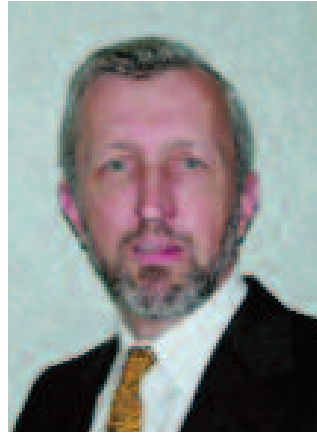


What Kids Really Want

For the past decade, the Guitar & Accessory Marketing Association has been quietly training teachers to launch guitar programs in the public schools. The effort is not flashy, like an advertising program, and it isn't the kind of program that generates overnight results. However, the teacher training initiative has had a positive and measurable effect in creating new guitar players. Groundbreaking *Music Trades* market research on school music (see page 90 of this issue) underscores the appropriateness of GAMA's approach to expanding the market.

School music has rightly become synonymous with band and orchestra programs. While no data exists on the scope of school guitar programs, anecdotal evidence suggests they are dwarfed by traditional bands and orchestras. However, what our survey clearly demonstrates is that 64% of the kids currently enrolled in bands and orchestras have a strong desire to learn another musical instrument, and that well over half of that group is primarily interested in taking up guitar. It's worth stressing here that the survey responses clearly show that students want to take up guitar in *addition to*—not *instead of*—participating in the school ensemble.

The implications of these and other findings are numerous. First, all segments of the industry reap rich rewards from school music programs. The introduction to music, which typically begins in fourth grade, creates music makers who go on to explore the full spectrum of musical products. Furthermore, these kids grow up to be parents who are



far more likely to encourage their children to participate in music. 66% of school music students come from families where at least one of the parents previously participated in school music.

Secondly, this clearly expressed desire to explore other musical outlets indicates that retailers, educators, and manufacturers have an opportunity to expand the

market. Based on current school enrollment levels, those kids in music programs who want to play guitar represent approximately two million potential buyers. A sizable percentage will probably find their own way to the guitar, piano, or some other instrument. However, at present the industry is doing little to facilitate that process.

At the very least, GAMA's efforts to create a corps of competent school guitar teachers warrants increased support from manufacturers, retailers, and the relevant industry associations. On a broader level, it's worth discussing how we might find ways to satisfy the clearly expressed desires of students.

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William F. Ludwig Jr. (1916-2008)

For years, Ludwig Drum Company used the slogan "Total Percussion" to convey the depth of its expansive product line. The catchy phrase could just as easily have been used to describe longtime company head Bill Ludwig Jr., who died last month at the age of 91. In a long and colorful life, Bill Ludwig was the living, breathing embodiment of all things percussion. He was an accomplished timpanist, skilled at mallet instruments, an astute judge of drumming talent, a discerning drum collector, and perhaps the leading authority on the history of American percussion, from the Revolutionary War's drum corps to the birth of rock 'n' roll. With energy and exuberance, fueled by a love of drumming, he channeled this extraordinary trove of knowledge toward the single goal of making his family's drum company the

world leader. To say he succeeded is something of an understatement. The Ludwig company not only earned the industry's top sales spot under his tenure, it defined the modern percussion industry as it is presently configured. There isn't a drum company in existence today that hasn't been directly or indirectly influenced by the products and marketing strategies Bill Ludwig pioneered.

With a biting sense of humor and a true gift for storytelling, Bill always found himself the center of attention wherever he went. But what earned him friendship and respect throughout the industry was his sincerity and his integrity. He loved musicians and the music industry and spent a lifetime dutifully serving both. He was a true original who will be missed.