

the ^{Independent} MUSIC & SOUND [^] **Retailer**

Captivating Demo Held At Hot Licks

Hot Licks Guitar Shop (Waldorf MD) and Jeff Mullin from SK Macdonald, Inc., presented a well-received DJ lighting and stage effects demo at the store on March 26. Members of the local music community—from DJs to worship leaders—were in attendance. The event was held in the store's pro-audio room, which was dark and had been lightly hazed to showcase the lighting effects. Mullin demonstrated some of the newest products from CHAUVET Professional, including moving heads and scanners, atmospheric effects, LEDs and washlights. In addition to fielding questions about lighting design for live bands, Mullin gave the audience some tips for how wedding DJs could boost their revenue by incorporating the latest battery-operated LED uplighting products at receptions. Guests stuck around afterward for a Q&A session and took advantage of a demo-night-only discount off any single CHAUVET product.

Hot Licks, a local music megastore that is now in its 30th year, stocks everything musical. It is known for its popular recitals, serious guitar competitions and song contests, and it draws musicians and their families not only from southern Maryland, but also from the nearby communities of Washington DC and Baltimore.



Jeff Mullin (right) during the demo.

Daddy O's Music Co. Celebrates 26 Years

Stillwater OK grade schools benefited from the anniversary celebration of a local music store, Daddy O's Music Co. To celebrate its 26-year anniversary, Daddy O's donated 26 ukuleles to the Stillwater Public School System. "We also sponsor the local ukulele club, The Stillwater Ukulele Association," noted Daddy O's Mike Shannon. "And, when they heard about our upcoming donation, they decided to become a part of it. They had a fundraising drive to purchase ukes to match our donation." He added, "So, with this donation of 52 ukuleles, we were able to get more instruments into more schools."

Another bit of wonderful happenstance occurred when Shannon told Amahi Ukuleles' Owner, Michael Shear, about his plans. Shear stepped up with a generous discount on ukuleles for the program. "The generosity shown by Amahi Ukuleles allowed us to purchase more instruments, and we're now donating ukes to grade

schools in the smaller towns surrounding Stillwater," Shannon added. "The kids are always excited about playing ukuleles due to the instruments' small size, their colors and the ease of playing."





Cultural Engagement Through Mariachi

By Jory Tindall, Director of Educator Services, Kennelly Keys Music

Mariachi is not a genre generally synonymous with public school music education. However, Ramon Rivera and his Wenatchee High School Mariachi Huenachi ensemble of trumpets, violins, guitars, vihuela, guitarron, harp and vocals break the mold for how music education can empower students to achieve their goals and better their community.

Mariachi Huenachi originates from the Wenatchee School District in Wenatchee WA, where the population is predominantly of Latino heritage, and the Latino culture stands at the forefront of the community. The program is offered at no cost to the students or their families, and student participants are given an instrument and a uniform for performances. Since the advent of Mariachi Huenachi and the affiliated mariachi programs in the Wenatchee School District, there has been a drastic decrease in student dropout rates and a new level of community involvement from students and fans alike. These groups have been featured in numerous settings: opening for Grammy-winning acts, sharing the stage with world-class musicians and performers, and performing at Seattle Seahawks and Mariners games.

Along the lines of community involvement and outreach, Kennelly Keys Music and the Wenatchee School District formed a strong bond of both friendship and business. In addition to aiding and assisting in the

normal, day-to-day needs of Rivera and his fellow Wenatchee educators, Kennelly Keys Music facilitated the debut of Hohner's H. Jimenez line of mariachi instruments. Mariachi instruments, although similar to other fretted instruments in terms of technique, lack the variety of retailers and manufacturers from which general band instruments benefit. The H. Jimenez line has helped Rivera spread his educational influence further, in order to reach more students and more musicians. And, in the development process of these instruments, Hohner consulted with Rivera to determine what technical additions would be necessary to make the H. Jimenez instruments play best for a wide range of players.

In cooperation with Kennelly Keys Music, Hohner facilitated the donation of several instruments in the H. Jimenez line for use by Rivera and Mariachi Huenachi to assist in the progress and expansion of mariachi education throughout Washington, and to deepen the bonds of Wenatchee cultural kinship. With such a strong level of support from the Wenatchee community and the local retail community, Rivera can focus on providing a remarkable and spirited environment for students not only to learn the mariachi tradition, but also to prepare for fruitful lives outside of Mariachi Huenachi.

Calling All Indies: The Top 100 Dealer Awards Are Coming

Independent dealers from across the music products industry are preparing for the 5th annual Top 100 Dealer Awards. Retailers are eligible for seven "Best of" categories, for Dealer of the Year and to be named one of the world's Top 100 Dealers. Dealers are evaluated for their innovative approaches to retail and for employing effective strategies in marketing and customer engagement. An independent panel of judges reviews entries to determine winners in each category and to select the Dealer of the Year. Top 100 Dealers are announced in early May. Category winners and the Dealer of the Year are announced during the Top 100 Dealer Awards gala on July 10 during Summer NAMM.

"Every morning, when they open for business and 24 hours a day

with their online and social-media presence, NAMM retail members are creating amazing stories with their customers," said NAMM's President and CEO, Joe Lamond. "Through beautiful store fronts, amazing inventory selections, events, education and trained staff, they separate themselves from their competition and provide real value to their communities." He continued, "And, by entering their stores into the Top 100, they share that pride with their peers, helping all dealers to improve and building a stronger industry for all."

This year's categories include Best Store Design, Best Marketing and Sales Promotion, Best Online Engagement, The Music Makes a Difference Award and Best Emerging Dealer, along with two new categories: Best Store Turnaround and Best Customer Service. 