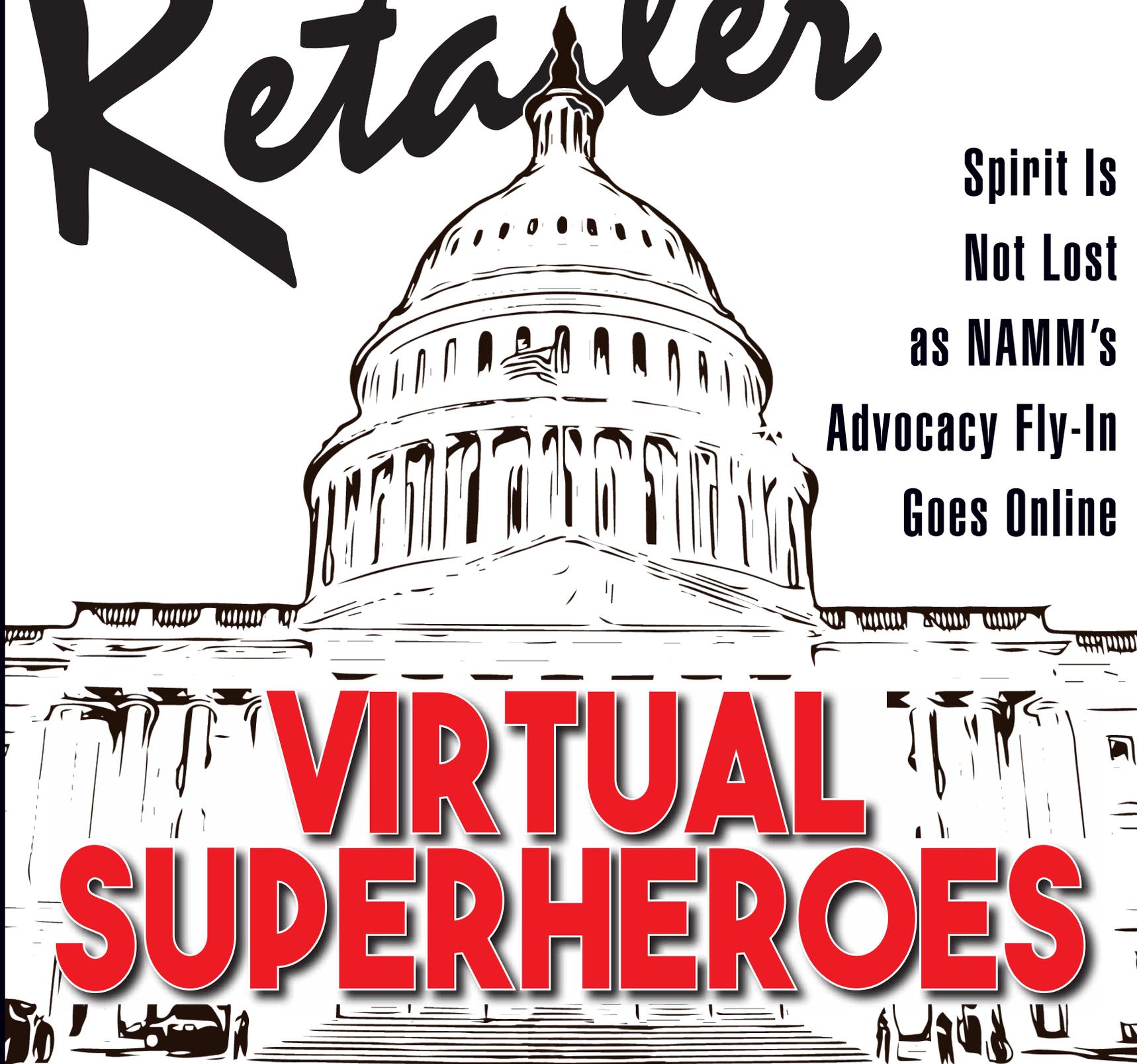


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2021 NAMM Show Expected to Take Place

NAMM on June 15 issued a letter to potential exhibitors, signed by chairman Chris Martin, treasurer Tom Sumner, vice chairman Joel Menchey, secretary Chris White and president and CEO Joe Lamond explaining that despite challenges and a “new normal,” The 2021 NAMM Show is expected to take place as scheduled in January. The letter is presented in its entirety below:

“Thank you for your feedback and support as our industry navigates the unprecedented challenges of the past few months. We have been focused on providing members with important lobbying and education regarding financial relief and also sharing the best peer-to-peer ideas for survival.

“Of course, the responsibility of producing the global industry’s show has likewise weighed heavily. Some have suggested we sit January out and wait until 2022 when the picture will be clearer. However, the majority have shared the importance of getting the trade together to help the industry rebuild and recover. We believe one of the most important things we can do as your association is to connect and unify. It seems that NAMM chair Chris Martin might have said it best: ‘Now as much as ever, we need to plan on having our gathering of the musical faithful at The NAMM Show in Anaheim. In 2021, the experience may seem different — indeed, life is different — our need to connect is more important than ever!’

“No one can really say what the world will look like next January. We are working with the city of Anaheim and the state of California to enable us to use the Anaheim Convention Center. We are also working with federal, state and local health agencies and have retained a medical doctor on our planning team to ensure that we take every possible precaution and follow all known best practices for social distancing, hygiene and enhanced facility cleaning.

“As with this past year’s show, we will do everything in our power to ensure a global gathering of buyers, key influencers and media through our Crossroads strategy. Education through NAMM U, TEC Tracks and the wide range of additional sessions will provide invaluable incentives for retail buyers, distributors, facilities managers, audio and video installers, recording, live sound, staging and lighting professionals. Rounding out our musical ecosystem, the event will once again attract music educators, artists and leading content creators and the thousands of music business students who are the leaders of tomorrow.

“We also understand that for some, attending The NAMM Show will just not be a possibility this time. We are building out a digital trade show experience that, while of course not the same as being there, will run concurrently with The NAMM Show and provide opportunities to launch new products, gain media exposure and feature



enhanced match-making and customer meetups.

“We are working with all of our exhibitors on extending deposits and booth payments. Many will want to reconfigure their exhibits to reflect their economic realities, and we are here to help. Your account rep will work with each of you individually to ensure that, regardless of your level of participation, we will have a solution that fits your unique situation.

“We believe that an industry that comes together to face adversity head-on will be more resilient in the face of the many challenges ahead. While The 2021 NAMM Show will be different than this past year, it is an important step in helping our members and the industry grow and thrive in the future. It won’t be easy, but as it was once said, ‘doing the easy thing isn’t always right and doing the right thing isn’t always easy.’ With your support and leadership, we know that we can and will succeed together!”

Luck of the Irish

Celestion appointed Professional Audio Ltd. as its distributor for Ireland and Northern Ireland. Professional Audio Ltd. (PAL), based in Dublin, was established in 1990 and is a distributor of professional audio equipment and musical instruments in the region.

“We are excited to have Professional Audio Ltd. as our partners in Ireland and Northern Ireland,” said Celestion distribution sales manager Neil McDougall. “Gerry and his team at PAL have many longstanding relationships across the region, and we look forward to having them represent Celestion.”

“PAL is very excited to be partnering with Celestion in Ireland and Northern Ireland,” added Gerry Forde, founder and owner of PAL. “Celestion is known the world over for its excellent reputation and quality products, which makes it a brand that our dealers are looking forward to being able to offer and end users are excited about.”

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COVER STORIES

20 Virtual Superheroes

Although the NAMM Advocacy Fly-In could not take place in Washington, D.C., this year, the trade group kept spirits high during a June 16 virtual event.

22 The Music & Sound Retailer's First-Ever Summer Product Showcase

Unfortunately, there is no Summer NAMM Show this month. So, instead, we offer several products that companies are featuring in the second half of 2020.



The Music & Sound Retailer editor Brian Berk (upper left), presented the Music & Sound Awards, Dealer Division, on Zoom on June 30. See who won at msr.io/34th-msa-dealer-winners.

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Being adept as an online reseller is no longer a suggestion, but a requirement. A great platform to conduct ecommerce is eBay, whose Chelsea Walsh joins us to provide retailer tips for online selling, plus much more.

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Spy continues his/her virtual visit of Minneapolis MI stores and this month selects a winner.

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Sebastian Fabál provides retailers with advice on how to make an in-store personality shine online.

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Taylor Guitars' American Dream Series is 46 years in the making.

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Nothing, not even a global pandemic, will get in the way of Illinois-based Tobias Music's success.

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Fender's Fullerton Ukuleles are influenced by the company's most iconic electric guitars and aimed at those musicians looking for a unique take on a ukulele that has a body shape deeply rooted in tradition.

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Allen McBroom has four offerings on today's "menu": patience, supply diversification, supply and demand, and optimism.

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It's incredible to think where we were a couple of months ago. Confidence in the future was even lower than the availability of toilet paper.

But I am happy to say I returned to the office on June 15 as part of "Phase Two" of New York's recovery from the COVID-19 epidemic. More importantly, most MI stores have reopened on a full, walk-in basis, not just via curbside. Even though things are most certainly not 100-percent the same as before at your store, this is excellent news for MI sales, the psyche of customers and, of course, our psyches as well.

MI stores can go back to helping people attempt to realize their musical fantasies. You will likely need to wear masks, provide hand-sanitizing stations, make sure your store is cleaner than ever before and make certain customers properly social distance, but the return of in-person retail is great news. In fact, many MI retailers posted on social media about the excitement both they and their customers had on the first day they fully opened for business.

I should caution this does not mean the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Cases have been spiking in several states as restrictions have been eased. The fall could provide an unwanted "second wave" of COVID-19 cases, as experts have warned is possible, along with the regular flu season. Hence, until a vaccine or effective treatment is widely available, we are not out of the woods yet. But progress is important, and we have certainly advanced several steps since March and April.

So, where do we go from here? I think we should look at what has worked during the pandemic, with virtual lessons and online sales as two things to point to. To get more advanced tips on what to do now, I encourage you to watch the NAMM U Virtual Summit videos from sessions that took place from July 7 to July 10. *The*

Music & Sound Retailer will also provide coverage of some of these sessions in next month's issue.

My final thought is to spot trends. In addition to the MI industry, of course, I like to follow the sports memorabilia market. Among Americans who today have jobs, money is plentiful due to nothing being spent on extravagant meals, sporting events, Broadway shows, travel, etc. For these reasons, plus the nostalgic fact that no team sports have been played for months, leaving a hole in people's hearts, the sports memorabilia market for the first time since the 1980s has gone "on fire" recently. Case in point: an autographed 2009 baseball card of Los Angeles Angels star Mike Trout sold for \$922,500 in a May online auction. Only five of the card were made. Trout is clearly a great player, but he has never even won a playoff game, and is of course still alive to sign many future autographs, as opposed to Babe Ruth, perhaps the greatest baseball player ever, whose memorabilia sells for less.

My point is this: Why can't the high-end musical instrument market also see a big boost? Actually, it already has, as evidenced by a Kurt Cobain guitar selling for \$6.01 million last month. If you are not doing so, perhaps it is time to consider selling expensive guitars in auctions, should you possess them. Buyers are out there and waiting. 

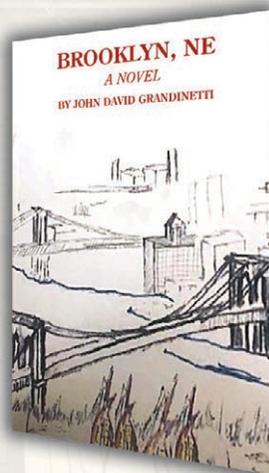


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D'Angelico Acquires Supro, Pigtronix

D'Angelico Guitars acquired Supro USA and Pigtronix, a merger of New York brands. D'Angelico Guitars and Supro have collaborated as a guitar and amp pairing in their marketing efforts for years.

"We have always had a deep appreciation for Supro's products and brand," said D'Angelico chairman John Ferolito Jr. "When the opportunity to acquire the brand arose, we didn't think twice."

"This is going to make all three brands even stronger," added D'Angelico CEO Brenden Cohen. "I can't wait for our customers to see what we have in store for them."

Both Supro and Pigtronix were previously owned by Absara Audio, located in Long Island, N.Y. "All three companies having a home base in New York just amplifies the harmony these brands already share," said D'Angelico chief operating officer Jimmy Lovinggood. "The last few months have been an extremely challenging time for businesses across the country and around the world, New York City especially. We began this acquisition many months before COVID-19, and although this is a challenging time for every industry, we truly believe in these brands and decided to move forward in full confidence."

Supro was originally founded in Chicago in the 1930s. It was re-launched in 2013 and has gone on to achieve popular status in the



music industry. Pigtronix is a fast-growing industry leader among boutique pedal companies, featuring forward-thinking design and concepts.

"The acquisition of Supro and Pigtronix by D'Angelico creates a trifecta," said Dave Koltai, former co-owner of Supro and Pigtronix. "It's a perfect fit, and I am thrilled to be able to continue making new gear for musicians around the world."

Koltai will be onboard as chief technology officer, continuing to design and develop both Supro Amps and Pigtronix Pedals, alongside D'Angelico's executive vice president of product development, Ryan Kershaw. "This is going to allow us to take everything we do to the next level," said Kershaw.

Though the acquisition is now complete, the brands will enter a transitional phase, developing a new company structure and revised product plan for 2021. "We could not be more excited for what's to come," said Cohen. "This is the company I have been envisioning."

Alliance Quantum Sweepstakes Winner Named

Eden Prairie High School of Eden Prairie, Minn., won the Academic Alliance Quantum Mark II Sweepstakes. More than 600 Academic Alliance member schools participated in the sweepstakes that ran from June 2019 to May 2020. As the winner, Eden Prairie High School, an Academic Alliance member since 2019, will be the recipient of five snares, three tenors and five bass drums to be sized, configured and finished to their requests from Mapex Drums, a division of KHS America.

Said Mapex/Majestic marching brand manager, Nic Milliner, "I'm very happy for Eden Prairie High School on the sweepstakes win. I hope that these young musicians enjoy these drums for years to come, and thank you for being a proud member of our Academic Alliance."

The Academic Alliance is designed to facilitate and strengthen important symbiotic relationships within the music-education community and is open to all kindergarten to 12th-grade public and private school band programs in the United States. KHS America offers access to benefits intended to enhance the student experience, promote program growth and bring attention to the great work being done by music educators.

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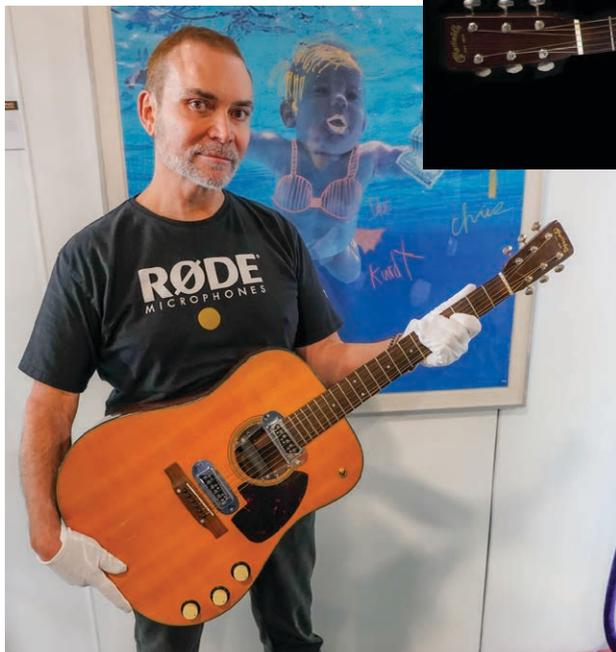
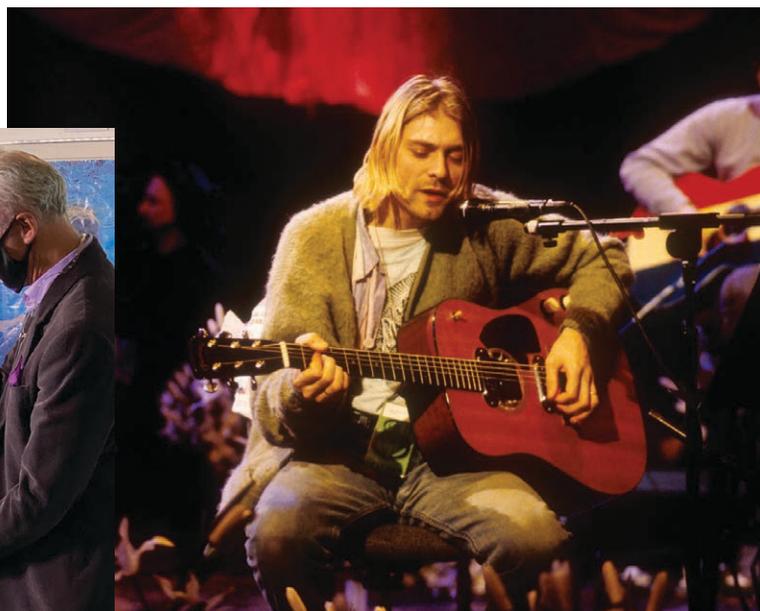


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MI Auction Market Is Red Hot

Despite the world suffering from a pandemic, the MI auction market has likely never been hotter, Martin Nolan, executive director of Culver City, Calif.'s Julien's Auctions, told *the Music & Sound Retailer*. "People want an escape from the harsh reality we are in right now. ... People are also stress shopping. Every store was closed," he said. "Then, there is the element that the stock market has been so volatile this year. People are saying, 'Let's diversify. Let's buy something. Let's get something iconic. I deserve this. I am going through a pandemic. I need to acknowledge this. I need to reflect on where I am in life.' People are at the point where they have disposable income and they want to splurge more. They are not traveling. They are not buying an expensive watch. They may not be buying an expensive car. They see something in an auction that is cool and a great conversation piece. We are all nostalgic. We all want to reflect back to our youth. We are buying a happier time in our life. We are buying some normalcy. And in years to come, we are owning something that will likely appreciate in value."

