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SPIRITS HIGH

Hot gear, cool sessions and a communal atmosphere was visible at this year's Summer NAMM session

BY KASIA FEJKLOWICZ & ALEX HARRELL

Summer NAMM once again brought the heat to Music City with three days jampacked with the latest gear, inspiring educational sessions, and an opportunity to meet and connect with dealers old and new. Held July 13–15 at the Music City Center in Nashville, Tennessee, Summer NAMM celebrated both industry vets and rookies who are motivated to keep up with the ever-evolving MI marketplace.

Overall attendance numbers were up 2 percent from last year (coming in at 14,284 attendees), and international attendees accounted for a growth of 14 percent over 2016 and nearly 28 percent growth over 2015, “a trend which continues to demonstrate the international opportunities available to both buyers and exhibiting members alike,” according to NAMM. The show also featured 505 exhibitors, comparable to Summer NAMM 2016.

This year's show featured 235 new and returning exhibitors.

“We didn't know what to expect for the first time coming here,” said Tim Barbour, co-founder of Strung, a custom guitar string accessory maker and first-time exhibitor. “We've met some amazing people.”

MORE MUSIC MAKERS

As always, gear drove attendee conversations at the show.

Yamaha showcased its CP4 Stage digital piano, the Billy Cor-

gan Signature Model Jumbo Acoustic Guitar and highlighted its revised BB series.

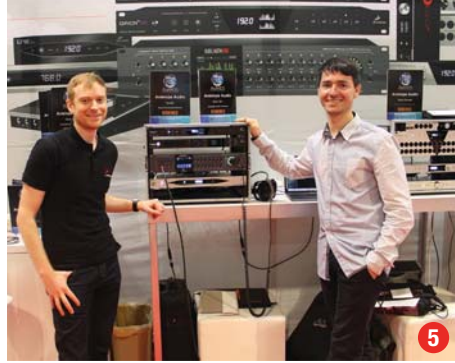
“One thing that really excites me is we're now able to [produce] a Japanese-made four-string BB bass for \$1,499 and a five-string for \$1,599 in a hard shell case,” said Andy Winston, product specialist at Yamaha. “We're trying to make [our] Japanese high-end [gear] more affordable for the masses.”

D'Angelico displayed its Bob Weir Signature SS, the Limited Edition Elvis Presley Excel 175, and new options in its Excel Series: the DC Shoreline and SS Shoreline. On the acoustic side, D'Angelico showed off its Premier Series.

“We were really excited to bring [the Premier Series] to Nashville because of the strong country scene,” said D'Angelico's Ryan Ker-shaw. “Acoustic flat tops, in particular, are going up in popularity. We joined that race last year and perfected our spot this year.”

To catch some summer vibes, Fender debuted the California Coast Series Ukuleles — a line consisting of five ukes with price points ranging from \$59 to \$250. And, all of the ukuleles will come with free Fender Play lessons, a video-based learning platform.

“We're focused on beginners because 45 percent of instruments that we sell, we believe, go into the hands of first-time players,” Fender CEO Andy Mooney explained. “90 percent of those players abandon the instrument in the first year. The [other] 10 percent



1) D'Angelico's Jessica Cambeiro surrounds herself in a sea of DC Shoreline models. 2) The D'Addario fam takes a break to show off some hot products, including the Pedal Tuner and Promark's FireGrain sticks. 3) Boss' Yoshihiro Ikegami, left, and Jay Wanamaker, Roland Corp. North America, with the new Boss Katana-Mini amplifier. 4) Naturally, the Alfred Music team celebrates the company's 95th birthday with songbooks, guides, posters and more! 5) Antelope Audio's Don Spacht, left, and Veselin Lazarov showcase the Goliath. 6) From left, Warm Audio's Mark Williams, Bryce Young and Royce Richmond. 7) Yamaha's Andy Winston highlights the BB series basses. 8) Team Hal Leonard gets ready to rumble while setting up their booth packed with guitars, drums, ukuleles ... and print music! 9) 64 Audio's Vitaliy Belonozhko highlights the MagPack. 10) From left, Kyser's Stacy Shew and James Paul with care products and Quick-Change caps. 11) Jason Isbell, right, wraps his arm around CEO Chris Martin as he holds the musician's Custom Signature Edition D-18. 12) Fender's Joey Brasler proudly displays the Brad Paisley Telecaster. 13) The Maple Leaf Strings team poses for the camera. 14) Casio's General Manager of Marketing Mike Martin. 15) From left, Adam Hall's Jack Kuhn, Jack Thompson and Steve Savvides take a break to smile for the camera.



From left, Proel's Antonio Ferranti, Dexibel's Ralf Schink and Fulvio Pesenti, a director at Proel.



The Music Link's Steve Patrino with his son.



From left, Crystal Morris and Mike Swenson highlight the Transit Collection.



Reverend's Penny and Ken Haas with the Reeves Gabrels Signature Dirtbike — and the 1966 Schwinn that inspired it.



The Kala crew hangs loose with the Elite collection of ukes.

commit to the instrument for life.”

Another learning app discussed at Summer NAMM was Casio’s free app — Chordana Play, which comes with the LK-265 Casio Key Lighting Keyboard, as well as the new CTK-2500, CTK-2550 or CTK-3500 Casio standard, and lets users import songs and learn to play them with the assistance of visual notes.

MORE THAN A GUITAR SHOW

Even though Casio’s General Manager of Marketing Mike Martin felt that the show was slower than last year’s, he said it’s still worth it and that the company will be back next year.

