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### **The Gretsch Company Celebrates 125 Years of That Great Gretsch Sound**

SAVANNAH, Ga., 2008 – The Gretsch Company, one of the world's most well-known drum and guitar manufacturers, will celebrate its 125th anniversary in 2008. Throughout the year, Gretsch will celebrate by introducing new lines of limited edition anniversary drums, guitars, and other Gretsch products; conducting an online search for the world's best unsigned bands called Next Gretsch Greats; and hosting a major concert event in New York City featuring an illustrious lineup of "Gretsch Greats."

"It's quite exciting to reach this remarkable milestone," said President Fred W. Gretsch. "We owe our many years of success to four generations of Gretsch owners and the dedicated men and women on their team who were – and are – passionate about great music and high-quality instruments."

According to research conducted by American Management Services, Inc., only three percent of American family-owned businesses survive to the fourth generation. The Gretsch Company is among that relative handful of fourth-generation companies.

Based in Savannah, Ga., the company has earned its reputation as an industry leader through 125 years of enduring commitment to manufacturing professional-quality, handcrafted instruments. The Gretsch Company began in 1883 when Friedrich Gretsch, a German immigrant, started making banjos, tambourines and other instruments in a Brooklyn, N.Y. factory. At the time, Chester A. Arthur was president of the United States and the Brooklyn Bridge was celebrating its grand opening, making it much easier for young Friedrich to get to and from Manhattan from his Brooklyn, N.Y. shop.

The company's popularity grew steadily and then exploded with the arrival of rock-n-roll in the 1950s and 1960s as Gretsch attracted famous endorsers like George Harrison, Bo Diddley and Charlie Watts. Gretsch has been a family business for all but 18 years of its history, starting when third-generation owner Fred Gretsch, Jr. sold The Gretsch Company to Baldwin Music Company in 1967 – a period much maligned by Gretsch aficionados. Without the family commitment that had driven the business for so many years, the company faltered. As a testament to his passion for the family business, the company's current president, Fred W. Gretsch, vowed to one day regain control. In 1985, he made good on his

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promise and bought The Gretsch Company back from Baldwin. He moved operations to Savannah, Ga., where the revitalized company began to offer new, vintage-styled Gretsch guitars and classic Gretsch drums. The new products were immediately successful and The Gretsch Company once again became a leading force in the musical instrument industry.

Today, Gretsch drums and guitars are the preferred instruments of many studio musicians and recording artists looking for unique tonal quality and hand-made craftsmanship.

"For as long as I can remember Gretsch drums have always epitomized 'class,'" said longtime Gretsch endorser Phil Collins. "I remember prowling around the drum shops of London in the 60s gazing at the beautiful drums in the windows. More often than not it was the Gretsch kits that made my mouth water. Then I started to notice which drummers played which drums – Charlie Watts played Gretsch, so did Tony Williams. Many more of course, but those two were enough for me."

As the 2007 recipient of Cox Family Enterprise Center's Century Award for Family Business, the company is also known for its strong commitment to community service. Last year, Gretsch awarded four college scholarships and donated numerous guitars for school fundraisers across the country. The Gretsch family was also an early major sponsor of the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in Macon, Ga.

"The Gretsch Company is gearing up for another 125 years of excellence," said CFO Dinah Gretsch. "We look forward to an exciting future creating that great Gretsch sound."

More information about The Gretsch Company's 125th Anniversary celebrations can be found at [www.gretsch125th.com](http://www.gretsch125th.com) and [www.myspace.com/gretsch125th](http://www.myspace.com/gretsch125th).

### About The Gretsch Company

Founded in 1883 as a small musical instrument shop in Brooklyn, N.Y., The Gretsch Company, now based in Savannah, Ga., has produced some of the world's greatest drums and guitars over the span of four generations. With its emphasis on hand-craftsmanship and commitment to quality, Gretsch has pioneered new designs and manufacturing techniques, winning endorsements from some of the music industry's most respected artists, including Chet Atkins, Charlie Watts, Neil Young and Phil Collins. Gretsch also owns and manufactures some of the other most popular and historic music industry products and brands including Bigsby® Vibratos and Sho-Bud® Pedal Steel Guitars. The company has strong worldwide ties with musical giants Kaman and Fender, placing the Gretsch name in concert halls and recording studios around the globe.

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