Nolan knows firsthand. He was a key component of the June 20 sale of Kurt Cobain's 1959 C.F. Martin 18-E that was played on Nirvana's famous 1993 "MTV Unplugged" performance for \$6.01 million. "This is the highest price paid not only for a guitar but for any item of memorabilia," said Nolan. "We were the first auction house to sell a guitar for more than a million dollars. That was John Lennon's J1 60E that was stolen or taken from him at a Beatles Christmas show in 1963. Nobody knew where it was until we were contacted in early 2015 that a person unknowingly might have the guitar. So, we went on a whole journey of authenticating and researching it. We even had to work with Yoko Ono, because she was the rightful owner of the guitar. We sold it for \$2.4 million, then a world record. Half the money went to John and Yoko's



Clockwise: Martin Nolan and Lloyd Chiate examine the Martin guitar; Kurt Cobain onstage during "MTV Unplugged;" the guitar itself; Peter Freedman, the winner of the auction.

charity as part of the settlement."

On June 20, 2019, Pink Floyd's David Gilmour sold his black Fender Stratocaster for \$3.9 million, setting a new world record. Exactly one year later, the Cobain guitar was sold to Røde Microphones founder Peter Freedman. "He is a great guy and a longtime client of ours," said Nolan of Freedman. "He has a special affinity for the [Cobain] guitar and decided he would go after it."

Julien's Auctions had expected the Cobain guitar to sell for

between \$1 million and \$2 million. Nolan said he was on "cloud nine" when seeing the final selling price of more than \$6 million. "We sold the cardigan Kurt wore on 'MTV Unplugged' in October for \$334,000," he recalled. "That was a world record for a Cobain item or cardigan. When we priced the Cobain guitar, we figured it would sell for three times what the cardigan sold for. But I believed it could sell for 10 times the cardigan. I believed it could reach a new world record. But I never

had any inkling we could break \$6 million. It was just incredible." He added, "It was even more exciting because it was the first time during the pandemic we had bidders in the room — socially distancing of course."

The Cobain guitar is even more fascinating considering the story behind its appearance at Nirvana's "MTV Unplugged" performance. Nolan recounted its history: "Kurt and [wife] Courtney [Love] went into [Hollywood's] Voltage Guitars. Lloyd Chiate, still the owner of the store, would go around the country sourcing for guitars. He bought the Martin guitar in the early 1990s, in a dingy guitar shop in either Mississippi or Alabama, for \$3,500. There were only 302 of the guitar made. This was No. 7. [Chiate] brought it back to his shop. Kurt Cobain came into the store looking for a Martin guitar. He wanted a left-handed guitar, and there was an easy transfer from right to left with Martin guitars. [Chiate] sold it to Kurt and a pregnant Courtney for \$5,000, a

nice markup for a guitar in the early 1990s.”

Chiate actually came to Julien’s Auctions’ showroom to see the guitar before the auction was finalized. “He looked at the guitar,” recalled Nolan. “There were two scratch marks. He said, ‘Those are still there. Those were there when I sold it to Kurt.’” Chiate later returned to Julien’s on the final day of the auction, and he and Freedman had the opportunity to meet and take a photo together with the Martin guitar. “That was history changing hands,” said Nolan. “That was truly incredible.”

While it may not be surprising that iconic instruments played by legends like Cobain, Lennon and Gilmour can fetch record bids, Nolan stressed that the market for musical instruments is not only hot at the high end in terms of price. Lower-price models under \$100,000 are also seeing plenty of sales, and these record-shattering auctions serve to raise values in all pricing tiers. “There is strength across the board,” he responded. “And the sale of the Cobain guitar raised the benchmark for musical instruments. Before we sold the [Lennon] guitar for \$2.4 million, there was a resistance for people to pay more than \$1 million for any musical instrument. We smashed that glass ceiling. ... We have raised the bar. Values have gone up. People are willing to spend on these items.”

The market for musical instruments will remain hot even if the COVID-19 pandemic passes, when people will have more options to spend their money on, such as travel and sporting events, Nolan told *the Retailer* with confidence. “This is going to be our best year in the [auction] business,” he said. “That is partly because people who have felt guilty about buying a collectible item are [now] saying, ‘What the heck?’ But also, people are seeing these items as investments. A good example is the [Kurt Cobain] cardigan I mentioned. We sold

that in 2015 for \$117,000. The buyer of that cardigan brought it back to us four years later and we doubled his money. There is definitely a trend. We are seeing interest and demand, and people keep coming back for more and are paying higher prices.”

Nolan’s biggest challenge now

is to find a memorabilia item, music-related or not, that can top the \$6.01 million earned for the Cobain guitar. “I am thinking about that,” concluded Nolan. “I am really pleased that Kurt Cobain, someone I have so much love for, set the record. I am looking for the next [great item]. Clearly,

there is demand. People lined up to bid for the Cobain guitar. And that was with the knowledge that we already had a \$1 million bid for the guitar before we opened the auction. The news about the guitar’s sale has gone worldwide. People are stunned and amazed, but loving it.”



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Gator Launches Campaign in Fight Against Racism and Discrimination

Gator partnered with artists Beatriz and Bianca Williams to create a unique strap that will be given away with donations to organizations leading the charge against racism. The goal is to raise money and awareness for these organizations' missions and create a strap as a conversation piece for musicians to wear and drive dialogue with.

For every donation more than \$25 that is made to NAACP Legal and Defense Fund, Center for Economic Inclusion, ACLU, Equal Justice Initiative or Color of Change, Gator will give a free, special-edition Levy's guitar strap.

"This affects every human being, regardless of race, and we have a responsibility to ourselves and others to be better," said Crystal Morris, Gator founder and CEO. "Gator is committed to being part of the change. We do not want to sit on the sidelines as observers. We want to use our voice to spark conversations that lead to change. We all have a choice. Let's choose to rise together."

Added Beatriz and Bianca Williams, "The design of the strap represents our nation and the values we should live by — justice, respect, kindness, peace, unity, equality and love for all, no matter the color of your skin. It provides an abstract view of a deconstructed flag, demonstrating how our nation is pulled apart by racism. The inspirational words on the back highlight the values and actions that will bring our nation together in solidarity and strength."

How to be a part of the change and receive a free strap:

Donate to NAACP Legal and Defense Fund, Center for Economic Inclusion, ACLU, Equal Justice Initiative or Color of Change.

Complete a short order form with contact details and donation receipt at www.levysleathers.com/unity-strap.

Afterwards, Gator will ship a special-edition Levy's strap for free. (The strap is not available for sale, it is currently available only in the United States and is available only while supplies last.)

To donate, and for more information on advocacy and education organizations, visit:

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- naacpldf.org
- aclu.org
- colorofchange.org
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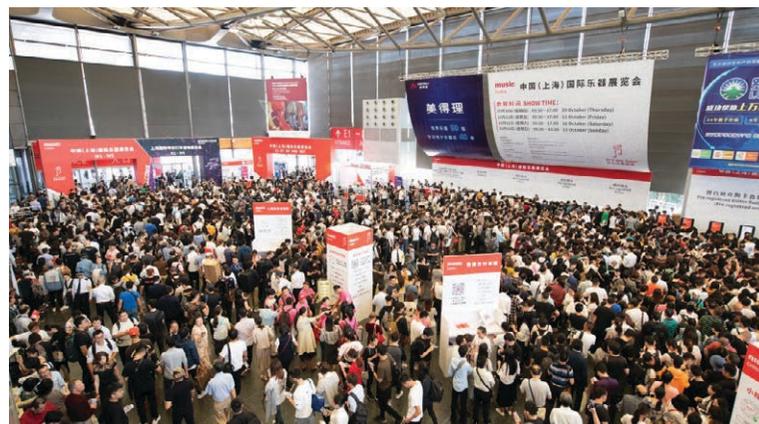
Music China to Take Place as Scheduled in October

The 2020 edition of Music China will take place from Oct. 28 to 31 at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre, confirmed organizer Messe Frankfurt (HK) LTD. "With the ease of anti-coronavirus measures in many parts of the world, businesses across a wide variety of sectors are targeting a resumption of normal economic activities. Music China, Asia's largest trade fair for musical instruments, will be the last major event of its kind for the last quarter of 2020. A number of the world's renowned brands have already confirmed their participation at this October's event, which is expected to play an important role in pulling manufacturers, suppliers, agents, buyers and music enthusiasts back together, to do business and mingle in one of the world's most vibrant commercial hubs, Shanghai," stated Messe Frankfurt.

"When the circumstances ease, Music China will play a crucial role in helping speed up a recovery in the musical instruments industry. While looking forward to the 2020 edition with a positive outlook, we are monitoring the situation closely and will take timely action to adapt to changes in the situation," said Judy Cheung, deputy general manager for Messe Frankfurt.

As early as June, many brands had already confirmed their participation at Music China, reflecting both their trust in the fair, as well as their expectations for an economic rebound, stated Messe Frankfurt. Some of the international brands already confirmed to appear include BAM, Bergerault, Casio, Kawai, PianoDisc, Saga, Samick, Schimmel, Seiko, Steinway, Taylor, Thomastik, Yamaha, Yanagisawa and many more, added the organizer. Domestic brands such as Beijing Shengshi Zhongze Yueqi, Guangzhou Digital Music Element, Ningbo Hailun Piano, Hebei Jinyin Musical Instruments, Hsinghai Piano, Parsons Music, Guangzhou Pearl River Piano, Shanghai Music Publishing House and Yantai Kingsburg Piano will also join the 2020 show.

"The outbreak of the epidemic has dwindled global economic activities to a large extent, and the global supply chain has also been affected. Over the short term, it has had a huge impact across many different industries. To combat these negative effects, we want to utilize



Music China's industry influence as a promotional channel. Exhibiting at Music China will enable us to reinforce our brand image and fully demonstrate our strengths," said Kay Chen, marketing division representative of Yamaha Music & Electronics (China) Co. Ltd.

During Music China, attendees will be entertained via live performances, competitions, music appreciation and product demonstrations performed by various celebrities and professionals both inside and outside the halls. The show's fringe program will again feature the NAMM CMIA Industry Forum, the University Courses, as well as many lectures, seminars and workshops catering to different products and topics explored by industry leaders and university scholars. Details and schedules of the fringe program will be announced closer to the show dates.

Visitors also have the opportunity to explore a larger scope of products thanks to the concurrent Prolight + Sound Shanghai event, a trade fair for entertainment technologies. The two shows connect buyers and professionals from the musical instruments industry as well as the audio and lighting industry, creating synergies for new business opportunities.

McCabe's Guitar Shop Passes the Torch

Despite reports stating it will close, Santa Monica, Calif.-based McCabe's Guitar Shop will see a passing of the torch instead.

"McCabe's may be under new ownership, but it's still in the family! Despite all that has happened, we are looking forward to the next 60 years in Santa Monica!!" the retailers wrote on Facebook.

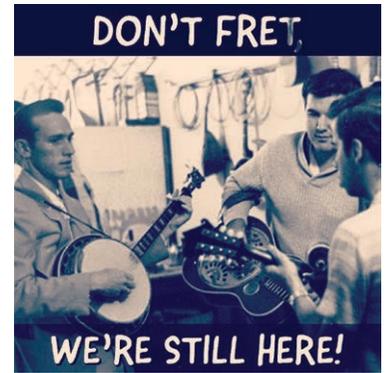
The store, a mainstay since 1958, has hosted a plethora of famous artists on its stage, including R.E.M., Tom Petty and Lisa Loeb. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, owners Esperanza Riskin and Bob Riskin considered closing the store after being denied

during the first round of paycheck protection program payouts in March. However, the Riskins were approved during the second round.

Instead of closing, the Riskins, who have co-owned McCabe's for more than 50 years, will instead retire due to concerns about CO-

VID-19. The Riskins have passed the torch to their daughter and son-in-law, Nora and Walt McGraw.

"It's sooner than we wanted to," Esperanza Riskin told the *Times*, adding that "It's kind of been heart-wrenching, actually. We're really sad."



D'Addario Foundation Names Scholarship Winners

The D'Addario Foundation announced the second round of its College Scholarship recipients. Ten students from Foundation grantee programs, nine being the first generation in their family to attend college, will be supported for four years with a scholarship that helps cover the cost of college expenses. This brings the total number of current scholarship recipients to 20.

Said scholarship winner Keith Fleming from Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's OrchKids program, "The community that I live in is a very dangerous and violent place. There are a lot of young people that get into lots of trouble because they don't have an outlet that helps them escape from the violence. Music and OrchKids has been that outlet for me since 2008. I am very excited for the scholarship because it gives me a chance to attend the University of Miami. This school and destination have been a dream place for me because of the diversity in cultures. This scholarship is helping me get the chance to experience and enlighten myself. It will definitely help me grow as a person and musician." 

MUSIC & SOUND RETAILER



**Streamer-Live Package Shown
(Phones are not included)

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USB Audio Interface, Condenser Microphone, Boom Stand, and LED Ring Light Package for Content Creators

The STREAMER USB audio interface packs tons of features including Bluetooth wireless input, 16 sound effects, both chat and singing mode with features like pitch correction and pitch bend, as well as vocal eliminator and talk over for accompaniment music. This makes it one of the most flexible AND affordable audio interface packages on the market for content creators.

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Streamer-Studio Package Includes: Audio Interface, Studio Condenser Microphone, and Boom Stand - MAP - \$99



Also Available: Streamer-Studio
www.vocopro.com



Note From Zach

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Introducing the NAMM U Virtual Summit

The online event adds to a suite of member resources as we navigate the new “next.”

This March, we amped up our webinars as COVID-19 brought the world to a standstill. The idea was to deliver vital education for you, the NAMM member, when you needed it most. We also wanted to provide a forum to convene like-minds—even virtually—at a time when we all craved connection with peers more than ever before.

What we didn't expect was the member response, though. And it could be summed up as ... “More please!”

And so we introduce the NAMM U Virtual Summit—an all-new education experience.

Held July 7–10, this free, four-day online summit will feature a series of super-sessions to help you navigate the new “next.” With three unique tracks (Business, Audio and Music Technology), NAMM U Virtual will appeal to everyone in the music products and sound industry, no matter your organizational role or industry segment. You'll discover new ways to win and amplify your success, right from the comfort of your home or office.

Covering everything from new marketing strategies to the future of music technology, these webinars will be presented by NAMM U, TEC Tracks and A3E (Advanced Audio + Applications Exchange). We know you're busy, so we're featuring one webinar per day, per track—for a total of a dozen sessions. We're also scheduling sessions without overlap, so you can watch them all.

You can view the full schedule and register for the NAMM U Virtual Summit at namm.org. But just to give you a taste of the program, we're kicking things off with “The Future of Retail in a Post-Pandemic World.” In this opening session, NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond will interview Doug Stephens, founder of Retail Prophet, on the future of consumer and employee behavior, physical retail and online commerce. And that's just the first webinar!

Get ready for powerful education that you won't find anywhere else. Register yourself and your team now. See you online!

