

At-home music more electronic than ever

United Press International
The sound of music across America, especially that made by young people, is more likely to be electronic than acoustic in the coming year, according to a survey of leading instrument makers.

Electronic guitars, often in exotic shapes, were mentioned most often as the top sellers for 1983 and the plugged-in instrument runner for No. 1 instrument of 1984.

Portable electronic keyboards, electronic pianos and synthesizers also are selling what was repeatedly described as an "amazing" rate. Sales are making a comeback electronic, of course.

And where you find electronic instruments, you'll probably find amplifiers for the level of sound that suits the ears of a generation bred on rock music. "Guitars are very, very big," reported Rick Munroe of Coyle

Music in Columbus, Ohio. "Kids are leaning more and more toward electronic guitars and the amplification to go with them. They're very today."

That observation was echoed by a salesman at Manny's music store in New York: "Guitar is the most popular back-to-school instrument for kids this year."

Richard Belmont of Terminal Music in mid-town Manhattan agreed: "You can't beat the electronic guitar and accompanying devices which change its sounds — chorus effects, delays, distortion. They're the biggest seller, especially in exotic shapes and adorned with art like a white lightning bolt. They start at \$179 and can run up to \$800 or \$900."

Belmont said Terminal's best selling electronic keyboard is the Cassio, a battery or plug-in instrument that produces piano

and organ sounds and 10 special effects such as the wail of bagpipes, at \$155, and the Cassio MT70 on which songs can be written and then played back, at \$315. Other dealers reported

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the Yamaha keyboard as the best seller.

"Portability is the big factor in the keyboards, which are tabletop instruments," noted David

Butler of Columbia Music in San Francisco. "You can take them to parties, to picnics. The whole family can have fun with them. You can take them to a studio if you want to compose or to some site that inspires you. You can play back your own music and even get a printout from some instruments."

Electronic keyboards can have appeal for would-be musicians as young as 4 or 5, according to Harry Folsom of Vene-man Music, Rockville, Md.

Small electronic keyboards now start at \$100, down from \$300 a year ago, and increase as they grow in size to \$300 and up to 10 times that much for the most complicated ones. They are especially popular with teenagers.

Synthesizers produce all sorts of instrumental sounds plus some that never emanated from any instrument. Because they can be used in very sophisticated ways, they are played mainly by

professional musicians and by musical groups of older teens and adults. They run from \$250

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to \$32,000. A good eight-voice synthesizer will cost about \$1,350.

Dealers reported that one of the most popular sellers last Christmas for about \$100 was an

electronic drum — a square with four patches that produce the sounds of different drums.

Most of those interviewed agreed that, in the non-electronic field, trumpets are enjoying a new popularity. Gary Jensen of Marching World, Denver, noted, "When kids are into jazz, they're often into trumpet." A good trumpet sells for about \$850.

"It's almost the most popular instrument with us," Jensen said. "The trombone is next, then the saxophone (\$1,500 to \$2,200). A lot of this is related to use in the schools."

Don Kingston, a top salesman for American Music World in Chicago, said the popularity of flutist James Galway helped create a flute boom in the past three years.

Vic Hugo at St. Louis' Music Centers Inc. reported that more

school teachers are buying flutes "because they're easy to play and are a C-instrument, same as the piano."

They average about \$375 unless they are solid silver, a luxury that will cost \$600 to \$1,000. Galway and other concert flutists have gold ones as well.

Piano instruction is rare in schools, especially with music budget cutbacks, but most dealers reported sales up this year over 1982.

Don Kingston, a top salesman in Chicago's American Music World, said, "More and more parents, particularly younger parents, are getting pianos for their kids because they want kids to learn and learn it right."

"Most people would prefer an old-fashioned acoustic piano but electronic pianos are good for apartments because they don't have percussive hammers that make a sound that goes right through a building, and it doesn't have to be tuned."

We do what we don't want to do because of the 'Abilene paradox'

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Why did Watergate conspirators bug Democratic Party headquarters even though individually they agreed the plan made no sense?

Why do some couples get married even though they have no land in common?

Why do businesses sometimes embark on projects when individual managers and technicians know they are doomed to fail?

Jerry B. Harvey, a professor of management science at George Washington University,

has a theory about all this. He calls it "the Abilene paradox."

"The Abilene paradox is a pervasive form of organizational mental illness," Harvey wrote in a recent article for Chem-Tech, the journal of the American Chemical Society.

He defined it as organizations taking actions that "contradict the desires of their individual members, thus defeating the very purposes the organizations are designed to achieve."

The name of the paradox is derived from a 53-mile drive the Harvey family took in a Buick with no air conditioner or shocks to a dusty cafe in the Good Luck

Motel in Abilene, Texas, one 104-degree day.

Harvey's father-in-law had suggested the trip and Harvey went along because he thought everyone else had wanted to go. It emerged in the family fight afterward that no one really did.

Harvey said he came up with the theory when serving on a building committee for a building no one wanted to build and found existing psychological theory lacking when he sought an explanation.

Harvey says the Abilene paradox has several causes, but what they boil down to is fantasies or fear that speaking out will

cause rejection, such as firing, or other disaster.

There are several ways to stop the trip, Harvey said. One is to "acknowledge your personal responsibility for solving the problem."

"Each organization member

has as much responsibility as any other for turning around the Buick," he said.

Another step is to calculate the risk involved in the confrontation. What are the odds you'll be ostracized, demoted or worse?



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