

## What's New In Music Technology- A Report From NAMM 2015"

By Mike Klinger

I love this time of year when I can leave the cold and gloomy Pacific NW and go to the sunny and warm sky of Anaheim, CA for the NAMM convention. I missed the NAMM show last year due to an illness so I was really looking forward to all of the new and exciting things heading our way as music educators this year in music technology. I was not disappointed.

You have probably heard by now that MakeMusic Inc. (the people who make Finale and SmartMusic) was relocated to Boulder, CO to a company called Peaksware. Unfortunately some positions at MakeMusic were either eliminated or, despite having received offers to join the new venture in Boulder, some chose not to make the move causing nasty rumors that the company had gone out of business. Not true! I met with President of Peaksware/Dirk Friel and Director of Marketing/Sonia Bertek and they re-assured me that all things are moving forward with a new strategy. Peaksware develop software platforms that connect creators, instructors, and performers and set a specific goal. You get expert instruction so that they can make the software and you perform at the highest level possible. Rest assured that Finale and Smart Music are moving forward.

### Software Apps

I found three smaller software/app companies that I fell in love with for the music education market. **Imitone** \$25 translates sound into MIDI, the "language" of digital music. Simply put, just play or sing thru a mic into any midi software like Garage Band and it will convert that track into a midi track. Think of the possibilities of this. I was blown away by their demonstration. **Piano Maestro** app for iPad by JoyTunes is *free* download for music teachers and students. Simply download the app at [www.joytunes.com](http://www.joytunes.com) and register as a teacher/student. It is a wonderful *new* approach to learning how to play the piano. Simply put your iPad on the music rack of the piano and launch Piano Maestro, load in a song and hit play. As the music scrolls along you simply play along on a real piano. The built in iPad mic hears your playing and shows the notes you are playing along the way. If you have a lab with headphones, the app will also work through a MIDI connection. Once you have finished a level and get your passing score, you move onto the next level. Over 4 million people have now downloaded this wonderful app. **MusicPlayAlong** is an accompaniment app (audio mp3) for music practice. It provides an electronic music score with high-quality accompaniment and synchronized music tracer. It is a dream companion for all music students. You can slow down or speed up by 50% without changing pitch or sound quality. There are "song collections" for specific instruments and categories as well. Finally, on a personal note, please check out a couple of my personal favorites. **Weezic** and **MatchMySound** are wonderful practice tools for your students.

## Digital Audio

Probably the biggest news at NAMM 2015 was that Avid would now be offering a *FREE* version of Pro Tools called **Pro Tools First**. It will allow for 16 tracks of audio, midi, virtual instruments, and aux tracks. Storage is made in the cloud and allows you to store up to 3 projects. If you want to work on a new project, then simply bounce a project to disk and store it onto your HD. Avid also announced **Pro Tools 12** coming out in quarter 2 of this year. Both Pro Tools 12 and Pro Tools First will allow for song collaboration in the cloud and a new Marketplace that will allow you to purchase extra sounds, effects, etc. The Marketplace also will serve as a portal where musicians can get paid for their work on song collaborations. Sibelius and Media Composer are also products of Avid. Look for them to follow in a similar fashion with collaboration and Marketplace portals in new versions soon.

Tascam introduced two new handheld recorders at NAMM. The **DR-44wl** is a 4-track recorder that includes Wi-Fi for transport control, file transfer, and audio streaming to your smartphone or PC. New built-in stereo condenser microphones feature shock mounting and are mounted in a true XY pattern for perfect stereo imaging. A pair of XLR inputs is also available for 4-track recording, and all four feed an improved microphone preamp and AD/DA stage. The **DR-22wl** also has Wi-Fi for transport control, file transfer, and audio streaming to your smartphone or PC. Other innovations like the new Scene Dial make it easier than ever to capture great-sounding recordings and share them online. A set of stereo condenser microphones is arranged in true XY pattern for ideal stereo imaging.

There were a lot of new audio interfaces announced at NAMM as well. Focusrite introduced two new models that look very promising for music educators. The **iTrack Dock for iPad** \$199 is a comprehensive studio-quality iPad recording interface, featuring dual legendary Focusrite microphone preamps plus two line inputs and an instrument DI, independent stereo monitor and headphone outputs, and a USB port for class-compliant MIDI instruments and controllers. iTrack Dock provides everything required to record, monitor and control music on Lightning iPads – with precision Focusrite digital conversion at up to 24-bit, 96kHz sampling. It even charges and powers the iPad at the same time. The **iTrack Studio** \$199 is a complete recording package for iPad, Mac and PC. Great low cost solution for school labs! It includes: iTrack Solo audio interface, CM25s, studio condenser mic/cable, HP6s stereo headphones, 1.2m device link cable, USB cable and recording/mixing software.

M-Audio introduced the **Deltabolt 1212 Thunderbolt 12-channel interface** at \$499. It comes with Octane X preamps, audio performance up to 32bit/192khz, full duplex 12 input/12 output simultaneous recording in a compact desktop form factor, and much more. A thunderbolt interface of this depth and quality is un-heard of at this pricing.

## Honorable Mention

Your kids will love you if you get this for them. Korg introduced the *new* **Little Bit Synth Kit** \$159. It is a build you own synthesizer kit that comes complete with: power, oscillator, keyboard, micro sequencer, envelope generator, filter, delay, mix, split, speaker, battery and cable and instructions (download). How fun is this!

*Mike Klinger is the owner of The Synthesis Midi Workshop ([www.midiworkshop.com](http://www.midiworkshop.com)), which specializes in educational sales and training in music technology. He offers a wide variety of music technology courses both online and at his Retreat Center in Carson, WA located in the beautiful Columbia River Gorge in the Pacific NW. To date over 5,000 music educators have studied with him.*



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- July 21-24 (Tues-Fri) 9am-3pm

**Sibelius**

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