Zach Phillips • NAMM Director of Professional Development



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Artists
& More

4 DAYS • 3 EDUCATION TRACKS • 1 SESSION EACH DAY (PER TRACK) • 12 SESSIONS TOTAL

FEATURED EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

JULY 7-10, 2020

NAMM|U



namm.org/virtual



Carlito's Way

DAS Audio of America Inc. appointed Carlito Cobos to the newly created position of national sales director/retail. Key responsibilities of the position involve strengthening the company's focus on retail sales and e-commerce. Cobos started with DAS Audio in May and is based out of the company's national headquarters in Miami.

Cobos has more than 20 years' experience in pro audio and the music industry. Prior to joining DAS Audio, he served as the pro audio business-development manager for Gibson brands. "DAS Audio has created the best live sound experience on the market, and I want every live sound professional in the country to hear the DAS difference," said Cobos. "At the end of the day, nothing is more important than a well-designed, aesthetically pleasing and reliable loudspeaker that fully engages the audience with accurate, articulate sound. These very qualities, which are characteristic of every product manufactured at the company's facilities in Spain, are crucial for making concerts among the most exciting moments of peoples' lives. DAS is a recognized leader in quality and performance, and I look forward to helping the company reach the next level in its success."

Added Jaime Villegas, general manager of DAS Audio of America, "Carlito brings a rich set of skills and experience to his new position with DAS. I have every confidence in his ability to make a positive impression on the sales professionals he will interact with and that his presence will be most beneficial to our organization. I am confident he will be a tremendous asset to our company. All of us at DAS Audio welcome him aboard."



Kati Eismann and Jason Echols

New Kids in the Hall

The Adam Hall Group appointed Jason Echols and Kati Eismann to fill two new management positions. Echols oversees Cameo brand international sales as business development manager, lighting technology. Eismann is in charge of the event technology company's global strategic and operational marketing.

Echols is supporting the business-development team directed by chief operating officer Markus Jahnel. Echols will drive the international expansion of the Cameo sales network and further expand the market position of the Adam Hall lighting technology brand in the rental, installation and industry sectors. Before joining the Adam Hall Group, Echols worked for a well-known lighting technology manufacturer as sales director for Asia.

"In the last few years, Cameo has continuously developed its product portfolio and gained an excellent reputation worldwide as an innovative, reliable and practically oriented lighting technology brand with first-class design," said Echols. "I look forward to greeting our customers and partners from the international Cameo sales network here in Neu-Anspach (Germany) and to convincing them of the brand's ingenuity through hands-on demonstrations and training courses. Together, we will continue expanding Cameo's global reach."

Eismann is now responsible for all the Adam Hall Group's marketing activities, from online and brand marketing to customer relationship management, and campaigns and advertising. The marketing and communication expert has gathered professional experience at Warner, Universal, Virgin, Eastpak, Endemol and Mindshare.

"I find Adam Hall Group's long history and successful international development very impressive," said Eismann. "I'm inspired by this to forge a successful path ahead for the umbrella brand and its individual brands."

In Memoriam: Lauren Keiser

Music publisher Lauren Keiser passed away on May 22. He was 74. Keiser worked with many of the top publishing companies over his long career, including Alfred, Cherry Lane, Carl Fischer and his own firm, the Keiser Music Publishing Co. In 2012, he purchased Southern Music and renamed the company Keiser Southern Music, where he worked to create new products taking advantage of developments in technology. As a result, the company provided DVDs and interactive method programs that won awards and helped change the way people bought and used print music. As president of the Music Publishers Association, he addressed concerns of illegal downloads and created a campaign to educate school administrators and school boards as to what are the legal uses of print music.

In Memoriam: Ellis Day

Ellis Day passed away on April 20 at the age of 97. Following his service in World War II, he worked for the retail chain Sherman Clay. He later moved to Chicago to work for Lyon & Healy and spent some time on the supplier's end of the industry, working at Leblanc. In the late 1960s, he began his long association with Allegro Music in Fremont, Calif., where he served as the store's general manager.

Dynamic Duo

As part of the company's efforts to position itself to work more effectively and efficiently in global product development activities, Audio-Technica U.S. (ATUS) announced two appointments to its product-management team.

Kurt Van Scoy was appointed to the position of executive director of product management for ATUS. In this position, Van Scoy is responsible for directing the product-development/management efforts at ATUS. In addition, he will oversee the ATUS quality-control department. Van Scoy is returning to the ATUS team after four years serving A-T as global product manager, based in Japan.

In addition, Gary Dixon has been promoted to the position of product manager for ATUS. With Dixon's knowledge of the professional audio market and years of experience in the installation segment, he brings a new level of depth and understanding to the product-management team. In his previous position as sales engineer, installed sound, Dixon served as a technical resource for the Audio-Technica sales channel in the broad contractor market (installed sound contractors, consultants and architects), where he helped ensure the proper and successful implementation of A-T products and technology in the marketplace while determining the application needs of customers.



Kurt Van Scoy



Gary Dixon

In Paul, We Trust(ee)

Paul Lavender, vice president of Instrumental Publications for Hal Leonard Corp., was elected to the VanderCook College of Music board as its newest trustee. VanderCook College has a longstanding relationship with Hal Leonard, as the music publishing and distribution company has made significant contributions to VanderCook's goals.

"We are excited to have Paul Lavender join the board of trustees at VanderCook. Paul's wealth of knowledge and experience will help guide our college and strengthen our leadership role in music education," said George Quinlan, Jr., chairman of the VanderCook board. "As a nationally recognized composer, arranger and author, his unique perspective will enhance VanderCook's reputation for providing a practical approach to music education."

At Hal Leonard, Lavender directs the product development and marketing of its catalog of music and educational publications for a wide range of ensembles. Under his supervision, Hal Leonard publishes more than 600 new instrumental publications annually.

In Memoriam: Don Holcombe

Don Holcombe, who owned and operated several music stores during his long career, passed away on May 31. He was 90. Among the most noted stores he operated were those stores he opened with fellow salesman Russell Lindquist in and around Houston under the name Holcombe-Lindquist Piano and Organ. The stores played a big part in the home organ boom of the 1960s and 1970s, with several successful advertisement campaigns, according to NAMM's Dan Del Fiorentino. Holcombe served the industry in several ways, including as a member of the NAMM Board from 1968 until 1971 and as secretary for the NAMM Executive Committee from 1971 to 1973.



Sweetwater Distribution Managers, l to r: senior vice president of distribution Robert Gerwig, chief supply chain officer Phil Rich, senior director Demarcus Austin and director of fulfillment Jeff Harrison.

How Sweet It Is

Sweetwater promoted Phil Rich to a newly-established role as chief supply chain officer. In this role, he is responsible for providing leadership for Sweetwater's merchandising and distribution center teams. This includes overseeing all vendor and manufacturer relationships, pricing, promotions and supply chain processes.

"I'm very excited to step into this new role," said Rich. "This opportunity will further allow me to refine our vendor relationships on all fronts, from new product launches to improved logistics. What's also particularly interesting is that being part of our distribution center puts me a lot closer to the customer. I'm able to help refine our processes to ensure the best outcomes for everyone involved."

"We are thrilled to elevate Phil into this new position," said Sweetwater founder and CEO Chuck Surack. "During the COVID-19 pandemic, Phil has been instrumental in helping to maintain inventory levels and keep shipments moving out the door, which has allowed us to serve our valuable customers in the manner they've come to expect. It just made sense for him to take an even larger leadership role."

Sweetwater also recently appointed three new managers in its Distribution Center, which opened in February. Robert Gerwig is the new senior vice president of distribution. Just prior to joining Sweetwater, Gerwig spent six years managing Macy's global supply chain in Chicago. "I was drawn to Sweetwater because of the combination of a keen focus on customer as well as employees," said Gerwig. "In addition, I am excited to contribute to the growth of such an amazing company."

Demarcus Austin is the new senior director in the distribution center. Before relocating to Fort Wayne, Ind., Austin was head of distribution operations at Newegg in Los Angeles. "I'm humbled to be awarded the opportunity to join the Sweetwater family, to be around so many positive individuals where the everyday message is doing the right thing."

Jeff Harrison is the new director of fulfillment, second shift. He grew up in northeast Indiana and most recently worked in Indianapolis, where he was a manager at Walmart's largest ecommerce facility. "In the short time I've been here, I'm already impressed by the immense amount of talent on the team. I am really excited about the positive things happening at Sweetwater and am grateful to be a part of it," Harrison said.

Sweetwater's new 480,000-square-foot facility opened in February with more than 35,000 packages being received and shipped from the location daily.



QUAD City DJ

For schools, churches, as well as stage production and rental companies, VocoPro unveiled its MIB-QUAD-8C system. This new package includes four VP wireless microphones and four headset or lapel mics with wireless packs, plus all cables — everything needed in one professional custom gig bag. All wireless mics/packs are color-coded to make setup even easier, stated the company.

MSRP: \$899

Ship Date: Contact company

Contact: VocoPro, vocopro.com



Snag a Snare

TAMA added two snare drums to its S.L.P. series. The S.L.P. Sonic Stainless Steel snare drum features a 6.5-inch by 14-inch, 1.2-millimeter, stainless-steel shell that delivers brightness, projection and a huge supply of cutting tone. The authoritative sound is supported by TAMA's new three-millimeter, 10-hole Steel Might Hoops, offering solid tuning and ample amounts of focused attack, stated the company. Overall, this new entry to the S.L.P. series delivers an assertive tonal voice, and its 6.5-inch depth affords it a wide tuning range, offering an array of stylistic applications. And the S.L.P. Bold Spotted Gum delivers a full, warm sound with a diverse dynamic range, lending itself to a variety of expressive playing styles, noted the company.

MSRP: \$749.98

Ship Date: Now

Contact: Tama, tama.com/usa



Stand in the Place Where You Live

As the world adjusts to remote working environments, Peavey Electronics introduced the fully adjustable Smartphone Desktop Tripod Stand for mobile photo and video. As a sturdy yet portable solution, this stand is the perfect desktop companion for work conferences, social media content creation and/or recorded performances, stated the company. The universal clip accommodates any size smartphone and can be rotated for landscape or portrait mode. Users can adjust accordingly for exactly the right angle, while benefiting from the extra grip of the stand's non-skid rubber feet. When not in use, the Smartphone Desktop Tripod Stand folds easily for storage. Packed up, it weighs less than 22 pounds, and measures roughly 21 inches high by 16 inches wide and 15 inches deep.

MSRP: \$19.99

Ship Date: Now

Contact: Peavey, peavey.com

Pedal to the Metal

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) expanded its effects pedals line with the MTG Tube Tremolo, designed to bring the “hypnotic sound typically found in vintage amps and places it in a stompbox based on a genuine U.S. Made NOS 6205 preamp tube.” The pedal features Level, Intensity, and Speed controls, three different waveform modes via the Wave knob and a dedicated tap tempo which allows access to various note subdivisions.



MSRP: \$199.99

Ship Date: Now

Contact: Fender, fender.com

Back in Black

Aston Microphones introduced the Black Spirit Bundle, a limited-edition release of only 1,500 individually numbered pieces. The box set comprises the multi-pattern, high-performance Spirit mic. The bundle includes a highly collectable, black-textured version of the Spirit, plus the Aston SwiftShield pop filter and shock-mount set, everything end users need for high-class recordings of vocals, instruments and most other sound sources, stated the company. The Aston Spirit is a high-performance switchable-pattern condenser microphone utilizing a one-inch gold evaporated capsule. A switch on the mic body selects from Omni, Cardioid or Figure-of-Eight polar patterns. It is versatile enough to use with most instruments and excels on acoustic guitar and vocals, according to the company. Its Aston 33 panel selected capsule is teamed with high-end transformer-balanced circuitry using only the best components. This highly accurate microphone gives a stunningly natural and transparent recording, capturing all the detail in the high range but without adding the harshness that some condenser microphones seem to, stated the manufacturer. The mic features Aston’s signature Wave-Form Mesh head, a built in ‘stainless-steel-wool’ pop filter, direct to stand mounting and the tumbled stainless-steel chassis.



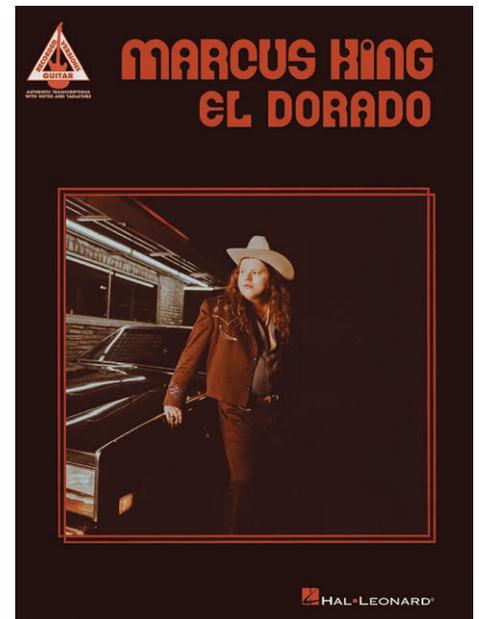
MAP: \$499

Ship Date: Contact company

Contact: Aston Mics, astonmics.com/en

One Day It’s Here

24-year-old Marcus King has been hailed as a guitar phenomenon and vocal powerhouse. His unique blend of rock, blues and soul has catapulted him to the top of the Billboard charts with his new release “El Dorado,” which was produced by Dan Auerbach. King’s first songbook is the artist-approved matching folio to “El Dorado.” The book is part of the Hal Leonard Guitar Recorded Versions series and features exact transcriptions to every note Marcus plays as well as complete lyrics to all twelve songs, including the singles “Wildflowers & Wine,” “The Well” and “One Day She’s Here.”



MSRP: \$22.99

Ship Date: Now

Contact: Hal Leonard, halleonard.com

Loop Me In

Vidami, a hands-free video looper that integrates with YouTube and other online video players, has announced new functionality for a more customized experience. Musicians can now press and hold the Forward button for a full second to scroll forward and stop wherever they’d like by tapping the Play/Pause button. This new QuickSearch feature will help musicians quickly navigate to any section of a video more easily, helping to further streamline their learning process. In addition to the new functionality, Vidami has expanded its compatibility with the release of its new Safari Extension. Users of Safari on MacOS 10.13 or later (High Sierra, Mojave or Catalina) can now access the new Safari extension via the downloads page at vidami.com. This extension offers all the same features as the Vidami Chrome Extension.

MSRP: \$149.99

Ship Date: Now

Contact: Vidami, vidami.com



Spirit Is
Not Lost
as NAMM's
Advocacy Fly-In
Goes Online



VIRTUAL SUPERHEROES

“Who would have thought when we gathered at The NAMM Show in January that it would look so different in June? You are all dealing with challenges in your life we could have never conceived of. What we are doing today could be as powerful or more powerful than before.”

—Joe Lamond

By Brian Berk

Unfortunately, NAMM had to cancel its annual Advocacy Fly-In, one of its most memorable events of the year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But the trade group wanted to make sure it did not skip the event entirely and simply wait for its return to Washington, D.C., in May 2021. So, NAMM on June 16 hosted a virtual advocacy event instead. Although it is difficult to replicate in-person visits to Capitol Hill, having lunch in the U.S. Capitol, and enjoying the nighttime entertainment and camaraderie among attendees the Fly-In provides, the four-hour digital event was about as good as it gets for something that only required delegates to log on to computers from their respective living rooms.

NAMM president and CEO Joe Lamond remarked that, although the world has been turned upside down in 2020, that does not mean NAMM members cannot continue to make a big difference. “Who would have thought when we gathered at The NAMM Show in January that it would look so different in June? You are all dealing with challenges in your life we could have never conceived of,” he said. “...What we are doing today could be as powerful or more powerful than before.”

While COVID-19 continues to provide unfortunate challenges, Lamond made sure to stress how impressed he is by today's advocacy efforts. “We are everyday people getting things done,” he remarked. “I am humbled.”

Intense challenges also provide opportunities, Lamond added. “Big opportunities happen at times of disruption,” he said. “...Now is the time when big things get done.”

Mackie V. Spradley, president of the National Association for Music

(continued on page 40)



Gil Parris (left) and Bernie Williams provided a virtual performance.



A look at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2019.



West Music's Robin Walenta (left) took to Capitol Hill last year to advocate for music education.



The Music & Sound Retailer's First-Ever Summer Product SHOWCASE

By Brian Berk

Many of us were planning to be in Nashville, Tenn., this month for what promised to be another amazing Summer NAMM Show. But unfortunately, COVID-19 took away that possibility. Although there is no way to replace the feeling of seeing NAMM friends (also referred to as NAMMily) in person or listening to some tremendous education sessions, at least we can highlight some products that manufacturers are releasing and/or featuring in the second half of 2020.

