

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Tony Taylor Jr. Named Winner of Guitar Center's 27th Annual Drum-Off

ANNOUNCEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- *Guitar Center to grant Taylor with career-altering endorsement deals, gear and cash in a grand prize package valued at over \$45,000*
- *Past Drum-Off winners have gone on to see successful careers, playing with the likes of Prince, Jay Z, Beyoncé, The Mars Volta and more*
- *The evening included performances by Taylor Hawkins (Foo Fighters), Mike Mangini (Dream Theater), Gil Sharone (Marilyn Manson) and more*

Los Angeles, CA (January 20, 2016) – Starting in August, drummers from across the country signed up to compete in Guitar Center's 27th Annual Drum-Off, and out of the thousands of hopefuls, five talented finalists competed for the winning title Saturday, January 16, 2016. At stake was a prize package including endorsement deals, gear and cash valued at nearly \$45,000. An all-star panel of judges was on hand to critique the performances including Steve Ferrone (Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers), Matt Garstka (Animals as Leaders), George "Spanky" McCurdy (Lady Gaga), Ced Mitchell (Nick Jonas), Cora Dunham (Beyoncé), Glen Sobel (Alice Cooper), Mike Reid (Rihanna), Gerald Heyward (Chris Brown), Tony Royster Jr. (Jay Z), Jim Riley (Rascal Flatts), Dave Elitch (Antemasque) and Nisan Stewart (Dancing With The Stars). As the winner, Tony Taylor Jr., joins an esteemed group of talented drummers who have gone on to play for the likes of Prince, Beyoncé, Jay Z and more.

Growing up in Matteson, IL, just outside of Chicago, Tony Taylor Jr. comes from a family with deep musical roots. With a drummer as a father, a pianist uncle and percussionist grandfather, there was little doubt that Tony had music in his blood and would pursue a musical passion of his own. At only 18 years old, Tony has been drumming for most of his life and hopes to be able to continue developing a career as a professional touring musician and honing his skills as a producer and audio engineer.

Watch Taylor's Winning Performance Here: <https://youtu.be/ydlaylLLjbo>

As Guitar Center's Drum-Off Grand Prize Winner, Taylor Will Receive:

- \$25,000 Cash
- Roland TD-30KV Electronic Drum Kit and the SPD-SX
- High-End Drum Kit by DW, Tama, Pearl, Gretsch or Yamaha (Winner's Choice)
- Full set up of drum sticks, cymbals, and drumheads (Winner's Choice)
- Endorsement Deals from the top drum manufacturers (Winner's Choice)
- VIP Experience at NAMM 2016
- Studio Time at Converse Rubber Tracks
- Feature in a Guitar Center Buyer's Guide

"I didn't go into this competition half-hearted – I knew what a big deal it was and I really wanted to win," says Taylor. "In the weeks leading up to the finals I practiced and prayed constantly, and when I heard my name come through that loudspeaker as the winner, it was a true moment of awe and gratitude. All I could think about was how this was going to change my life for the better in such a drastic and meaningful way."

After 27 years of celebrating the country's best drummers, Guitar Center's Drum-Off has become one of the most loved events in the drumming community. Each year, legendary musicians from the drumming community return

to the event as performers, judges and guests. This year featured Gregg Bissonette as host along with performances by Taylor Hawkins (Foo Fighters), Mike Mangini (Dream Theater), Clyde Stubblefield (James Brown), Robert "Sput" Searight (Snarky Puppy) and Gil Sharone (Marilyn Manson). The night also honored Vic Firth and Jim Keltner with two special inductions into Guitar Center's RockWalk. Drum Channel and DW founder, Don Lombardi, joined Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith to introduce Jim Keltner as he stepped onstage to be inducted into the RockWalk. Vic Firth's posthumous induction was presented by Remo Belli to Craigie Zildjian on behalf of the Zildjian and Vic Firth family.

Guitar Center Drum-Off is presented by Roland, Yamaha, Meinl, Remo, Pearl, Vic Firth, DW, LP, Gretsch, Zildjian, Evans, Promark, Sabian, Tama, Drum Channel, GoPro, and *Modern Drummer*.

About Guitar Center:

Guitar Center is the world's largest retailer of guitars, amplifiers, drums, keyboards, recording, live sound, DJ, and lighting equipment. With more than 270 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. In addition, the Music & Arts division operates more than 120 stores specializing in band & orchestral instruments for sale and rental, serving teachers, band directors, college professors, and students since 1952. Guitar Center also operates Musician's Friend, a leading direct marketer of musical instruments in the United States. With an unrivaled in-store experience, an industry-leading online presence, and passionate commitment to making gear easy-to-buy, Guitar Center is all about enabling musicians and non-musicians alike to experience the almost indescribable joy that comes from playing an instrument. All we sell is the greatest feeling on earth. For more information about Guitar Center, please visit www.guitarcenter.com.

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