

Music Trades

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THE GLOBAL MUSIC INDUSTRY

Anthem Enlists Flute Artisan Chris McKenna
For New North Bridge Line

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NORTH BRIDGE WINDS

Anthem veterans enlist renowned flute craftsman for unique step-up line

THE C CONCERT FLUTE IS JUST over 26 inches in length, but most of the instrument's tone comes from the nine inches in the head joint. What exactly does that mean for flute-making? For David Kilkenny, Brent Beech, and Frank Sarcia, founders of the new North Bridge line—quite a bit. As principals behind Anthem Musical Instruments, the three had helped introduce a new formula to the student band instrument market, restoring respectable margins for retailers while building genuine value into the product. With North Bridge, they're taking that concept to the step-up flute market, and it all comes down to the critical head joint. For every flute built by North Bridge, a Taiwan-made flute body will be paired with a head joint hand-crafted in the United States by noted flute artisan Chris McKenna—maximizing the instrument's tonal potency while hitting a sweet spot in pricing and dealer margins for the step-up market.

"Making the step up to a musical instrument offering more professional features is an important decision for all musicians," says McKenna. "The step-up instrument is often the 'bridge' that transforms the budding student into the professional artist. Our goal is to facilitate that transformation."

While the step-up market can be difficult for a newcomer to crack, North Bridge comes to the table with some unique tools in its pocket. In hand-cut head joints, a specialized part of flute-making that takes years to master, it would be hard to find a more respected authority than McKenna. Also the owner of his own master flute shop, he's been crafting some of the world's finest head joints for more than 30 years. For North Bridge he's designed a head joint that's both flexible and responsive, allowing for superb projection and control that supports the high notes and allows players to perform at softer volumes.



Flute artisan Chris McKenna hand-crafts head joints for the North Bridge line.

North Bridge also has the backing of Massachusetts-based Anthem Musical Instruments as its U.S. distributor. Known for its "Freedom Pricing" model, Anthem grants dealers exclusive territories and allows them to set their own prices while prohibiting internet sales. For North Bridge

Anthem will tweak that model slightly,

opening up distribution to a carefully selected circle of its retail partners. "One of the key ingredients to a successful sales strategy is choosing the 'right' dealers and being careful not to oversaturate the market," explained Sarcia, Anthem's sales director.

North Bridge flutes debuted this past August at the National Flute Convention, along with an official website, www.northbridgewinds.com. The company will also be coming out with a buyers' guide to educate students and parents on shopping for the ideal step-up flute. "The National Flute show was a great success for us," says Kilkenny, president of Anthem. "We have a quality step-up flute with a great story behind it, we are implementing a limited distribution strategy that offers high retail margins, and we have an experienced marketing team with a track record of capturing the #1 position in the market. That's what sets us apart."

www.northbridgewinds.com
www.antheminstruments.com

NORTH
BRIDGE

Featuring a handmade headjoint
by Chris McKenna.

"The note heard 'round the world"

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