Here, we present our first-ever “non-NAMM” Summer Product Showcase. Let’s hope we need to run this story only once and can return to a Summer NAMM Product Showcase in 2021. In the meantime, we hope this product showcase will prove useful.



Mustang Sally

Fender Musical Instrument Corp. added to its Player Series in an effort to further expand entry-level offerings within the Fender brand. The new models include the Duo Sonic, Mustang, Mustang Bass PJ and Mustang 90 in Firemist Gold, Desert Sand and Aged Natural, offering a distinctive take on the classic models, perfect for players looking to express their unique sound and style, stated the company. Every Player Series instrument is “authentically Fender, with the sound, style and feel that make Fender electric instruments the choice of musical legends,” added the manufacturer.

fender.com



No Parlor Game

PRS Guitars announced its Parlor acoustic guitars. Building on its successful SE acoustic lineup, PRS’s new assortment of SE Tonare Parlor Acoustics are available in several colors and are offered both with and without electronics. Featuring PRS hybrid “X”/classical bracing, which allows the top to freely vibrate, the SE Parlor acoustics project with bold, even tone, stated the company. These guitars boast all-mahogany construction, and have an organic, warm voice. Their smaller size makes playing for hours effortless and comfortable, noted the manufacturer. They are available in three satin finishes with herringbone rosettes and accents. Other features include a solid mahogany top, ebony fretboard and bridge, bone nut and saddle, as well as PRS trademark bird inlays and headstock design.

prsguitars.com

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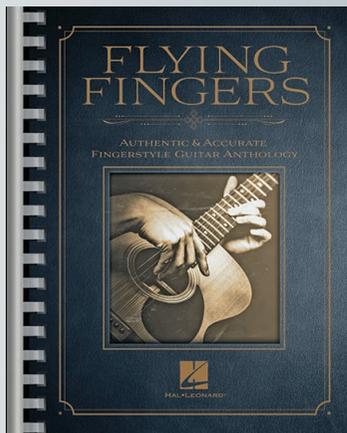
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It Only Comes Out at Night

Blipblox After Dark is Playtime Engineering's newest addition to the Blipblox toy synthesizer product line. It features a mature look with completely re-engineered electronics and software designed specifically for synthesizer enthusiasts. Labeled controls and guided LEDs allow anyone to instantly understand and manipulate the sound parameters. It features a multimode resonant filter designed to provide sound with a rich, analog-like quality; multi-tap stereo delay adds a full, lush quality to the output; and new oscillator modulation schemes include enhanced Blipblox classics, plus all new schemes that utilize 256 custom wavetables that can be morphed and scanned, stated the company. The After Dark's drums are generated by over 100 new kick and snare samples that can be individually pitched for unique, professional beats, added the manufacturer.

blipblox.com



Flying High

Fingerstyle guitarists and teachers now have a definitive source for repertoire thanks to a new release from Hal Leonard. "Flying Fingers" covers an expansive variety of styles and techniques — including recent innovations like percussive gestures, right-hand string-stopping, two hands on the fingerboard and partial capos — via its 50 accurate transcriptions with historical and performance notes for each. Beginning fingerstyle guitarists will find suitable arrangements for the start of their journey, and as they progress, they will continue to find new titles to work on. Intermediate- to advanced-level students and professionals will also find plenty of challenging new pieces to add to their set list. More than 50 artists are featured, each represented by a single, characteristic piece. Recordings of the specific versions included in the book can be located easily and are specified at the beginning of each tune, stated the company. All transcriptions are shown in standard notation and tab. halleonard.com

SansAmp™ PSA 2.0

for Guitar, Bass, Vocals,
Horns, Drums, Keyboards,
you name it.

TECH 21
Analog Brilliance™
tech21nyc.com



Originally introduced in 1993, the SansAmp PSA rackmount quickly became a studio staple. It's been used on thousands of major releases, worldwide tours and film soundtracks for multiple stage and studio applications and instruments.

We thought it was time to change things up a bit and streamline its architecture into a compact, easily portable pedal. The SansAmp PSA 2.0 offers the same 100% analog circuitry for punchy, responsive, organic sounds that brings out the best in any instrument. Only the programming and memory sections are digital. It also offers the same operational simplicity, essential functionality and dizzying versatility of its predecessor.

With 128 memory locations, storing and recalling programs is simple. You turn the knobs and hit Save. Being all-analog, there is zero latency when you switch between programs.

The SansAmp PSA 2.0 provides the flexibility to find almost any conceivable personality within the vintage and modern guitar and bass amplifier sound spectrums, as well as an assortment of revered stompboxes.

SansAmp PSA 2.0 Features:

- 100% analog signal path; digital programmability
- Performance Mode to instantly access 3 most often used presets
- Buzz, Punch, Crunch and Drive for tons of tonal options
- Gain for different flavors of overdrive
- Dual band active EQ, cut or boost ± 18 dB
- Global Trim control to adjust the level of all presets
- MIDI capability
- 1/4-inch 1meg0hm input
- 1/4-inch low impedance output
- Speaker simulation defeat switch
- Rugged, all-metal housing
- Measures 7.75"l x 2.5"w x 1.25"h
- Weighs just 12 oz.
- Utilizes included 9V DC Universal Power Supply, Model #DC9. Includes interchangeable international prong assemblies for EU, UK, Australia/New Zealand for use anywhere in the world.

Safe at Home

For singers and consumers looking to entertain at home and just have fun, VocoPro introduced its Smart TV Stay-At-Home Karaoke Package. It lets anyone enjoy a fun karaoke-club-like entertainment experience from the comfort of home. The core of the system is VocoPro's popular SmartTVoke unit. Just connect the box to the headphone or optical out of any internet-enabled smart TV and stream thousands of songs from YouTube or any number of karaoke apps. The new system includes two wireless microphones operating in the digital 2.4 gigahertz spectrum. For duets, each singer can control his or her own settings with independent volume and effect controls directly from the microphone's keypad. The system also includes a 100-watt powered wedge monitor/speaker with a built-in five-effect light show to really set the mood, stated the company. vocopro.com



I'm All Ears

ProCo Sound debuted what it states is the "most compact wireless in-ear monitor system on the market," W.I.E.M.S. by ProCo. The system has clear 24-bit/48-kilohertz digital transmission and operates at 5.8 gigahertz. It uses an internal rechargeable battery and offers low latency and a range of up to 30 meters line of sight. It accepts line-level signals and has four selectable channels, giving end users the ability to use up to four systems simultaneously. It's quick and simple to pair and comes complete in a hard-shell case small enough to throw in a gig bag or guitar case, stated the manufacturer. procosound.com/topic/wiems



Wide Assortment

Paiste introduced several Formula 602 releases, which enhance the company's cymbal assortment with heavier-weight classic models for louder situations and additional sizes to existing models. Released are 16-inch, 17-inch, 18-inch, 19-inch and 20-inch medium models, which are medium-heavy, multifunctional cymbals with full, strong crash sound. The larger models are well-suited for ride playing due to their silvery transparency. Similar to its smaller equivalent, the 15-inch Sound Edge Hi-Hat has great softness, finesse and — thanks to the wavy bottom cymbal — an always concise chick sound, stated the company. Thin Crashes, now available in 17 inches and 19 inches, are sensitive, responsive cymbals for full accents with silvery highs.

halleonard.com
(U.S. distributor for Paiste)

Morning (or Evening) Boost

IK Multimedia added Z-TONE advanced tone-shaping to its Z-TONE Buffer Boost pedal and Z-TONE DI active direct box. Both are housed in a sturdy metal chassis and offer a unique active/passive pickup selector switch to ensure the ideal gain staging for any instrument; switchable PURE and JFET input circuits to adjust from pristine, transparent sound to added warmth and harmonics; and IK's patented Z-TONE variable impedance control for powerful new ways to shape an instrument's sound and feel, stated the company. Z-TONE Buffer Boost is a guitar/bass preamp/DI pedal that adds Z-TONE tone

shaping to any player's pedalboard or stage rig. A buffered signal preserves instruments' tone when using pedalboards or long cable runs, and a boost control provides added volume and drive when needed.

ikmultimedia.com



The Right Connection

CAIG Laboratories added two new applicators to its DeoxIT line of connector treatments. DeoxIT is a hydrocarbon-based connector treatment. According to the company, it is the only product that will remove oxidation down to the microscopic level and that leaves a coating on the connection surface that stops future oxidation. The company has also introduced DeoxIT Swabs, foam cleaning swabs pre-saturated with DeoxIT D100 Liquid, as well as DeoxIT D5 Mini Spray, a smaller version of CAIG's contact-treatment D5 Sprays.

caig.com

Keep a Safe Distance

Adam Hall introduced the Gravity GMS23DIS01B (W) Universal Disinfectant Stand and Social Distancing Tape. The product is a height-adjustable disinfectant stand, which combines the round-base GMS23 microphone stand and the GMAD-IS01B (W) universal disinfectant holder (also available separately). The yellow-and-black PVC adhesive Social Distancing tape measures 216.54 feet in total length and is ideal for temporarily marking distance markers in waiting areas. adamhall.com



Kansas City, Here I Come

The W6 Paseo trombone from B.A.C. Musical Instruments is made entirely by hand in Kansas City, Mo. It features an eight-inch, yellow brass, one-piece, hand-hammered bell, and a yellow brass .500 bore handslide. This horn is designed to stand up against any beautifully handcrafted jazz horn made from the 1930s to 1960s, stated the company. coolisbac.com



Flex Some Muscle

Finnish loudspeaker manufacturer Amphon upgraded its flagship stereo bass extension and management system, FlexBase25. Boasting wide adjustment capabilities, a separate LFE-channel input and 1,400 watts of power, FlexBase25 gives users the ability to precisely sculpt the bass response of their monitor systems, making it an indispensable tool for the ever-changing low-end landscape of modern music production, stated the company. The key enhancement to the product is the two by 700-watt amplifier, more than double that of its predecessor, meaning that FlexBase25 has a faster and more powerful response, as well as improved headroom and lower distortion across all frequency ranges. amphon.fi

(continued on page 43)



The NY Meyer

**Flexibility. Easy to Blow.
Outstanding Consistency.**

This free-blowing alto sax model has superb control and note separation at any tempo or volume level. Offers great intonation and even response, too. It's ideal for students and pros alike.



jj Babbitt
jjbabbitt.com

*Made of
hard rubber*

CELEBRATING OVER 100 YEARS OF MAKING MUSIC
TRADITION. CRAFTSMANSHIP. LOYALTY.

The 34th Annual Music & Sound Awards, Dealer Division, Winners

During these difficult days of a global pandemic, it is perhaps even more important to honor today's best retailers, as voted upon by manufacturers and sales representatives. Just shy of 1,000 votes were cast. Here are the winners of the 34th annual Music & Sound Awards, Dealer Division. Winners were announced during a first-ever Zoom event on June 30. Video of this event is available now at msr.io/34th-msa-dealer-winners.



The Music & Sound Retailer editor Brian Berk (upper left), presented the awards on Zoom on June 30.

MULTI-STORE DEALER DIVISION

Best Guitars & Basses
Strait Music (TX)

Best Keyboards
Heid Music (WI)

Best Instrument Amplifiers
Ken Stanton Music (GA)

Best Sound Reinforcement
Ted Brown Music (WA)

Best Recording-Related Products
Tarpley Music (TX, NM)

Best Percussion
Ted Brown Music (WA)

Best DJ Equipment
I DJ Now (NY)

Best Clinics
Skip's Music (CA)

Best Customer Service
Blues Angel Music (FL, AL)

Best Sales Staff
Springfield Music (MO)

Multi-Store Dealer of the Year
Ted Brown Music (WA)

SINGLE-STORE DEALER DIVISION

Best Guitars & Basses
Music Villa (MT)

Best Keyboards
AMRO Music (TN)

Best Instrument Amplifiers
Chicago Music Exchange (IL)

Best Sound Reinforcement
Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center (MD)

Best Recording-Related Products
Sweetwater (IN)

Best Percussion
Chicago Music Exchange (IL)

Best DJ Equipment
Rock and Soul (NY)

Best Clinics
San Diego Music Studio (CA)

Best Customer Service
Musical Innovations (SC)

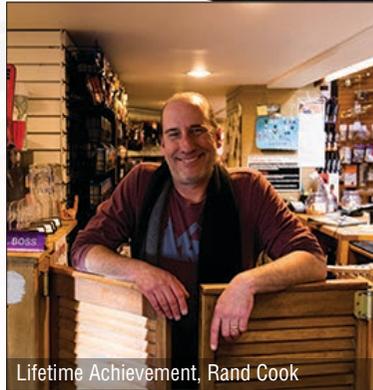
Best Sales Staff
The Candyman Strings & Things (NM)

Single-Store Dealer of the Year
The Candyman Strings & Things (NM)

Lifetime Achievement Award
(Individual person at either a multi-store or single-store retailer)
Rand Cook,
The Candyman Strings & Things



Blues Angel Music
 SALES • RENTALS • LESSONS • REPAIRS • PRO AUDIO
 PENSACOLA, FL • SPANISH FORT, AL
 BLUESANGELMUSIC.COM



Chelsea Walsh

Senior Category Manager,
Media & Musical Instruments, **ebay**

By Brian Berk



There is no question the retail landscape has changed forever due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One great way MI retailers have adjusted their business plans is by dramatically boosting their online ecommerce efforts, with eBay being an excellent place to do so. Chelsea Walsh, senior category manager, media and musical instruments, for eBay, provides tips for MI retailers to boost online sales and describes the company’s charitable efforts, plus much more.

The Music & Sound Retailer: Please tell us about yourself, your background, how long you have been at eBay and why you originally joined the company?

Chelsea Walsh: My love for music developed very early in my childhood. I grew up in a family with seven siblings, and my parents bravely embarked on countless summer road trips using music as a way to keep the peace, so my passion for music — as well as my passion for travel — likely came from these adventures. In my adult years, I have continued to pursue music and travel, visiting 27 countries in the last 10 years with my husband. Often, the fondest memories of our travels are the music we experienced in each country.

I have worked at eBay for 17 years, joining while I was still in college in our customer service team and quickly transitioning into various roles in our account management team. From there, I moved into my role in category management and have been doing that for the past five years. When I joined eBay, I was excited to be part of a company that was enabling commerce for small business in a revolutionary way. Seventeen years later, that is still one of the things I’m most excited about when I come to work every day.

The Retailer: How have you personally changed your personal shopping habits during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Walsh: Having worked at eBay for so long, I was already a seasoned online shopper before COVID-19 — perhaps too seasoned given the number of packages that arrive at my house each week. With shelter-in-place orders enacted, I tried to limit my trips to

stores and did find myself shopping for essential items like groceries and health and beauty items online. And like many people around the world, I have been purchasing more at-home entertainment items. My small vinyl collection has grown quite a bit in the past few months.

The Retailer: During these times, it is perhaps more important than ever for MI retailers to have a strong online presence, such as the one eBay provides. Can you provide some tips for retailers, both beginner and advanced, on how to improve their online presence and make more sales on eBay?

Walsh: Understanding the challenges that so many businesses were facing in the initial months, eBay launched its “Up & Running” program that focused specifically on retailers without an online presence. In order to keep these businesses running, and to connect them with new customers online, eBay committed \$100 million to cover their selling fees and resources to get started. We have welcomed tens of thousands of new businesses onto the platform, connecting them to a community of small businesses offering to help.

Once set up on eBay, my advice to sellers would be to list as quickly as possible, even if it’s just a few items, to try it out and kickstart that additional flow of income. Of course, considerations like taking high-quality images, pricing it right, and including the right product descriptors are all important as well. But, we help sellers every step of the way, and the



power of eBay is that each seller can configure their online presence to best complement their business needs.

In a time like this, eBay is an invaluable, low-risk tool for retailers to expand their online footprint. From small businesses that have never before sold online to those that have a web presence but want to reach more customers, any entrepreneur can start listing and selling right away. eBay reaches more than 174 million active buyers worldwide, so retailers using the marketplace are truly able to reach a global audience.

The Retailer: Have you seen a strong increase of music instrument sales during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, can you tell us what types of instruments have been good sellers and why that may be the case?

Walsh: eBay has long been a destination for music enthusiasts. We sell a musical instrument or piece of gear every five seconds on an average day. But during the pandemic, we have seen a definite spike, since most people began spending time at home. In the overall category, we saw a nearly 35-percent increase in sales from March to April when most stay-at-home guidance was issued, with guitars and basses, and DJ equipment seeing the steepest increases. In fact, sales for DJ equipment have increased 60 percent year over year, which is the biggest increase, even over our more traditional instrument categories.

