

WYMAN PIANO

EUROPEAN STYLE ALTENBURG PIANO DEBUTS

WYMAN PIANO has introduced a new line of grand pianos, designed to the specifications of Altenburg Piano Company of Elizabeth, New Jersey. Carrying the Altenburg trademark, the new grands feature the single-string scale design that is used in the finest European-made pianos.

Fred Altenburg, the sixth generation of the Altenburg family involved in the piano business, said the new pianos offer "improved tuning stability that is inherent with single-string scale design, as



Fred Altenburg and George Benson with the new Altenburg piano.

well as exceptional tonal quality." The line will initially include grands in 4'9", 5'3", and 5'7" sizes. A 6'1" grand will be introduced later in the year.

Although Altenburg grand pianos were initially designed for sale at the Altenburg stores in New Jersey, George Benson, Wyman Piano vice-president of sales, is so impressed with it that he envisions a larger market. "The Altenburg Piano offers the features and performance of much higher priced instruments at a very affordable price. It's an instrument that is easily sold and very profitable."

In addition to its single-string scale design, other fine details on the Altenburg piano include heavy-duty brass casters, a soft-touch fallboard, a locking lid, and an ornately detailed sand cast plate. The grands will also be available with Empire and French Provincial styled legs and mahogany and cherry case finishes. Benson said, "These are the finest natural wood finishes you'll find on any Asian-made piano. The coloring is perfect and clear. With a lot of the Chinese pianos the emphasis is on getting to the lowest price possible. We're going in the other direction, building in meaningful value-added features that enable the retailer to command a higher selling price. Altenburg Pianos are about high value, not low price."

The Wyman Piano Company was launched in 2002 by Benson and Tim Lasky, Baldwin Piano veterans. From the start the company strategy has been to offer premium quality Chinese-made pianos on a limited distribution basis. Lasky commented, "We've never been

An advertisement for RC Design Guitars. The top part features the brand name "RC design" in a large, stylized, yellow script font, with "GUITARS" in a smaller, yellow, sans-serif font below it. The background is a dark, arched hallway with two guitars (one light-colored, one dark) leaning against a wall. To the right, there is a wall with several framed photographs. Text in the middle right says "NAMM Booth #2729" and "www.rcdesignguitars.com". At the bottom, the slogan "Get Wood!" is written in a large, yellow, stylized font.

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interested in selling to every dealer on the street. Every dealer in the country will tell you that broad-based distribution doesn't benefit anyone. We offer a larger territory—in some cases, just one dealer per state."

To achieve higher quality standards, Wyman has full-time quality control inspectors on site at a piano factory in Beijing who subject every instrument to a rigorous going-over. Benson said, "We inspect and inspect and inspect so everyone of our pianos comes out of the crate defect-free and ready for the showroom floor."

MUSIC MAGAZINE ASSOC.

DEALERS ARE CONFIDENT ABOUT MUSIC MAGAZINES

THE MUSIC MAGAZINE Publishers Association (MMPA) reports that music instrument dealers are showing deeper commitment to the value of music magazines as indicated by a 22 percent reduction in the rate of account attrition and a 12.6 percent reduction in the amount of title order cancellations over the year prior. The increase in account and order retention appears to be the result of renewed efforts to educate dealers about the inherent value magazines bring to their stores as well as what to expect in overall sales.

Providing the most flexibility and least risk for retailers, the Musicmags program allows dealers to choose whichever magazine titles they want to carry and allows for cancellations at any time.

Through telemarketing, advertising and marketing campaigns, the MMPA is raising awareness of the key role magazines play in promoting the music instrument business. The Association demonstrates to retailers that, in addition to generating an average of three times the industry standard in annual revenue per square foot, magazines support product sales throughout the store, increase foot traffic, builds customer loyalty, and enhances sales promotions.

The MMPA's value-focused campaigns have had another positive effect: In addition to slowing the rate of existing title and account cancellations, the MMPA has also seen exceptional growth in new dealer accounts and title orders added. Two and a half times as

Jesse Plays the Babicz Identity Jumbo equipped with L.R. Baggs iMix onboard

Babicz Identity Acoustic: "It's the only steel-string I play!"

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- Jesse Gress

Jesse records and tours with Todd Rundgren, and has three acclaimed reference books to his credit: *The Guitar Cookbook*, *Guitar Lick Factory* & *Guitar Licks of the Brit-Rock Heroes: Clapton, Beck & Page*. Jesse also freelances for *Guitar Player*, *Guitar World*, *Backbeat Books*, and others.

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