“We didn’t have any crazy expectations coming here, and it’s a great way for us to reach dealers that aren’t making the haul to Anaheim,” he said.

And Bryce Young, president of Warm Audio, sees value in presenting the company’s audio products in Nashville because the city continues to grow as a recording mecca.

“This is where the industry is now,” he said. “We meet a lot more true professionals here than we do at other shows. Some of the other shows are larger, but fewer professionals are there.”

Antelope Audio showcased its Goliath HD 64-channel interface to connect with the recording community.

“It’s smaller than Winter NAMM, but the quality of people that come here are really professional people,” said Don Spacht, Antelope’s East Coast sales representative. “Our company only makes high-end products, and Nashville is where it happens.”

Music Distributors Group displayed LD Systems’ Maui Go — a portable, battery-powered version of the Maui column P.A. system with mixer and Bluetooth. The Maui Go received a Best In Show award for its lightweight form factor and hard-hitting sound quality.

“The industry is really about making your presence known with a lot of the smaller dealers,” Steve Savvides, president of MDG said. “You just have to be able to get out in front of them.”

Sabian’s Luis Cardoso suggested treating Summer NAMM as more than The NAMM Show’s little sister because they are entirely different events.

“I think a lot of people see it as a regional guitar show, but I think it’s important to be here in Nashville to support dealers in this area as there’s so much music happening in the city,” he said. “A lot of drum companies for, whatever reason, have stopped coming, but we’re having a really good, busy show.” **MI**

NAMM Elects First Female Chair, New Members

The NAMM Board of Directors unanimously voted in the next slate of officers at Summer NAMM.

At the meeting, the board officially welcomed each industry leader to new roles, representing a balanced composition of retail and commercial members. The 2017 Executive Committee includes Chair Robin Walenta, Vice-Chair Chris Martin IV, Treasurer Joel Menchy and Secretary Tom Sumner.

The vote and transition sees Robin Walenta, previously NAMM's vice chair, move into the new role as chair of NAMM's Board of Directors. Walenta is President and CEO of West Music based in Coralville, Iowa. She is the first female chair in the history of the organization.

"Through my career-long involvement with NAMM, I have learned that networking builds beneficial and productive communities; that educational opportunities provide vital catalysts for new and ongoing musical ventures; and that in today's world, music advocacy is more important than ever," Walenta said. "I am excited to be at the forefront of continuing diversification and



From left, Secretary Tom Sumner, Treasurer Joel Menchy, Chair Robin Walenta, Vice-Chair Chris Martin IV and NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond.

broadening inclusivity in both our members and the products and services we represent."

As part of her first official duties, Walenta welcomed Tom Sumner to the Executive Committee as secretary. Sumner is past member of the Board of Directors and currently senior vice president of Yamaha.

Outgoing Chair Mark Goff was honored during the meeting for his eight years of

service on the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee members Joel Menchy and Chris Martin will transition to their new roles. Menchy is the president and owner of Menchy Music Service and will serve as secretary of the Executive Committee. Chris Martin is the owner and CEO of C.F. Martin & Co. and now, vice chair of the NAMM Executive Committee.



From left, Mark Goff, A&G reps Josh Zapor and Robert Christie, and NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond.

TOP 100 DEALER AWARDS A&G Named Dealer of the Year

A&G Central Music of Madison Heights, Michigan, was awarded the Dealer of the Year honors during Summer NAMM's annual Top 100 Dealer Awards on July 14 at Nashville, Tennessee's Music City Center.

"Focus, have a plan, stick to it, and never give up," Robert Christie, president of A&G Central, said during his acceptance speech.

Other winners included: Third Rock Music Center for Best Emerging Dealer/Rookie of the Year; Zeswitz Music for Best Store Turnaround; Spicer's Music for Best Marketing & Sales Promotion; The Candyman Strings & Things for Best Customer Service; Andertons Music Co. for Best Online Engagement; and Spicer's Music for Best Store Design.

BREAKFAST SESSION

Prophetic Tips

Founder and CEO of Retail Prophet, Doug Stephens, sat down with NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond for forward-thinking insights at the NAMM U Breakfast Session held July 13.

"I don't think a day goes by that we don't see a major headline about the retail industry," Lamond said before introducing Stephens. "I think we're all pretty curious to know about the future of retail and what it means to us. We have a really cool tour guide to take us around."

Here are the biggest takeaways from Stephens' session:

1. Bad retail is dying. "It is no longer possible to be just an average, mediocre retailer or have an average business proposition and succeed."

2. New consumers are coming into the market. "We have a whole new generation of consumers that have never not known the internet. They have never not known Google. So we have to accommodate the fact that behavior is changing and that [millennials] are plugged in and they spend a disproportionate amount of time online. So, we have to address these realities."



From left, founder and CEO of Retail Prophet, Doug Stephens, and NAMM President and CEO Joe Lamond.

3. Mobile e-commerce is growing.

"Gone are the days of just sitting behind your desktop or even your laptop. People are searching on the go. About 50 percent of all transactions in retail this year are going to be impacted by a mobile device in some way."

4. Don't defend old business models.

"We have to stop saying, 'That's impossible. We can't do that.' I would argue that we need to be the ones attacking our own models. We're the ones who are most intimate with the things that are broken. We don't need to wait for any outsider to tell us what's broken in our own category."

5. Experiences are the products of the future.

"The distinction between one business and another is the experience. It really comes down to that. It's not what you sell, but how you sell what you sell."