It's evident that finally learning to play an instrument or reinvigorating an old hobby have become common pastimes for people these days. I attribute the increase in sales on eBay to the fact that people are generally buying more online, including items like instruments, and they're moving beyond preconceptions about where and from whom they buy. They don't have to settle for what is available from two or three major retailers; they can instead find the exact instrument they've been looking for from a trusted eBay seller.

The Retailer: Do you think the COVID-19 pandemic will forever alter the retail landscape? If so, what can MI retailers do to ensure their eBay presence is strong and they change with changing times post-COVID-19?

Walsh: When life returns to normal after the pandemic, I think we will see a sustained change in the way consumers and businesses approach retail. A lot of people who may previously have shied away from purchasing certain items online, or perhaps frequently bought from the same big-box retailers, have realized they can find just about anything on the internet. With eBay, not only can they find that very thing they're looking for, but they can also choose to shop small and feel good that they're supporting the nation's Main



“It is evident that finally learning how to play an instrument or reinvigorating an old hobby have become common pastimes. I attribute the increase in sales on eBay to the fact that people are generally buying more online.”

Street music shops.

To take advantage of this change, I would encourage MI retailers to bake an eBay presence into their broader business strategy. There are countless sellers that have seen success with this, but I like to highlight Rocky Schiano and his store Street-sounds NYC. Rocky opened his business in 1988 and relies on eBay in addition to his own website to maximize his reach and customer base. Like I mentioned before, there isn't really a downside to establishing and maintaining an eBay store because it complements other sales avenues.

The Retailer: eBay has been heavily involved in many charitable efforts. Can you tell us about some of those efforts, with a specific focus on any music-related charities?

Walsh: Purpose is at the core of our business, and it is important that we have a positive impact, especially on sellers during challenging times. As such, the eBay Foundation announced a \$15 million grant investment in organizations supporting small businesses and COVID-19 relief efforts, including Alice, the Opportunity Fund, Small Business Majority, and Silicon Valley Community Foundation's COVID-19 Regional Response Fund and Regional Nonprofit Emergency Fund. We also announced in March that we would match up to \$1 million in funds donated by sellers to Feeding America, Direct Relief and Opportunity Fund. Relating more specifically to music, we worked with Corey Taylor of Slipknot to auction guitars from his personal collection, and we ultimately raised more than \$150,000 with eBay's match to support Feeding America.

Beyond COVID-19, eBay has an established track record partnering with music-industry performers and organizations to help raise funds for charity. In June, eBay announced a donation of more than \$1.3 million, split between the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and Equal Justice Initiative, in an effort to take action against systemic racism and injustice. This includes proceeds from “Blackout Tuesday” (June 2), during which we donated all fees collected from items sold in the music categories. Further, since 2002, eBay for Charity has partnered with the GRAMMY awards show on an auction that includes exclusive items and experiences from GRAMMY award winners and nominees. This year, we raised more than \$85,000 to support MusiCares and the GRAMMY museum to aid the advancement of music learning and appreciation, as well as the music artists themselves that are in need.

Editor's Note: In our June issue, MI Spy reviewed Minneapolis-area websites. This month, MI Spy reviews four more sites and selects a winner among all nine websites presented both this month and last month.

Twin Town Guitars twintown.com

Visit the Twin Town Guitars website, and you'll immediately be greeted by a scrolling carousel of clickable images accompanied by clear, concise messages about the store's deals and services. When MI Spy visited the site, these links included "Online Lessons" and "Quarantunes," which demonstrated that the store is already reaching out to us in our socially distanced lairs. And the promise of "Curbside Pickup: Monday through Friday, noon to 5 p.m." is another very good way for the store to show its adaptability. At the top of the site is the store's logo and slogan: "Keeping Your Life Loud & Local Since 1997."

Twin Town's website offers a wide variety of instruments and accessories, and the homepage has a clean layout. One of the first things I clicked on was the "About Us" section, and I was pleased to see that the page recaps the store's history, and it even mentions that it has solar panels on its roof (more signs of modernity and adaptability!). A bit of the store's pedigree is also mentioned in that it is "picking up where the legendary Benedict's Guitar Shop left off in 1995."

Overall, Twin Town's website is inviting and well organized. It is easy to navigate, and its drop-down menus work well. For each type of instrument or accessory, there are easily accessed options to limit your search results on the left-hand side of the page (including options to limit your results by category, price and brand). One minor quibble is that, in the search results, the prices are listed in a lighter gray font and are harder to read than the names and descriptions of the items for sale.

Sweep your mouse over an item's image and "Quickview" will appear; click on that button, and it will open a popup with some information about the chosen product.



A Virtual Visit to Minneapolis MI Stores, Part 2



You can also get more detailed information by clicking on the image or the product name, or by clicking "View more details" in the "Quickview" pop-up.

Twin Town's website offers up electric and acoustic guitars, basses, amps, effects pedals, drums, keyboards and a variety of accessories. Within the acoustic designation, you can see banjos, dulcimers, ukuleles, mandolins, harmonicas, resonators and even sitars. It also offers band and orchestra instruments such as violins, violas, cellos, upright

basses, clarinets, flutes, saxophones, trumpets and trombones. In addition, they do repairs for all types of instruments.

As for depth of inventory, electric and acoustic guitars, as well as drums, are best represented here. The store offers products covering many prices; for acoustic guitars, it has a \$99 guitar as well as some over \$3,000. It sells new as well as used instruments and equipment. There are dozens upon dozens of guitars offered here, as well as basses. Some instruments have more limited sup-

ply, such as banjos, saxophones and woodwind instruments.

Twin Town offers private lessons and classes, for both children and adults, for several instruments and genres, including jazz and blues. It even features a few tribute groups (including The Blues Brothers, CAKE and Juanes). They also have workshops and seminars, and a songwriting course. (These offerings may be handled differently during the pandemic, so contact the store for precise details.) The site lists 30 different music instructors, male

and female, for various instruments and specialties. You can click on each instructor for a bio, personal statement and photo.

Blackbird's Music Store blackbirdsmusicstore.com

The homepage to Blackbird's is like a record album cover: a bold graphic with their name and logo. The silhouette of a bird with a red musical note inside it grabs your attention, so if you were an indifferent web surfer, you would likely be drawn in by this catchy image.

You have a variety of choices to click on just below the graphic, such as "Events Calendar," "Current Inventory," "Lessons," "Rentals," "Repairs," "Jams" and "Store." Or you can scroll down to see the store hours and contact information.

Believe it or not, an Events Calendar is an atypical feature for a music store website. When MI Spy checked, Blackbird's Events Calendar let visitors look at events for the current month, the previous month and the next few months. There was an intriguing assortment of offerings listed: Bluegrass Jams, French Canadian Jams, Celtic Jams, Adult Learner's Jams, Community Ed Banjo and Community Ed Violin, and Guitar Jams as well. Blackbird's is currently hosting the jams via Zoom. Based on the wide variety of events listed, it seems this shop has a strong emphasis on community participation and lessons.

As for inventory, Blackbird's carries a lot of accessories for string instruments, especially for acoustics (although there is plenty on offer for electrics as well). It sells a few small instruments such as harmonicas and tambourines. In addition, the store stocks essentials like music stands, strings, rosin, humidifiers, picks, capos and more. And it is stocked with a variety of sheet music and books. If you click on the "Current Inventory" tab, you'll see a link to the store's Reverb page.

Blackbird's offers rentals, and their policy is straightforward, but the problem here is that they don't have pictures nor descriptions of their instruments offered. You are told to "Call or email us about specific instrument request

(sic), since inventory is always rotating at the shop."

Under "Lessons," the "Teachers" page lists 10 music instructors, and you can click on each person's headshot to read a brief bio. Blackbird's also does repairs at the shop, and the specifics and prices are spelled out on the website, which is good policy.

Overall, there are a few very inviting elements to this website, as well as others that are lacking. In person, this is probably a lively and homey place to buy things and play music, but over the internet, there are definite limits.

Hoffman Guitars hoffmanguitars.com

A lot of text, a hand-drawn logo, two close-up pictures of guitars, and an action shot of a black dog running in the snow: This is what you first see on the Hoffman Guitars homepage. It comes across as homespun, not slick, but also not necessarily the most eye-catching layout and graphics. You had better be interested in what they have or you will turn away quickly.

But the text is interesting, if you are a guitar lover. The retailer is straightforward and clear about its business, which includes crafting custom-made guitars, servicing guitars of many brands, selling essential and desired accessories, and casually teaching people about guitars and how to appreciate them. (One thing I didn't like on the homepage is the sidebar on the left. It's rendered in two badly paired colors, so it's harsh on the eyes.)

Click on the link for "New Guitars," then click the various links listed under "Models," and you will be enthralled by Hoffman's beautiful handcrafted guitars. There are a dozen types of guitars, all with specifications listed. This is serious stuff, and real craftsmanship.

On the other hand, the "Recent Additions" link brings you to blogs and material that was written in 2013 and earlier. And two of the links in the main menu bring you to nothing. The site may have "130 separate pages with more than 1,000 photographs" but then, it's more like a museum than a store. The website has some

tantalizing elements and some average aspects, but badly needs editing and revamping.

Schmitt Music schmittmusic.com/stores/edina

The main reason I picked Schmitt's to include here was that it used to be located within Minneapolis but now has multiple locations elsewhere, including a suburb that is close to Minneapolis. And also... none other than the dearly beloved, legendary Prince himself once posed for a photograph in front of the infamous Schmitt Music Mural in downtown Minneapolis, on Marquette Avenue (the mural is still there, although the store moved).

So, let's take a look at the website for Schmitt Music in Edina, Minn., which is the closest location to Minneapolis.

The Edina store site's homepage also has a prominent carousel of images that scroll by. The homepage packs in a lot of information (including links to the other Schmitt locations), and it is easy to navigate the rest of the website from here. There are blog posts that are only a week old, so this is a well-maintained section of the website.

One unusual aspect of Schmitt Music in general is that it not only offers private lessons and group lessons for several instruments, it also offers music therapy sessions (including individualized music therapy sessions for "birth through age 5"). You can find information about these music therapy offerings on the website.

Schmitt Music is an impressive entity in other ways, too: It has 15 store locations (including a few others that are not far from Minneapolis), and it turned 123 years old this past November. The franchise stocks a wide variety of instruments and accessories, but as it specializes in keyboards, pianos, and band and orchestra instruments, it is less of a rock 'n roll outfit and caters more to children and schools.

The website features links for several categories and subcategories of instruments, and each section provides prices for individual items. However, for some sections, you have to click through

a few different layers of links to get to specific items and prices. Overall, it's a well-designed site and provides a lot of information, in a nice setting.

The Web Winner

Making my final evaluations and comparisons for this particular report was *sooooo* different, ladies and gents. Not being inside these shops, on my own two feet, was a new experience indeed. And thanks to the inherent anonymity of the internet, I didn't even have to use my dazzling MI Spy skills! So, I am giving you my report based only on what I saw online, and this approach certainly has its limitations.

Therefore, for what it's worth, I selected Twin Town Guitars as the winner for its design and the way it clearly conveyed information on the store's products and offerings.

A few honorable mentions: If you are into violins, violas and cellos, you will be very impressed by the Claire Givens Violins site. Similarly, if you are interested in folk, bluegrass and Americana, the Homestead Pickin' Parlor and Blackbird's Music Store sites are enjoyable and informative. If you want high-end guitars, then Hoffman and El Diablo will have you drooling. Schmitt Music is a good all-around music emporium website. A few of the other websites need some gussying up to be more enticing to discriminating customers.

One thing that got me wondering was that these sites did not namedrop some of the more famous musical performers and groups that have come from Minneapolis, such as Prince, the Replacements, Soul Asylum and Lizzo. Are there any bits and pieces of memorabilia from them and others in the actual stores? If so, you wouldn't know just from visiting the websites. I'd have thought at least some of them would have made mention of these luminaries and others.

Well, ladies and gents, I do hope to make it to Minneapolis someday again, to check out these stores and maybe take in some live sports once the stadiums and arenas open up again. Wouldn't that be a great time? Until then... 

Make Your In-Store Personality Shine Online

By Sebastian Fabál, Senior Director of Operations and Outreach, Reverb



As dealers across the country start to open their doors — many with limited in-store capacity or a “by appointment only” model — one thing is apparent: The retail landscape we once knew is changing. Even as retailers start to reopen, they should expect in-store sales to be a fraction of what they were prior to COVID-19. By my estimate, retailers’ in-store sales numbers will remain lower for the foreseeable future as customers continue to shop cautiously and store owners implement various measures to keep their customers safe.

The good news for sellers, based on what we’ve seen on Reverb, is that more people are buying more musical instruments online than ever, including many first-time buyers. Our team has been laying the groundwork for years for more players to feel comfortable buying instruments online by devoting time to video demos, price guides, support from our customer-service team full of musicians, and more. Throughout the pandemic, consumers have experienced and become more comfortable with buying music gear online, and that trend will remain, even as stores start to open.

Over the past four and a half years, I’ve worked with Reverb’s top sellers to help them better incorporate ecommerce practices into their business strategy and increase their sales online. Over the past few months, our team has worked closely with sellers looking to not only ramp up their online sales during this unprec-

edented time, but put processes in place to sustain their online success. One of our first tips? Consider how your presence online can mirror the in-store experience you work so hard to curate. Here are three things to consider:

Give online customers the same A+ service you provide in-store. Even when you’re not face-to-face with a potential customer, there are plenty of ways that you can show your store’s personality and top-notch service through your website or an online marketplace like Reverb. Respond quickly to messages, and don’t be afraid to have a conversation. We’ve seen instances where a buyer from one state connects with a seller in another and they build such a strong relationship that the buyer visits the retailer’s store when they’re in town.

Many of our top sellers even dedicate an employee to online sales just like you would dedicate a salesperson to the showroom floor to ensure that online customers get great service. We’ve found that buyers on Reverb are very knowledgeable and like to ask questions about what they’re looking for. When you have an expert staff member whose time is dedicated to

fielding these questions and having these conversations, you can use messaging as an opportunity to build loyalty and trust.

Take as much pride in the look of your virtual shop as you do in the layout of your physical space. Dealers with brick-and-mortar locations spend a lot of time thinking about what their physical space says to customers. You should think just as critically about your online presence. Increasingly, consumers want to know who they are buying from online. How can you show your personality and your professionalism through an online destination like your Reverb shop?

Tell your story. Sims Music in South Carolina is a great example of a seller that uses its Reverb shop description to paint a picture of who the owners are and how the shop started. Consider other ways you can help your shop and your listings stand out from the crowd, like using a distinct, recognizable backdrop for your used gear listings like Rock N Roll Vintage in Chicago. Another easy way to instill confidence in buyers? Ensure your gear descriptions are detailed, error-free, include specs if possible, and that your photos are clear and consistent.

Consider the marketing and sales tactics that work in-store and use them online. Negotiating, upselling, sales and promotions: all of the tactics you’ve used over the years in your store, apply them online. Consider negotiation as an example. On Reverb, most used orders begin with an offer, and half of all counter offers from a seller result in a sale. We recommend replying to every gear inquiry with an offer, if possible. For sellers that get hundreds of questions and offers a day, we’ve even created tools to help automate that process.

On Reverb, specifically, participating in site-wide sales is another great way to get your gear in front of more buyers. Our marketing and tech teams are always working on the backend to drive more buyers to sellers’ shops, but adding your inventory to a sale is an easy way to benefit from Reverb’s email, social media and other marketing efforts.

Even as consumers move online, they still want to feel connected to the shops and brands that help them make music. By creating thoughtful and consistent touchpoints online, dealers can build loyalty and trust with online customers. 

Sebastian Fabál is senior director of operations and outreach at Reverb, a website and app for buying and selling new, used and vintage musical instruments. In his role, Fabál oversees the team of experts that works closely with Reverb’s top sellers to grow their online sales as well as the entire Customer Engagement team, which comprises musicians who are available daily to support buyers and sellers.

Taylor Guitars' American Dream Series

By Brian Berk

It was a dream 46 years in the making: Taylor Guitars has debuted its American Dream Series, named after the guitar shop where Taylor was founded in 1974.

Even though we continue to face the COVID-19 global pandemic, manufacturer innovation has not ceased. In fact, one could argue people have had more time to think about manufacturing with fewer outside distractions. El Cajon, Calif.-based Taylor Guitars challenged itself to create a series of U.S.-made, solid-wood guitars distilled down to the essential elements of premium musical performance — featuring Taylor's well-known playability and V-Class bracing — yet designed so they won't break the bank. Thus, the American Dream Series was born.

