



## EDITORIAL

# WHERE TO GO FOR ANSWERS

*How do you meet the challenge if a Guitar Center or MARS opens down the street from your store?*

*Do Chinese-made pianos offer a special opportunity for serving entry-level price points?*

*Thanks to plummeting computer prices and higher powered PCs, computer-based multi-track systems are becoming more and more practical. What are the most promising formats and products in this emerging product category?*

*After years where orders outstripped production levels, band instrument manufacturers finally seem to have some excess inventory on their hands. Will this translate into more attractive pricing in 1999?*

*Guitar sales have stagnated for about four years now. Are there any proven promotional strategies that can rekindle growth at the retail level?*

As the New Year commences, these are just a few of the important questions that retailers are wrestling with. Finding suitable answers is no easy task, but we have a very useful suggestion: Attend the NAMM show in Los Angeles (Jan. 28-31). With everybody who's anybody in attendance, the show provides the ultimate opportunity for retailers to take the pulse of the market, exchange ideas with other retailers, and develop a plan for making 1999 a successful year.

Downtown Los Angeles is not America's number-one vacation destination. The L.A. ambiance may not be as congenial as the Anaheim Convention Center. Airfares are probably even higher this year than last. To these, and any other complaints about show venue, we say, "So what?" The Anaheim Convention Center is currently out of commission due to a major construction project, so NAMM had no choice but to relocate to Los Angeles. Retailers who hope to meet the challenges of the market have no choice but to attend the NAMM show. If you're serious about the

business, it's not an option. Be there, or run the risk of being left behind.

We live in what the Chinese euphemistically refer to as "interesting times." With the emergence of national players, retailing is in the midst of what could be a revolution. As the baby boomers leave their prime music participation years behind, the industry is on the cusp of a new era in musical tastes, product preferences, and marketing methods. We certainly don't presume to have simple answers for these issues; however, at the NAMM show you'll be bombarded with so much information that you'll be in a better position to come up with workable strategies. We could go on, but, suffice it to say, if you care about the future of your business or your career, you'll make the trip.

**Brian T. Majeski**  
Editor

## GET A FREE TRIP TO NAMM IN L.A. (NO KIDDING!)

IF A CHANCE TO SCOPE OUT the industry isn't inducement enough to attend NAMM in Los Angeles, how do thousands of dollars of free merchandise and special offers sound? In our first-ever NAMM Show Coupon book, mailed with this issue, over 130 manufacturers have outdone themselves by offering an incredible range of incentives: special discounts, free products, and incredible package deals, not to mention the chance to enter some enticing raffles. By taking advantage of just a few of these special offers, you'll more than pay for your trip to Los Angeles. Think of the Coupon Book as your ticket to a powerful education at the NAMM show, generously underwritten by your suppliers. But you can't really use the book unless you're at the show. So make your reservations now.