com



RS BERKELEY | LOUIS ARMSTRONG LEGENDS SERIES

Play Like Louis

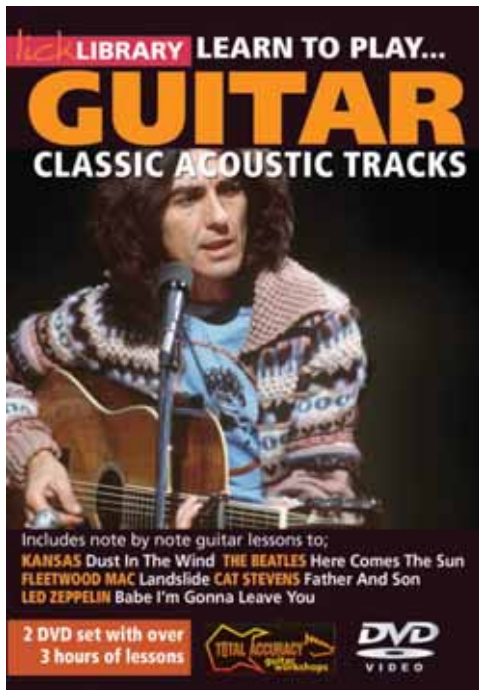
RS Berkeley's new Louis Armstrong Legends series trumpet mouthpiece is the first model added to the Legends series brass line. It's an exact reproduction of Armstrong's silver-plated mouthpiece. Brass-mouthpiece maker Greg Black has improved the dynamics of the mold and maintained the authenticity of Armstrong's original design. rsberkeley.com

thanks.

The staff of Music Inc. would like to thank every retailer and supplier who has appeared on our pages. This vibrant, exciting industry is the reason Music Inc. was named **Magazine of the Year** by the American Society of Business Publication Editors.

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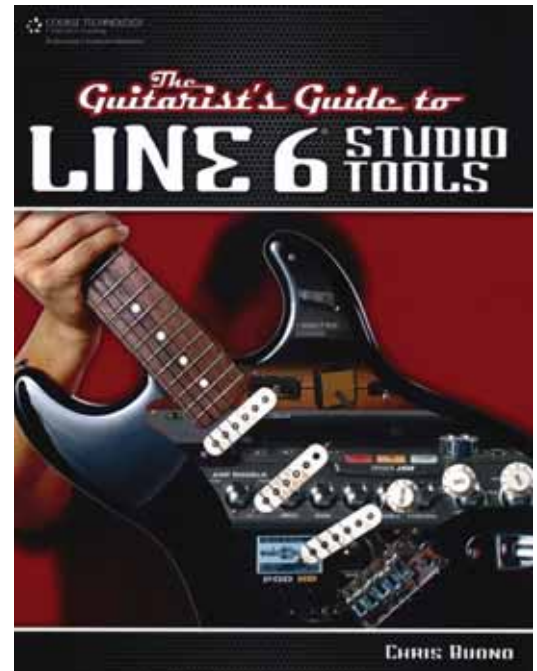
Lick Library recently released the *Learn To Play Classic Acoustic Tracks* DVD. Tutor Danny Gill takes users through five tracks with more than three hours of guitar lessons that explore the theories and techniques of the fingerpicking style. The DVD features Kansas' "Dust In The Wind" as an exercise to learn fingerpicking. licklibrary.com



ALFRED I 'THE GUITARIST'S GUIDE TO LINE 6 STUDIO TOOLS'

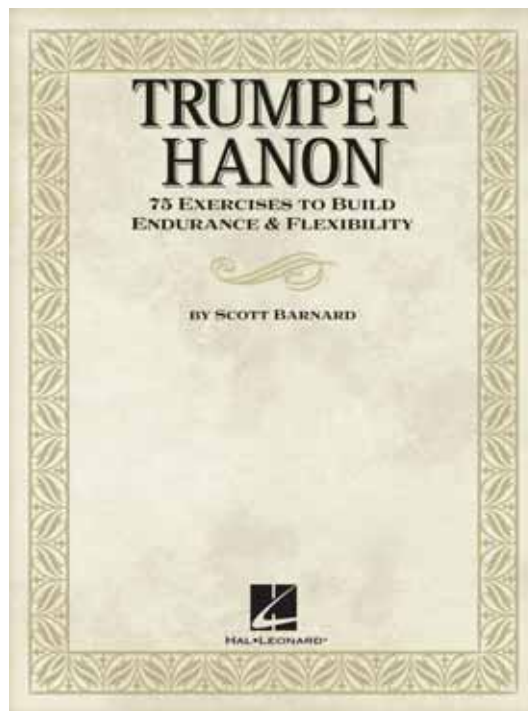
Line 6 Pro

Alfred now distributes *The Guitarist's Guide To Line 6 Studio Tools*. The book introduces players of all levels to the array of hardware and software products available from Line 6. Author and Line 6 user Chris Buono shares a compilation of practical guidance, detailed images, insightful tutorials and exclusive artist testimonials to help fellow users get in on some of the most widely used music trends. MSRP: \$29.99. alfred.com