The American Dream series embodies the principles of innovation, craftsmanship and resourcefulness Taylor has always turned to during challenging times, stated Taylor Guitars. "In 1974, Kurt Listug and I started Taylor Guitars right after we bought a little guitar-making shop for \$3,000," recalled Bob Taylor, co-founder and president of Taylor Guitars. "It was called The American Dream. I was 19, Kurt was 21. Back then, times were tough, but we had a dream. Our problems seemed insurmountable. We had to think, get creative, adapt and learn. It felt like we were trying to do the impossible every day. And so far, 2020 has sort of felt like 1974 all over again."

For the new series, master guitar designer Andy Powers and Bob Taylor intentionally chose wood with naturally occurring cosmetic character that fits the functional, workhorse aesthetic of these guitars. The series debuted with three models, each of which features Taylor's new Grand Pacific round-shoulder dread-

nought body style, which also fits into the series' "workhorse" identity. All models are available with and without electronics.

First up in Taylor's dream-turned-reality is the AD17 and A17e, the first Grand Pacific models to feature ovankol back and sides (with a spruce top). This construction combines the tonewood's rosewood-like properties (plus a full midrange); the body shape's warm, seasoned voice; and the enhanced power, sustain and intonation of V-Class bracing, making this an incredibly versatile workhorse with expressive musical range. Visually, Taylor Guitar's Urban Sienna color treatment adds depth to ovankol's natural variegation, while understated appointments, including a thin matte finish, emphasize a workmanlike aesthetic.

Street price for these models is \$1,399, with an MSRP of \$1,599.

Second in the American Dream Series lineup is the AD17 Blacktop and AD17e Blacktop. "The AD17 makes a striking impression — bold and yet understated — with its matte-black spruce top and black pickguard," stated Taylor Guitars. The thin two-mil finish also helps optimize the sonic output of the body, woods and V-Class architecture, delivering a blend of seasoned

warmth and clear low-end power that make the Grand Pacific a "Swiss Army knife instrument."

According to Taylor Guitars, "Anyone looking for a solid-wood Taylor experience with throwback aesthetic character will find themselves drawn to this guitar."

The D17 Blacktop and AD17e Blacktop carry a street price of \$1,499 and an MSRP of \$1,699.

Last, but certainly not least in Taylor Guitar's American Dream lineup, is its AD27 and AD27e. Fans of mahogany-top dreadnought-style guitars will love what this solid-wood AD27 has to offer as a jack-of-all-trades musical tool, stated the manufacturer. Voiced with V-Class bracing, this Grand Pacific's warm, seasoned voice boasts clear, powerful lows and a meaty midrange, with additional focus and evenness across the tonal spectrum from the hardwood mahogany top. Urban Sienna stain and a matte finish support the rootsy aesthetic, while clean appointments support the handsome but unpretentious vibe.

Street price for these models is \$1,399, with an MSRP of \$1,599.

According to Taylor Guitars, the American Dream Series offers the lowest-priced, U.S.-made, all-solid-wood guitars in its product line. The series sits between its 200 DLX and 300 Series and marks the new entry point to the company's American-made, solid-wood guitars.

"I remember what it's like to not be able to afford something that would serve me well," concluded Andy Powers. "In many ways, this series is like building a guitar for my younger self." 





By Allen McBroom

I miss the Chinese buffet in our town. The place is still open, but with a menu instead of a buffet — and it’s still good food — but ordering from the menu lacks some of the pleasure I got from staring at steam tables filled with tempting goodies. Stuffed mushrooms. Salt and pepper chicken. Sweet and sour anything. Sushi.

Today’s article is also not a buffet, it’s a menu, and today’s menu has four offerings, which are patience, supply diversification, supply and demand, and optimism. Your server will get your drink orders while you make your selection.

You may not speak Latin, but you might be familiar with the phrase “Maxima enim, patientia virtus,” or its rough English translation: “Patience is a virtue.” In the rare moments when I’ve been accused of being virtuous, it probably had nothing to do with patience. I’ve had the opportunity in the past couple of months to be more virtuous in my patience, and while I know it’s good for my character, I’m weary of being patient. Guitars I ordered three weeks ago haven’t been shipped yet. Stock orders that used to take four days from order to delivery now routinely take two weeks.

Despite all the patience I’ve gained recently, I’ve got one customer who has earned sainthood for her patience. We’ll call her Theresa.

Theresa (who is in San Ramon, Calif.) ordered a TV stand from us (we’re in Mississippi) on May 15. We shipped it via the post office on May 16, and it arrived in Oakland on May 17. That’s

PATIENCE, SUPPLY DIVERSIFICATION, SUPPLY AND DEMAND, AND OPTIMISM

pretty great, I think. Mississippi to Oakland in one day. Then it gets weird. Three weeks later, the TV stand still isn’t there. Tracking says it’s been in Sacramento three times, Chico three times, Redding once, and a few other places, and each time the package is “on track to its destination.” Theresa has been very kind and patient, and even left a good review for us based on our efforts

to get the item to her. When I feel myself becoming impatient with our supply chain, I guess I need to utter my new mantra: “Be Patient, and Be Theresa.” When I get around to building a shrine to our customers, Theresa will be the first one to get a

statue in a place of honor.

Speaking of supply chains, today’s category is “diversification.” We’ve talked about diversifying our supply sources in the past, and the COVID-19 experience has shown how critical that is to health of a business. Getting everything from one supplier is the same as having all your eggs in one basket. If the basket falls apart, you’re in trouble. Got one cable source? Research other sources, and see if other suppliers offer some security your old standby supplier cannot. The same idea applies to anything your business relies upon as part of your revenue streams. Got only one case supplier, or accessory supplier, or (fill in the blank)? We’ve just learned how fragile the supply chain can be, so having multiple sources for your products is pretty dang important. Not sure where to diversify first? Just recall what you’ve been out of in the last few months, and that’s where you start.

Everyone reading this understands supply and demand. When there’s plenty of something or little demand, the price goes down. When there is a demand but a scarce supply, the price goes up. The contracting side of our business has seen this repeatedly. Everyone is streaming these days, so video streaming gear now demands a premium. One particular device my partner has used in video setups was an affordable \$299 in February, and in May it couldn’t be found for less than \$549. The device is the same, but the supply is down, and the demand is up. I was looking last week for a particular webcam to use at home for Skype or Zoom with my kids. In February, that model was selling online for \$50 to \$60 all day long. In May, that same model was bringing \$179 to the lucky merchants who had one to sell.

So, what does this mean to MI retailers? It means that you’d better have a good relationship with your suppliers, and not be limited to only one source if other options exist. Make sure you can contact your supplier’s rep even if the regular lines of communications are down. And if shipping has slowed, or the supply-side labor force is reduced for some reason beyond anyone’s control, you’d better have the patience required to hang in there until things get better.

Speaking of things getting better, let’s discuss optimism in general, and the Airplane Relative Health Index (ARHI) in particular. If you’re not familiar with the ARHI, it’s a critical component of assessing the relative health of the economy, and I made it up last night.

My bride and I enjoy sitting at night and watching airplanes and satellites pass overhead. In the last two months, two hours of deck-sitting might reveal only one or possibly two airplanes. Pre-virus, we'd see 25 or 30 planes in the course of two hours. Last night, we saw six airplanes pass overhead. Six, as in three times as many as we saw only a week earlier. Three times as many planes means there's more activity than there was relative to a week ago. That's an ARHI of three, which indicates a strong uptick in our economic outlook.

Add to the ARHI of three the report that American Airlines is entering the next week with a 55-percent occupancy rate, way up from two weeks ago. That's something the market reporters would refer to as a "strong economic indicator." The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished in early June above 27,000 points, around 9,000 higher than where it was toward the end of March. The May jobs report, which came out on June 5, revealed that instead of a 20-plus percent unemployment rate, the number was 13.3 percent. Still not as great as it was four months ago, but way better than expected.

Optimism isn't the popular sentiment in much of our nation, but so what? We don't live in much of our nation; we live in a tiny slice of it. Each of us inhabits a tiny sphere of our own making, where we have almost total control over what we see and hear. I used to watch the news every morning and every night, and today I see maybe 10 minutes total per day. News channels come across these days as doom-and-gloom merchants, and I find I'm much happier when I don't ingest their output on a regular basis. I've unfollowed Facebook pages and Facebook users who spout political outrage of any stripe. I turn off ads that start with phrases such as "in these unprecedented times" or "in

the troubled days ahead."

I prefer to open the store each day with as much patience as I can muster, with an eye toward protecting my supply lines through diversification and good vendor relationships, an awareness of supply and demand, and a high

level of optimism. Chances are, if I start like that, some of that will rub off on our employees and maybe even our customers. I'll leave the spreading of ill portents to the merchants of doom and gloom. There are plenty of them to muddy the waters of life. I dang

sure don't need to add to it.

Let's make our stores places of optimism and love, not darkness and despair. I'm pretty sure optimism and love sell better, and they'll darn sure leave you feeling better at the end of the day.

Happy trails.



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MOM, POPS AND WHISKEY TO BOOT

By Michelle Loeb

Paul Tobias was in high school in October 1978 when his parents — Margaret, a guitar teacher at the local high school, and Ken, a mainstay of the Chicago coffee-house circuit to complement his career at a scientific company — opened up a 600-square-foot music shop four blocks from the home he shared with his five siblings.

All six Tobias children grew up hanging around Tobias Music, and a few even worked in the store over the years, but it was far from assumed that one of them would take over the store when “Mom” and “Pops,” as Tobias affectionately calls them, were ready to call it a day. In fact, Tobias was in the midst of a successful multi-decade career at Campbell’s Soup and Pepperidge Farm when the succession conversation began in 2005.

“I certainly wasn’t the ‘chosen one’ to carry on with the family business,” said Tobias, “But none of the other siblings had an opportunity to switch healthcare coverage for their families if they were to take over at the shop, while my wife, Pat, was having a successful career in healthcare and also had access to some great benefits. Since I was able to have our family healthcare covered through my wife’s company, I decided to take a stab at a new career.”

While his years spent writing procedure, preventative maintenance and training manuals hardly prepared him for the ins and outs of running a music store, Tobias was able to lean on his memories of watching his parents run Tobias Music in those early years.

“Since it was a relatively small shop, I had a chance to see how Mom and Pops formed their

business model,” said Tobias. “I absorbed a lot just hanging out in the shop.”

It also doesn’t hurt that his parents still maintain a presence at the store. Margaret comes in on Saturdays and Ken still works every day. “Our shop started with Mom and Pops, and now it’s just Pops and I,” said Tobias, who added that he and his father are the store’s only full-time employees. “Though I own the business, you can probably guess who still runs the show,” he joked.

Tobias works hard to maintain the “living-room atmosphere” that has defined Tobias Music for more than 40 years. That description is not only apt because everyone who has come into Tobias Music is treated like family, but also because the business literally began in the Tobias family living room.

“The shop was a few weeks away from being ready for business when the delivery of the first group of Martin guitars came, and my parents had all the guitar boxes in their living room waiting for the shop to be ready,” recalled Tobias. “A family friend came by the house to look at all the Martins. He ended up falling in love with a Martin D28, and he bought it right there in the living room. That was the first official sale of Tobias Music and a great start to our family business.”

Tobias Music remains a C.F. Martin dealer to this day, in addition to carrying brands such as Santa Cruz, Eastman and Taylor, which the store has carried for more than 35 years.

“My parents met Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug of Taylor Guitars very early in their careers, and they brought Taylor Guitars in



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our shop at a very early stage,” said Tobias. “We now have a large Taylor Guitars boutique showroom in front with more than 60 Taylor Guitars on display, and we are one of their top dealers in the country.”

Over the years, Tobias has expanded the shop as adjacent space became available, with the sales area now comprising upwards of 2,000 square feet of inviting space that includes couches, comfy chairs and a flatscreen TV. “Not bragging,” said Tobias, “but it’s a cool shop. Everyone wants to hang out here.”

One of the most popular aspects of the shop is the whiskey bar, which currently contains 10 to 12 whiskey bottles that have been donated by regular customers over the years.

“Honestly, we don’t drink all the time here,” Tobias joked, “but if I see a customer getting ready

to pull the trigger on a high-end guitar, I offer them a little taste of a high-end scotch. Then, bam, the charge card comes flying out of their wallet!”

The store has also grown to include an 80-seat live music/events room where it hosts live music, open mics, workshops and vendor events, in addition to renting out the space for private events. “The events room brings in large crowds, creating a sense of community while exposing our cool guitar shop to many new faces,” explained Tobias.

“Twenty years ago, our No. 1 goal was to sell the guitar hanging on the wall, but in this internet age, the No. 1 goal for brick-and-mortar shops is to get people into your store, while the No. 2 goal is to sell them the guitar on the wall,” Tobias continued. “So we have to be creative in getting people in the



door, and the three areas that we have concentrated on have been the live music/events room, our lessons program and our repair service. We figure that the internet doesn't create much competition in these areas."

Of course, everything changed with the onset of coronavirus, but Tobias isn't going to let that get in the way of four decades of multigenerational success.

"I will not let 42 years of our family business go down the drain because of the pandemic. Whatever it takes, we will get through this," said Tobias. "With help from some of our suppliers, especially Taylor Guitars, we have seen a nice boost in online sales. Our online traffic, as well as our curbside service and home deliveries, have been just enough to pay the bills. We have been blessed. Fingers are crossed that it continues." R

THE 'NEW NORMAL'

By Dan Vedda

So we've reopened, and we're about two weeks live as I write this just after Memorial Day. While we are seeing more traffic than when we were officially closed, it's still sparse, even for May. Of course, public confusion over the rolling litany of staggered openings means that a lot of people aren't sure if we're open. Getting to the ends of the abortive school year and staging virtual graduations is also consuming a lot of attention. But already, we're seeing teachers come back, live in the store, with at least some of their students. (Although as I predicted, a big chunk of them are reticent — well, petrified is more accurate — about coming into a closed room for a lesson, being around wind players ... the spit ... AAAAAHHHHH!!! You know the deal.)

Still, music holds a lot of peoples' attention: as a stress-buster, as recreation and as a method of personal growth. It's not just the kids, either; so many adults got through the spring thanks to music, and now that they're faced with a summer of at least diminished possibilities, they appreciate the activity even more. We've already signed up students craving in-person lessons, and many of our pre-closure students who did not use Zoom with us through the quarantine months have asked to be notified the moment they can take lessons in the store again. Of course, everyone wants to ensure the safety of all involved and take the necessary precautions, but this interest shows the desire to make music is intact.

As we restock our inventory, it becomes evident that COVID-19 closures have often taken an even greater toll on some supply-side companies. It could not have been easy sitting on a full warehouse when most dealers were closed and big chains withheld payment while they sorted out their issues. So, I'm not surprised some of our sales reps are either gone or in suspended animation even though the company is shipping again. While I've always tried to cultivate personal relationships with my rep contacts, business-to-business portals have sometimes been the only way to get an order going. I've noticed the glaring differences between

these interfaces: some user-friendly, some nearly useless. Those that show available inventory in real time also tell the story of stock outages due to delayed shipments or physical shutdown of domestic manufacturing (or just plain lack of money for inventory.)

Thanks to the pastiche of state-mandated strictures, putting our supply chain back together is a MacGyver kludge of new patterns as we try to stock what our customers want. We have a tiny honeymoon period to work with for a few weeks, but very soon store outages will drive people back online if we can't fulfill their needs.

However, that presents the question: What do we do now? Plenty of pundits have warned everyone that there ain't gonna be no reset. This isn't about going back to pre-COVID existence; it's about moving forward in a post-COVID world. The sooner we figure out what that means, the better chance we have of surviving, even thriving. But I stress (actually, I scream from the rooftop) that the path isn't about our desires, it's about what people want and feel comfortable doing.

That's goes for both what we innovate and what we preserve. It would be just as foolish to think that everything must change as it would be to try to put everything back the way it was. People will forge the path.

Witness the dramatic surge in RV sales and rentals: Someone's doing well in the post-COVID world — in an old-school way. People still want to go on vacation, and the RV approach makes them feel safer than flying and hotel rooms. But RV outlets need to harness their sudden windfall and convert fearful vacationers into RV enthusiasts. That may mean new programs, financing, new features — virtually every aspect of the way they do business will need to be reconsidered. I guarantee some dealers will grab the quick cash but never see return business, while the better-prepared, more creative, and thoroughly service-oriented dealers will see their businesses rise to new, sustainable heights. In the music products industry, we need to think in those terms even more.

Why? Because the RV industry is seeing a surge without taking a hit. Its core business

remains minimally affected by the pandemic now that it can open. But we in MI will face a definite shift in our fortunes, one that I have been expecting for a few years, although not delivered in such dramatic fashion.

