

# Gift of music sound choice for musically inclined

BY DOUG DAVENPORT  
Special to the Record-Eagle

For the music lovers on your list, gifts that let them make their own joyful sounds are plentiful. Area music shops cater to the creative needs of music aficionados. Here's what's hot to stir the muse in your favorite musician.

Inside **The Music Factory**, at 517 S. Union Street in Old Town, the instrument wall resembles an art gallery. Gracefully sculpted guitars adorn the wall in gleaming colors from polished natural woods to glossy black, hot pink and electric blue.

Owner Charles Tomlin is excited about his first Christmas on Union Street. "Guitars are what we do," Tomlin said, "and acoustics are especially popular."

Shoppers will find interesting guitar packages offered by various manufacturers. Turnkey sets, including guitar, case and selected accessories, allow you to plug in and play.

"Customers often locate us while browsing the Web sites of our featured manufacturers," Tomlin said.

He carries custom makers like Larrivee, Godin, Art & Lutherie and Paul Reed Smith.

"All our brands are crafted by people who know guitars and provide great service," he said. Lessons are available at The Music Factory for students at all skill levels, from four instructors, all professional musicians. "This is what these guys do," Tomlin said, "and they're very good."

At **Marshall Music Company**, 1197 S. Airport Road, drum sets are hot Christmas sellers.

"People are excited by percussion instruments, especially hand percussion. It's not just kids, even grandmas play Conga drums," said store manager Al Jankowski.

Marshall's also sells acoustic and electric guitars by Fender and Gibson, with package options available. Need a stocking stuffer for your favorite guitarist? Small, affordable humidifiers protect your fine instruments from winter dryness.

Technology buffs can peruse Marshall's selection of digital keyboards as an affordable alternative to a standard piano. Digital workstations by Yamaha, Roland, and Sonar4 allow you to create your own sound studio at home.

Shoppers will also find a variety of affordable gadgetry, electronic devices, cleaning kits, sheet music and novelty items, all popular with musicians. Lessons make a practical

gift. Marshall Music offers lessons from 30 professional instructors, including a 4 lesson gift certificate aimed to help beginners.

Jankowski sees a busy Christmas season ahead: "People are returning to a love of music and rhythm, it's great fun."

Drop by **Kurtz Music**, at Garfield and S. Airport Roads, where you'll be treated to wonderful piano sounds as you explore the baby grands, uprights and digital instruments by Yamaha and Kawai.

Ask store manager Tony Bero for a demonstration on the Yamaha Disklavier. This exquisite digital player-piano has a built-in workstation that allows the operator to blend a custom mix of accompaniments, while playing a full range of music styles. The piano can be wired to speakers throughout your home and controlled by a palm pilot remote.

Kurtz is proud to offer the Yamaha Clarinova, the official digital piano of Interlochen, which features an intuitive system that allows the keyboard to produce the sounds of a wide variety of instruments.

The Kurtz staff, Bero, Chris Selby, and Len Crandall, have each been awarded Best Performance in Class ratings by the Kawai Keyboard Academy.

"In any sale, the key elements are tone and touch," Bero said, "We're match-makers, and we strive to match our customers to the piano that best suits their desires and abilities."

Gifts for the pianist on your list might include lessons from one of four professional instructors. Kurtz stocks a full selection of sheet music and instrument accessories. Piano moving service is also available.

At the **Good News Music Centre**, 140 Front St., the good news for shoppers is that quality guitars are affordable and available.

Owner Dave Flees said that "guitars are always popular at Christmas, and acoustic guitars are enjoying a revival.

Manufacturers are offering some nice packages for beginners," he added, "Fender offers headphones with some models."

Good News Music features Takamine instruments, acoustic guitars popular with many performing artists.

"People have brought us cheap instruments for tuning," Flees said. "One gentleman thought he couldn't play, the sound was never right. We hooked him up with a quality instrument and he heard the difference."

A child sized set of



Gretsch drums sits in the store's percussion section. Flees points out, "these aren't toys; good quality drum sets are available for kids and beginners."

A complete line of percussion accessories such as sticks, cymbals, bells and blocks is available.

The keyboard room displays a wide selection of new and used keyboards and amplifiers by Fender and Peavey.

"We're one of few dealers in the area that takes trade-ins," Flees said.

Lessons available at Good News are taught by professional musicians. Instrument accessories such as electronic cables, digital recorders, strings, instrument cases and sheet music are readily found in the store.

Perhaps your personal wish this year is for a home sound system or home theater. Visit **The Sound Room** on S. Airport Road, where experts like co-owner Greg Walton, consult with customers to design audio/video home entertainment systems.

"We focus on offering personal consultation and design, in your home, and continued service after the sale," Walton said, "Our goal is to optimize the quality of your entertainment system. Sound makes the theater."

If you're looking for a smaller, affordable gift for that makes a great thank you, The Sound Room car-



Above left, a guitar from The Music Factory in Traverse City. Above are a variety of drum sets from Marshall Music on South Airport Rd.

ries the Tivoli table radio.

"It has an analog tuner that older people love, and features excellent reception," Walton said, "We've sold many of these to businesses as gifts for staff, or favorite clients." Other gift suggestions include calibration mics, used to balance the sound in any room or theater center.

Walton also suggests satellite radio packages, especially from Sirius or XM. Growing in popularity, these systems offer up to 150 channels for the home or auto.

Unique gifts that celebrate music and the Arts will be found at **Bravo!**, the gift shop of the Interlochen Center for the Arts, located at 237 E. Front Street.

Is dad dreading the prospect of getting another boring tie this Christmas?

Store Manager Kim Scheffler points out a tie emblazoned with the likeness of Beethoven: "Our assortment of fun, artistic ties is popular every year."

Scheffler added, "Our arts theme puzzles and games are great novelties, too."

A collection of miniature metal figurines, representing the various musicians in an orchestra, is dis-

played in a glass case.

"This is the Nuts 'n Bolts collection," she said, "You can also get a ballet dancer and music teacher."

Scheffler pointed to the aprons, pot holders, towels, and other kitchen items hanging on a wall display. Some sport musical notes, while others proclaim "Too Hot to Handel," or "Maestro At Work."

"Our tote bags are very popular with students and musicians," she said.

A "Fear No Art" collec-

tion of bags, mugs and note cubes sits next to a display of Interlochen keepsake ornaments.

For that special music student or teacher there are unique clocks and small music related furniture items. Art and music patrons will appreciate that some proceeds from the store are used to support the Interlochen Scholarship program.

**Doug Davenport is a local freelance writer.**



Left, a variety of tote bags and accessories from Bravo! in Traverse City. Above are socks adorned with musical notes. The store is a gift shop of Interlochen Center for the Arts, located in downtown Traverse City.

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