HAL LEONARD I 'TRUMPET HANON'

Hanon Handbook



Hal Leonard's new *Trumpet Hanon* by Scott Barnard boasts 75 exercises that help players build their endurance and flexibility. Barnard thoroughly covers such topics as articulation, dynamics, range, breath management, finger and lip flexibility, double and triple tonguing, scales and arpeggios, harmonic progressions, transposition, and ornamentation. MSRP: \$14.99. halleonard.com



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AMERICAN DJ | TRI-COLOR LED

Go-to Gobo

American DJ recently unveiled the Gobo Motion LED, a fast-moving Tri-Color LED lighting fixture that's both a multi-gobo fixture and solid-color beam effect in one compact unit. A portable scanner-type effect, the Gobo Motion LED is equipped with six replaceable, removable gobo patterns. MSRP: \$239.95.

americandj.com



ELATION | EPV15 FLEX VIDEO PANEL

Flexible Board

Elation has released the EPV15 Flex Video Panel, which is designed for creating curved video walls. The EPV15 Flex features an easy flex design that lets the panels bend, coil and wrap around any flat or dimensional surface. With its ability to adapt to curved surfaces and high ingress protection ratings of IP65 (front) and IP54 (back), the new light makes it possible to install a high-impact video wall anywhere. elationlighting.com



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Rick Santos

Rick's Music World
Raynham, Mass.

The answer to that question is actually "yes" and "no." Four years ago, we were going through one of the most disastrous economic periods of our time. Most of us got through that, and as a store, we are better for it. We focused on our core values of education, performance, installation and watching inventory. During that same period, banks went wild with credit card interest-rate hikes and totally debilitated us from improving and sustaining our proper inventories. We are still working off some of that interest today. However, we are better off than we were four years ago, and there are signs that the economy is improving. We will continue to market and improve our core departments, slightly change our business model and continue growing.

>>>

Michelle Wlosinski

Denton, Cottier & Daniels
Pianos and Organs
Getzville, N.Y.

The last four years have been challenging. Our business remains strong due to a strong network of community partnerships. We were never a place that could rely on flashy advertising. We survive and thrive by helping other community organizations, and they in return help us. We make our store a place of music, culture and philanthropic activities. All arts and charitable organizations are facing cuts and are more open than ever to collaborations. We sell luxury products in two Rust Belt cities. We focus on making our community a better place. I am convinced that is the only reason that we survive, no matter what the economy or politics send our way.

>>>

Rick Hamilton

Drums Etc.
Lancaster, Pa.

They say, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Getting through the last few years has helped us mature. We are leaner, more efficient, and we are moving forward with more confidence. We are having fun again! Our latest challenge is to improve our Internet presence.



>>>

Peter Sides

Robert M. Sides Family
Music Center
State College, Pa.

Is your store **better off** now than it was four years ago?

We have better people. We're better training the ones that we have or making some new hires. We have one more store than we had four years ago that we added last year. We also cut one of the stores in half and scaled it down to make it more profitable. It helped us simply by lowering costs. We had a 16,000-square-foot building, and half of that was for pianos. The day we finished splitting the building was the day Lehman Brothers tanked in September 2008. The piano business hasn't been the same since.

We've had four straight years of record-breaking band rentals, so we've really grown that

area of our business. We felt that school music and band rentals were areas that we should focus on more as a full-line store. They're the engine that keeps the whole machine going. We talked to the teachers about ways that we could partner with them, as well as ways we could streamline our rental program and inventory offerings.

Maximizing the use of that inventory and minimizing the amount left at the end of October has been a personal project of mine. I want to make sure we don't lose any business but also make sure we're not fully shelved at the end of the school music season.

We do have fewer

employees than we had four years ago. Where we added that fourth store [in Elmira, N.Y.], two or three stores in the area had closed. There was no one doing retail there. There are catalogs and websites, but we felt that was a million-dollar market. Here at our State College store, where we've cut the store in half, we've had two or three music stores go out of business. I like to think we're doing something right, but in a lot of cases, these were people I never saw at NAMM shows, at NASMD or active in the community.

Thirty years ago, the store had the advantage, and these days, it's the customer.

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