For example, schools are beginning to address band programs for next year. Unfortunately, in a growing number of districts, the decision is to suspend fifth-grade recruiting this year. Cautious administrators or overwhelmed directors in these systems would rather sidestep and wait for solutions, or at least calm the (often diametrically opposed) concerns of parents and the community, rather than addressing them. So while the schools in question still haven't finalized the rest of band and orchestra, they're definitely skipping a year as far as startups. For dealers who are exclusively band and orchestra oriented, this is an existential crisis. Further, while marching band will likely go on this fall (because of football), band competitions and festivals may be reduced or eliminated. If your main customers are band directors, good luck. This is why I have always touted relationships with families and end-users rather than school personnel. Having those relationships is helping us now, because we're being approached by families who want to start the kids anyway, get a rental and sign up for lessons instead of waiting for the school program to start them.

If you cater to performers, they're not working, and likely won't work much this year. Some are scrambling to replace income via Patreon and other donation-based platforms, but at best, it's just keeping most afloat. We'll not only lose the revenue active players generate for consumables like reeds, strings, cables and other staples, we may actually lose those players completely as they are forced to pivot to other jobs just to make some sort of living.

So, faced with the fragmentation of "traditional" markets ... it's time to get creative. I've been letting everyone in my store know that my take is not that we're reopening; we're starting a new business. That means rethinking everything with an eye toward satisfying the needs of customers who seek us out. This is not the time to think of your store as belonging to a pigeonhole category when all the categories have been blasted to bits. Trying to prop up old models and hoping for a return to outmoded "normalcy" is pointless.

Yet unquestionably, people still want to make music. How do we reach them and convince them that we can help them do so? The businesses that figure that out will survive, and will likely become the industry leaders in a few years. The race is already on. Ready? Set? And ... go!



Fender's Fullerton Series Ukuleles

By Brian Berk

In May, Fender Musical Instrument Corp. unveiled Fullerton Ukuleles, which were first displayed at The 2020 NAMM Show. They are influenced by Fender's most iconic electric guitars and aimed at those musicians looking for a unique take on a ukulele that has a body shape deeply rooted in tradition. In fact, the Fullerton Series tips its hat to Fender's Telecaster, Stratocaster and Jazzmaster models, ensuring players will stand out at every performance, stated Fender.

Each ukulele features a laminated spruce top, maple neck with a laminated walnut fingerboard and a Fender-designed preamp system. Designed with comfort and ease in mind, the Fullerton Series also has a convenient no-tie bridge, making string changes a breeze in comparison to traditional ukulele bridges that require special knotting, stated the company.

The series comprises the Fullerton Telecaster, available in Butterscotch Blonde and Black; the Fullerton Stratocaster, available in Three Tone Sunburst and Black; and the Fullerton Jazzmaster, available in a new color, Tidepool, as well as Olympic White.

"The Fullerton Series is a true representation of blending iconic Fender style with the functionality of a traditional ukulele to diversify the way that players can express their vibe and personality on stage," said Billy Martinez, vice president, category management, acoustics and Squier.

Martinez added the ukuleles fit in really well with Fender's brand name. "Fender has a long history of being more than a musical instrument brand," he told *the Music & Sound Retailer*. "It becomes a lifestyle for most, and ukuleles are a great way to showcase that while still maintaining the desire to create the world's best instruments. The Fullerton ukuleles really embrace our love for all instruments and commitment to help every player at every stage of their musical journey, so I would say they complement the traditional instruments quite well."

During these difficult times, interest in ukuleles has anecdotally grown, as consumers who have needed to stay at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic are turning to playing music, and ukulele is an excellent beginner instrument thanks to its ease of use compared to other instruments. Ukuleles also serve as a great way for people who want to take their mind off of the world's ills. We asked Martinez if he is seeing strong interest in ukuleles and if they are selling well via online sales and curbside pickup.

"We have seen a ton of interest from people who want to start playing," responded Martinez. "Ukuleles are a great item for our dealers' ecommerce and curbside pickup. It has also been great to see the response to our Fender Play three-month giveaway and the number of first-time players jumping right in. Ukuleles are a great way to begin your musical journey. They are easy to play, and with our online lessons, you can be playing in no time at all."

Of course, the growth of ukuleles began well before the coronavirus pandemic. The instrument has seen impressive growth during the past several years. This popularity is one reason behind the launch of Fullerton Ukuleles.

"As we all know, the ukulele popularity has been really strong since 2009," relayed

Martinez. "We have had a great opportunity to be a part of that with our more traditional California Coast Ukes and artist models. We really wanted to accentuate our brand identity in the ukulele space, and what better way than to offer our iconic shapes? Now you can own a uke that matches your Strat, Tele or Jazzmaster. These were also built with performance in mind, so they are stage ready from the moment you receive [them]. It was a concept that we started to put into action more than two years ago, knowing that the uke market would be hungry for something new and exciting."

Despite a lot of tremendous MI products set to launch in the second half of 2020, some of which can be seen in our cover story this month, sadly, there are no MI trade shows for the rest of 2020 due to COVID-19. This provides an extra hurdle for MI manufacturers looking to promote their products. Martinez responded that the marketplace will adapt to these changes, however.

"We have a great team of creative and driven people," concluded Martinez. "We are always looking for great ways to reach our audience, even in these unprecedented times. Between social media and a great list of influencers, we feel confident that word will spread quickly, and we are excited to see the market adopt these great new additions to our ukulele offering."

MSRP for each model in the Fender Fullerton Series is \$199.

R



Billy Martinez



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VIRTUAL SUPERHEROES

(continued from page 20)

Education (NAfMe), also stressed the opportunities presenting themselves today. “I believe this is a unique opportunity. The door is wide open,” she said. “We are now empowered with a voice to be change agents.”

Added William Pelto, executive director, The College Music Society, “This is an opportunity. We need to be very aware that not all students have the technology that applies to learning. This could be the tipping point that allows us to move more quickly and nimbly.”

This does not mean making changes will be easy, though. Chris Martin, NAMM chairman and CEO of C.F. Martin, noted, “Our job is to get Congress unstuck. Particularly the Senate.”

Martin also brought up a crucial theme that many other Zoom panelists picked up on throughout the advocacy event: The 2020-2021 school year could be the most important ever for students. In fact, Lynn Tuttle, director of public policy, research and development for the National Association for Music Education, and David Dik, national executive director for Young Audiences, Arts for Learning, talked about this topic in depth.

“Not all students may be allowed at school at the same time,” said Tuttle. “And large [music] assemblies are unlikely.”

Do not expect school budgets to help either, Tuttle added.

Tax revenues have decreased from between five percent in “lucky” areas up to 25 percent in less-fortunate locations, said Tuttle. “Constitutionally, the budget must be balanced,” she said. “Music programs could be cut.”

Tuttle and Dik presented a slide to further explain what the top challenges and considerations are for the upcoming school year. They are:

- Multiple possibilities for school openings this fall
- Restricted access for supplemental instructors in the school building
- Safety and health concerns and social distancing impacts for traditional models
- Curtailment of out-of-school and informal musical activities
- Uncertainty in the foundation and individual contribution sector

This means delegates must work harder, but those in the MI industry must remember what Tuttle said: “We are essential to the students we teach. Begin the work now. Our students depend on us.”

Regarding how to provide assistance, Tuttle asked delegates to simply ask of politicians, “How can I help?”

Back to school was also



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stressed by West Music’s Robin Walenta, former chairwoman of NAMM. “What back to school will look like is advocacy,” she said. “What conversations need to happen now?”

Walenta advised that during these conversations with elected officials, NAMM delegates should:

- Discuss all contingencies
- Offer your assistance anywhere and everywhere
- Discuss the logistics of back to school. How will schedules be made, and how will kids function in a school building?

What is the financial implication of that?

The ‘Ask’

Although NAMM delegates may not be able to have face-to-face meetings, each year at the Advocacy Fly-In, there is an “ask,” to be done, typically via email. First, NAMM defined why advocacy is so important, as was presented in a slide: “Research

findings demonstrate that music students do better in English, math and science than their peers without music education, and more music and arts education is linked with fewer dropouts and suspensions. The social and emotional benefits of music education have become even more evident during the current pandemic,” NAMM stated.

The main ask this year is to ask members of Congress to fully fund the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title IV, Part A, which is authorized for \$1.65 billion, but currently appropriated at \$1.2 billion. Hence, an extra \$450 million is being requested.

NAMM delegate work, however, has made a huge difference. Thanks to their work, the appropriated figure has risen by \$800 million in the past three years.

Also on the plus side, panelists stressed that music and arts education is a bipartisan issue. “Nobody is against music and arts education,” asserted recently

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retired lobbyist Leo Coco of the firm Nelson Mullins. "It is finding people who will champion it."

The best way to get politicians' attention is having a great story to tell, relayed Chris Cushing, managing director, Federal Strategies Team, Nelson Mullins. "Advocacy makes a difference," he said. "... Do you have a story to tell? We know over a decade

and a half [of NAMM Fly-Ins] that we have a great story. How do we know that? Because it works."

Added Connie Myers, policy advisor for Nelson Mullins, a great way to get a politician's attention is simply being a constituent when sending emails. "Being a constituent matters," she said. "[Politicians] care about you. You rise to the top of the list."

When contacting members of Congress, here are the specific "asks" as presented by Cushing and Myers:

- We ask Congress to enact additional funding directly to states to replace revenue and address K-12 education budget shortfalls.

- We urge Congress to support full funding in fiscal-year 2021 Education Appropriations for ESSA's Title IV Part A at its authorized level of \$1.65 billion to ensure that the well-rounded education goals of ESSA are realized for every child.

- We ask Congress to support ESSA's Title I funding for our nation's most vulnerable students and Title II funding that promotes the effectiveness of our teachers.

- We urge ongoing support for our national arts and culture organizations, such as The National Endowment for the Arts, which provides competitive grants in every state and congressional district.

Cushing and Myers also presented an "ask" of state governors. These are:

- We ask governors and state education officials to utilize ESSA's SSAEGs (Title IV) and other federal programs to create and expand music programs; a survey of the current school year yielded a three-fold increase of districts reporting use of Title IV funds for well-round-

ed music education offerings.

- We request governors' sustained commitment and support for quality music education as an essential learning force that must be available to all students.

- We offer to be a resource to governors and state and local education officials in the development of policies and best practices for music instruction.

Beyond the ask, partnerships and alliances manager for Yamaha Corp. of America David Jewell and recording star J. Dash offered additional advice based upon their personal advocacy experiences. "My first Fly-In was 2013," recalled Jewell. "It changed my life. You can make a definite impact."

When contacting politicians, Jewell suggested a simple way to help break the ice. "Invite [members of] Congress and Senators to your space," Jewell said. "[I found] they had no idea what [Yamaha] did. If you have a concert or event, invite your local member of Congress. You can get them in your corner and get to know every [staff member's] first names."

J. Dash also recalled his first time attending the Fly-In and that it "opened my world. That is an understatement."

Initially, J. Dash wondered what power he had as one person to make a difference. The answer was a lot. "We have a voice," he said. "But the first step is always the hardest. ... We are all superheroes that have the power in us to make a change. ... I can almost guarantee you can exceed your own expectations."

Jewell stressed the need to keep music at the forefront as the world sees significant change. "It is important to keep music at the forefront in the 'new normal.' ... If you are not at the table, you are on the menu," he said. "One person can make a big difference. Take that step and be at the table."

Fly-In Reminiscing

Although much of the virtual Fly-In featured talk about the future of music education, there was also a look at the past with Coco. He recalled the first 15 NAMM Advocacy Fly-Ins, as well as some of the best moments. "I remember the first Fly-In in 2005. There were only a handful of delegates," he stated. "We

had a reception at the 9:30 Club [in Washington, D.C.]. The Commodores were there and so were three "American Idol" finalists. That show was huge at the time. More than their great performances, each talked about the importance of music in their lives. That was really powerful."

Former U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey was the first "champion" of music education, stated Coco. "She was a big advocate," Coco said of Woolsey, D-Calif., who served the U.S. House of Representatives from 1993 to 2013. "She [even] proposed a music grant program."

As for celebrities, Coco pointed to three big names who were especially powerful in helping music's cause: Tony Bennett, The Blue Man Group and Bernie Williams. He vividly recalled Bennett, the "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" crooner, on hand to meet California's Nancy Pelosi, now the U.S. House Majority Leader. "Nancy Pelosi's plane was late, but she really wanted to meet Tony Bennett. She said how important the meeting was," Coco recalled.

The Blue Man Group was powerful in a different way. "When they are in costume, they cannot speak, so I thought *How is this going to work?* But everyone knew who they were and had a great sense of humor. [U.S. Sen.] Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., especially had a great sense of humor when we went to visit him," recalled Coco.

Most delegates can point to many memorable experiences at NAMM Fly-Ins involving Bernie Williams, since he first started attending Capitol Hill meetings 10 years ago. But Coco specifically remembered one: "He performed 'Take Me Out to the Ball Game' in the Mansfield Room [located in the U.S. Capitol]. There was not a dry eye after that performance."

The event also featured performances from Williams and Gil Parris, J. Dash, NAMM's Zach Phillips, Benedetto Guitars' Howard Paul, artist Maggie Evans and cellist Ifetayo Ali-Landing.

"It is one of the highlight of the year for me," concluded Williams, referring to his annual NAMM Fly-In experiences. R

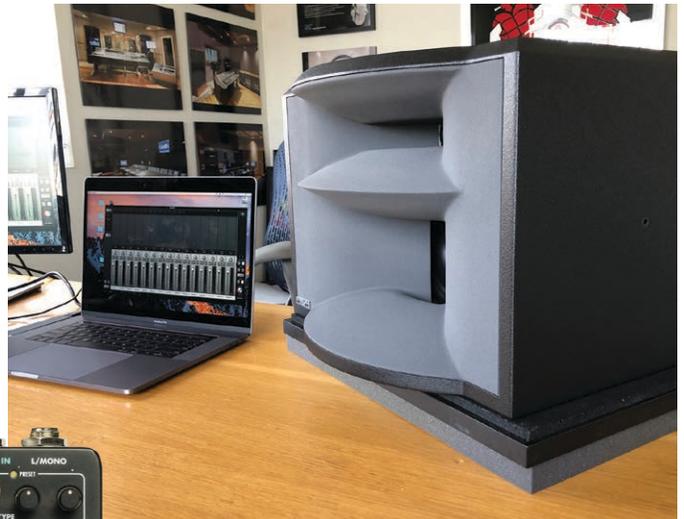
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While every care is taken to ensure that these listings are accurate and complete, The Music & Sound Retailer does not accept responsibility for omissions or errors.

