



## **Guitar Center Names Donny Gruendler Vice President of Music Education**

*Gruendler sets out to grow Guitar Center's Lessons program nationwide, in addition to further engaging with music educators around the country*

**Westlake Village, CA** (March 21, 2018) – Guitar Center, the world's largest musical instrument retailer, has appointed industry veteran Donny Gruendler Vice President of Music Education. In this role, Gruendler will help expand Guitar Center's focus on music education programs to provide more individuals with the tools and resources needed to learn the craft of music. Gruendler will spearhead Guitar Center's Lessons programs nationwide, in addition to further engaging with music educators around the country.

The benefits of music lessons for students are well documented, and Gruendler's appointment reflects Guitar Center's growing emphasis on lessons, which also includes the expansion of Guitar Center Lessons facilities in recent months. Adding to its existing 190-plus lessons locations, by the end of 2018 Guitar Center will open an additional 90 lessons facilities within their Guitar Center retail locations nationwide. The expansion will also be accompanied by new and diverse lessons offerings including DJ classes, electronic music production courses, and songwriting lessons.

"With the rapid growth of Guitar Center's Lessons program, Guitar Center is positioned to be the largest provider of student-direct music education. Donny's appointment further emphasizes Guitar Center's ongoing commitment to music education, which engages music educators, students and communities around the country in promoting the benefits of music education programs," said Wayne Colwell, Executive Vice President of Stores at Guitar Center.

Gruendler has a Master of Music from Wayne State University and a Bachelor of Music from Berklee College of Music. He is currently a Doctoral Candidate in the Ed.D track (ABD) for Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership and Global Change from Pepperdine University, with his degree being awarded this May. Since 2016, he has served as President of the MI College of Contemporary Music, where he has helped shape the direction of the organization in terms of growth, operations, academic vision, pedagogy, program development, curriculum, interdepartmental communication, budgeting and resource allocation, and more.

Covering the topics of musical instruction, leadership and business, Gruendler has penned over 25 periodicals and 10 textbooks, for a wide range of domestic and international publishers in addition to creating several music instructional DVDs and iOS applications.

Gruendler is a frequent columnist for Modern Drummer magazine and a member of the Percussive Arts Society drum set committee, and has performed, taught and spoken at many international conventions including World Creative City Forum (Hamamatsu, Japan), Musicabana (Havana, Cuba), Japanese External Trade Organization Convention (Tokyo, Japan), Music Week (Berlin, Germany), National Association of Music Merchants “NAMM U” (Anaheim, CA), and PASIC (various locales). Gruendler is also an active and outspoken figure in music education, contributing regularly to panels and conferences to share his perspectives. On May 21-22, Gruendler will return to speak at the NAMM Fly-in initiative in Washington, D.C. alongside senators, congressmen, and other key legislators to discuss the importance of music education for K-12 level students.

“I am very excited to join the Guitar Center team in this new role. As an educator, I strive to reach as many students as possible, and Guitar Center gives me the opportunity to reach so many more, igniting a new spark and passion for music,” said Gruendler. “Music education has gone unsupported in schools in recent decades. We know that learning music boosts test scores, improves mental wellbeing, provides a sense of community and numerous other benefits. That is why now is the time, more than ever before, for Guitar Center to do its part to bring music education back to the forefront.

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#### **About Guitar Center:**

Guitar Center is a leading retailer of musical instruments, lessons, repairs and rentals in the U.S. With more than 280 stores across the U.S. and one of the top direct sales websites in the industry, Guitar Center has helped people make music for more than 50 years. Guitar Center also provides customers with various musician based services, including Guitar Center Lessons, where musicians of all ages and skill levels can learn to play a variety of instruments in many music genres; GC Repairs, an on-site maintenance and repairs service; and GC Rentals, a program offering easy rentals of instruments and other sound reinforcement gear. Additionally, Guitar Center’s sister brands include Music & Arts, which operates more than 150 stores specializing in band & orchestral instruments for sale and rental, serving teachers, band directors, college professors and students, and Musician’s Friend, a leading direct marketer of musical instruments in the United States. For more information about Guitar Center, please visit [www.guitarcenter.com](http://www.guitarcenter.com).

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