COMING IN THE AUGUST ISSUE OF THE MUSIC & SOUND RETAILER:

- NAMM U Virtual Summit Recap
- Five Minutes With:
Evan Rubinson, Armadillo Enterprises
- A Tribute to Greg Bennett
- The Return of Formidable Females
Plus much more



Be Productive

TASCAM introduced the Model 12 Integrated Production Suite. It is a multitrack recording mixer for audio and multimedia creators featuring an integrated 12-track multitrack recorder, USB audio interface, 10-input mixer, MIDI connectivity, click output and DAW controller. Combining the feel and interface of analog recording and mixing with the efficient workflow and pristine quality associated with digital production, the compact Model 12 is perfect for desktop-style audio and multimedia production, small-format live performances as well as podcasting and live streaming, stated the company. Applications include music production, multimedia production, remix/EDM creation, songwriting, and live performance where a solo artist plays along with tracks and/or beats. The Model 12's internal 12-track multitrack recorder records WAV files (up to 48 kilohertz/24-bit) directly to SD, SDHC and SDXC cards (up to 512-gigabyte capacity). tascam.com

Good Reverberations

Electro-Harmonix introduced Oceans 12. It features two simultaneous, independent stereo reverb engines, series and parallel control for the dual reverbs, 24 presets, and advanced I/O, allowing for stereo in/out, splitting reverbs to left and right channels, or mono send/return with pre- and post-reverb options. The pedal also includes a new Tide Control for stereo image alteration, a Lo-fi Control, an infinite attenuation control and an input jack for external expression and footswitch control. The Oceans 12's reverbs types are: Room, Spring, Plate, Reverse, Echo, Trem, Mod, Dyna, Auto-Inf, Shimmer, Polyphonic and Resonant. A Tails switch provides a choice of whether the reverb effect fades out naturally or stops immediately when the pedal is switched to bypass. The Oceans 12 comes equipped with a standard EHX 9.6DC200mA power supply. ehx.com

You Can Go Your Own Way

Designed to deliver performance greater than any speaker of its size, Ocean Way Audio's new HR5 reference monitor system is the company's most affordable speaker. One of the most powerful qualities of the HR5 is the ability to provide 100 degrees of horizontal dispersion, stated the company. Ocean Way's technology utilizes patented twin constant-directivity HF and low-band horns with exceptional driving elements. The HF and low-band horns are milled out of solid blocks of wood and are totally non-resonant, resulting in optimum efficiency in their respective bands as compared to conventional direct radiators. Also available soon is a small companion Ocean Way Audio subwoofer, transforming the HR5s into a three-way monitor system and extending the bass response to 25 hertz. oceanwayaudio.com/hr5

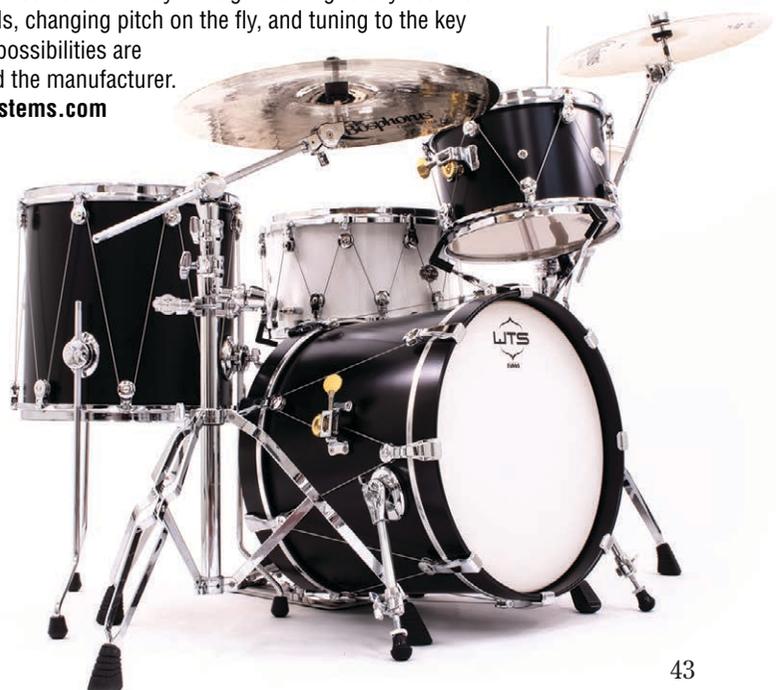


Two Decades of Evah

Pirastro celebrates the 20th anniversary of its Evah Pirazzi string line with the introduction of the Evah Pirazzi five-string violin set. Originally launched at the 2000 Musikmesse trade show, Pirastro has been steadily expanding the Evah Pirazzi string line, which now includes sets for violin, viola, cello and double bass. Evah Pirazzi strings are ideal for acoustic and electric five-string violins, stated the company. Each set includes a silvery steel E, aluminum A, silver D, silver G and the new tungsten-silver C string. pirastro.com

Artistry at Work

The WTS Artistry Series features Welch Tuning System (WTS) hardware and is crafted to allow for instant, effortless tuning. The drums need no tension rods or drum key. "Imagine tuning to any room or stage in seconds, changing pitch on the fly, and tuning to the key of a song. The possibilities are endless," stated the manufacturer. welchtuningsystems.com



Conference Call

MXL Microphones' AC-44 USB conferencing mic offers clear speech intelligibility in a compact design for applications in UCC, conferencing, medical, telemedicine, legal, government and specialty OEM applications. The AC-44 utilizes MXL's signature three-capsule boundary mic design to capture speech in a wide arc while rejecting sound pickup from sources behind the back of the mic, such as speakers, other equipment or room noise. With a compact footprint measuring only 2.5 inches by three inches and one inch tall, the AC-44 is suited for any limited-space application. The AC-44 is designed with a rugged, all-metal frame and durable metal grill to ensure it can withstand the rigors of daily use in busy industrial environments. The MXL AC-44 is available in three different colors: white, black and cobalt blue.

halleonard.com

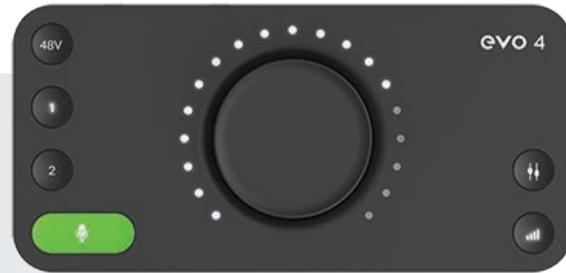
(Hal Leonard is U.S. distributor for MXL)



Station to Station

The PreSonus ioStation 24c audio interface and production controller delivers tools needed for both audio recording and DAW control in a compact, ergonomic desktop design that will fit into any home studio, stated the company. The interface/controller combines the recording capabilities of the Studio Series USB-C 24-bit, 192-kilohertz audio interfaces with the functionality of the FaderPort USB production controller. The ioStation 24c features two of PreSonus' XMAX Class A analog mic preamps, along with audiophile-grade, high-definition 24-bit, 192-kilohertz analog-to-digital converters, for professional-quality recording and monitoring. The XMAX preamp is known for its high headroom, deep lows, smooth highs and rich overall sound, added the manufacturer.

presonus.com



EVO-lution

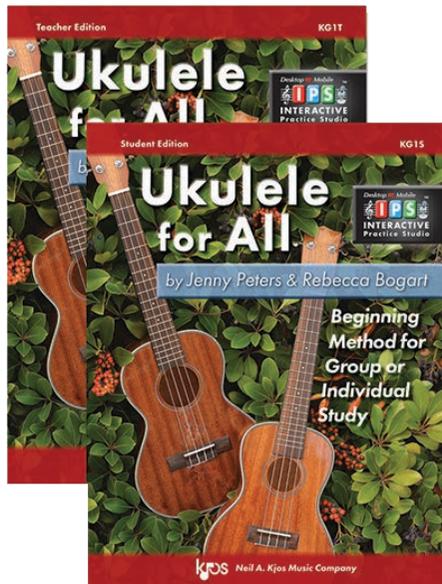
British audio brand Audient is releasing EVO 4, available now, and its "big brother," EVO 8, due to ship at the end of this month. The products address the affordable audio interface market, and includes application-specific features for those involved in podcasting, streaming and gaming, as well as home recording. Retaining the professional sound and technical quality expected from Audient, the EVO range provides high performance, all-new EVO mic preamps with 58-decibel gain range, class-leading converters with a 113-decibel dynamic range alongside a JFET D.I, Smartgain, Smart Touchpoints, speaker/headphone outputs, ultra-low latency, monitor mix and loop-back functionality, stated the company.

evo.audio

All for One and One for All

Neil A. Kjos Music Co.'s "Ukulele For All — Student Edition" and "Teacher Edition" by Jenny Peters and Rebecca Bogart is a beginning method for group or individual study of this popular instrument. The pedagogy begins with one-chord songs to give students instant success as they learn solo and ensemble skills. For today's digital learners, the Interactive Practice Studio — included free — offers multi-screen video lessons, play-along audio recordings and more for every song in the book. The Teacher Edition also offers comprehensive guidance on achieving curricular alignment with the National Core Arts Standards or similar criteria.

kjos.com



In the Limelight

Tech 21 introduced the DI-2112 Geddy Lee Signature SansAmp. It offers a new format designed to be equally at home on a studio desktop as well as an amp top. Each signature SansAmp offers Lee's core sound and the versatility for many different styles. The Drive preamp section is based upon the versatile SansAmp RPM for a wide range of sonic possibilities. The Deep preamp section offers thick, meaty tones. Saturation goes from clean in lower settings to increased harmonics and tube-like compression in higher settings. End users can use either section independently or blend them externally direct to a mixing board as well as to two amplifiers. It features dual all-analog SansAmp circuits, Drive for gain and overdrive, Blend to adjust the ratio of SansAmp tube amp emulation and the direct signal, sweepable semi-parametric EQ, and a Tight switch that adds definition to notes in cleaner settings and makes distorted tones snappier. It runs on 18V DC for increased headroom and clarity, via power supply or two 9V alkaline batteries (not included).

tech21nyc.com



Mix It Up

The DJM-V10 six-channel club mixer enables DJs to craft new soundscapes from multiple audio sources behind the booth or in the studio. Connect CDJs, turntables and other line-level audio sources to the DJM-V10's six channels and use the specially developed four-band EQ to sculpt sound. End users can assemble a custom setup by plugging in FX units, guitar pedals, smartphone apps and more to further personalize your performance. And end users can add harmony and depth with Beat FX, including the new Shimmer.

pioneerdj.com

Catch the Wave

Wavebone upgraded its Head-quarter Studio Workstation with a height-adjustable keyboard desk that can house 88 keys. Featuring three height options of 51.5, 55.4 and 59.3 centimeters, users can either adjust down to the lowest point for huge 88 keys, or switch to a higher point for the most suitable playing posture. The independent keyboard desk reaches an excellent level of sturdiness to house every kind of keyboard model, while still being absolutely stable however you play, stated the company.

wavebone.com



Robot in Disguise

Roland introduced its V-Drums Acoustic Design, a new product category within the company's electronic percussion lineup. It merges the presence of acoustic drums with Roland's digital percussion technology. For traditional drummers, V-Drums Acoustic Design opens a world of possibilities with the benefits of V-Drums without having to sacrifice the classic acoustic vibe they know and love, stated the company. V-Drums also provides a natural electronic drumming experience, offering behavior that accurately models the response of real acoustic drums, added the manufacturer. V-Drums feature full-size wood shells, custom heavy-duty chrome-shell hardware, thinner cymbals, standard acoustic mounting and more.

roland.com

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THE FINAL NOTE

(continued from page 46)

from the moral majority when he first broke into the business?

John F. Kennedy: I would ask him to explain the entire Cuban Missile Crisis. And were there really aliens at Area 51?

My mother: No questions. Just one last dinner to talk and be together.

R Tell us about your most memorable experience with an MI retailer (without naming them).

L This is an easy one. I was visiting a dealer (also a friend) in the Chicago area. We walked out of a restaurant/bar. I proceeded to trip on the curb and needed 27 stitches on my face to repair the damage. I won't soon forget that one.

R What is the best thing about the MI industry?

L The people. I know that sounds like a standard and safe answer, but it is true. I have met so many great people in this industry. Many are now lifelong friends.

R Who do you admire most outside of the music industry and why?

L My big brother Bob. Growing up without a father wasn't easy. He taught me how to be a man and a good human.

R If you weren't in the music industry, what would you be doing and why?

L That is a difficult question. I have been doing this for so long it is hard to imagine myself doing anything else. I think something in manufacturing. That is what I know and what I enjoy. Bringing great products to consumers is something I truly embrace.

R Tell us about your hometown and why you enjoy living there.

L My hometown is Southgate, Mich., which is about 10 miles south of Detroit. It is a small town with a big-city feel since we were so close to Detroit. Like all of the metro Detroit area, Southgate is filled with sports nuts. Everyone loves the Red Wings, Lions, Pistons and Tigers. I believe it is a law to own a jersey from each team or you get kicked out and forced to move to Ohio. The weather was just a bit too much for me. I moved many years ago to Los Angeles. I prefer one season all year around ... warm.

R What are your most prized possession(s) and why?

L The American flag from my grandfather's funeral. He was a WWII veteran, and I was chosen to receive the flag.

R What's your favorite book and why?

L I am not an avid reader. However, I do enjoy a good murder mystery. My favorite book would have to be "Along Came a Spider" by James Patterson. Really any of the Alex Cross books are among my favorites.

R

JIMMY LOVINGGOOD

Chief Operating Officer,
D'Angelico Guitars

By Brian Berk



"On day two of [The NAMM] Show, Steven Tyler walked in. Being a huge Aerosmith fan, I became very excited. He looked around and realized our room was not where he could get cheeseburgers, so he left."

The Music & Sound Retailer: Who was your greatest influence or mentor and why?

Jimmy Lovinggood: My former CEO Lacy Edwards. He taught me so much about business and life. He was an example of how to treat people with respect, kindness and honesty. One valuable lesson I learned from him was how to motivate people. That a method of motivation that works for one person does not necessarily work for another. A good manager needs to know what motivates each of their co-workers and proceed accordingly.

R What was the best advice you ever received?

L Never tell someone to hit you first.

R What was your first experience with a musical instrument?

L My grandfather bought me my first guitar when I was about eight or nine years old. I wasn't the best [at playing it], so I gave it to my friend and now brother-in-law Gene Baker. Then I started playing bass.

R What instrument do you most enjoy playing?

L Bass guitar; though I'm slowly adding to the number of songs I can play on guitar, as well.

R Tell us something about yourself that others do not know or would be surprised to learn.

L When I was 17, I sold Kirby vacuums door-to-door. I was really bad. I think I sold one: to my mother.

R What's your favorite activity to do when you're not at work?

L See live music, work out and hang with good friends.

R What is the best concert you've ever been to?

L I've been to hundreds of concerts, so this is a really tough question. If I had to choose one it would be Iron Maiden, "Number of the Beast" tour.

R If you could see any musician, alive or deceased, play a concert for one night, who would it be and why?

L The Beatles, because they're responsible for some of the best rock and roll songs ever written.

R What musician are you hoping to see play in the near future?

L Bruno Mars. Unbelievable performer.

R What song was most memorable for you throughout your childhood and what do you remember about it the most?

L Led Zeppelin, "Houses of the Holy." My friends and I would listen to the entire "Physical Graffiti" album over and over again. But that song just reminds me of being a teenager and hanging with great friends.

R What are your favorite songs on your smartphone/iPod?

L "Lions in Cages" by Rae Garvey, "Let it Be" by The Beatles and "The Funky Nation" by Jordan John.

R What's the most fun thing you saw/did at a NAMM Show?

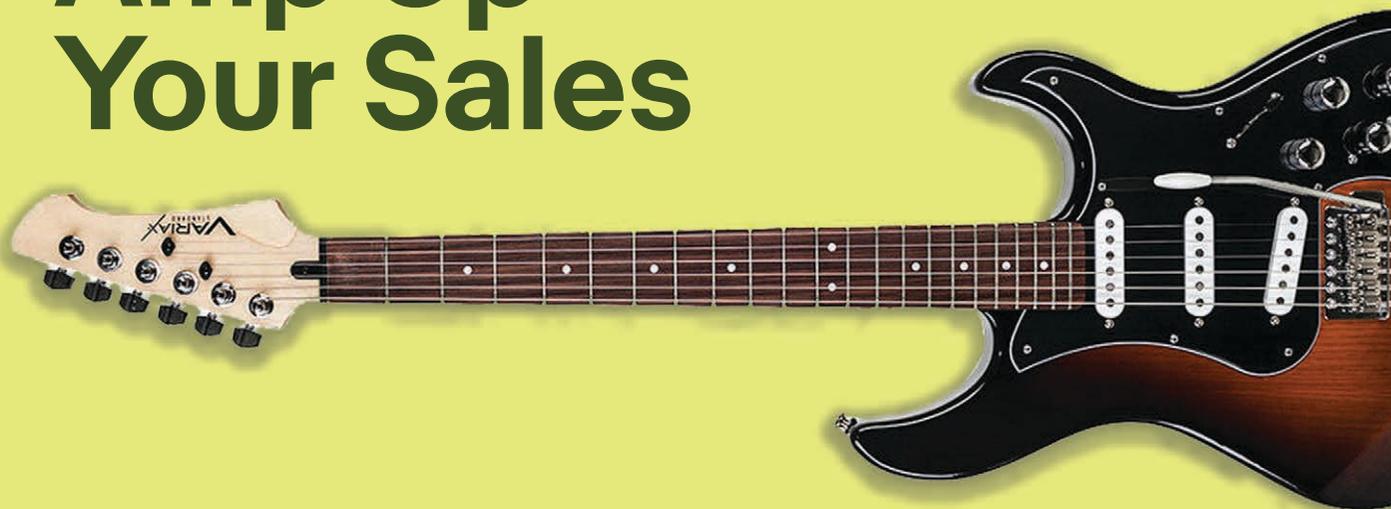
L It was the first year D'Angelico Guitars had a room upstairs. At the time, the room was shared with my former company, Premier Builders Guild. On day two of the show, Steven Tyler walked in. Being a huge Aerosmith fan, I became very excited. He looked around and realized our room was not where he could get cheeseburgers, so he left. That was most definitely one of the funniest moments I've had at The NAMM Show.

R If you had to select three people, past or present, to have dinner with, who would they be and what would you ask them?

L Elvis Presley: How did he handle all the negativity

(continued on page 45)

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Second- and third-tier
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