

Drumming up success: Demand growing for Moravian Percussion's drums



Joshua Trask

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The cajons are made in Wilkes

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Percussion drums or cajons (pronounced ca-hone) made by Wilkes County-based Moravian Percussion are gaining a strong presence in the music industry.

Moravian Percussion cajons are used by well-known bluegrass and country bands, including Grammy-nominated Steep Canyon Rangers, Amos Lee, Alison Brown Band and David Neil.

Called the BoxKit, the drums are available in three sizes and varying styles.

A traditional cajon is usually a six-sided box-shaped percussion originally from Peru. It is played by slapping the front or rear faces with hands, fingers or various implements such as brushes, mallets or sticks. Trask described them as the “finest percussion instruments.”

Over 5,000 cajons have been ordered from Moravian Percussion since July, said Joshua and Jenny Trask, owners of Moravian Percussion and parent company Moravian Builders. They live in Moravian Falls.

The company relocated to the building occupied by Greene Brothers Furniture off N.C. 268 East, North Wilkesboro in July. Four people are currently employed by the company and some of the work is outsourced to a cabinet company in Wilkes.

The \$15,000 needed for the relocation and expansion of the business came from a revolving loan from the Wilkes Economic Development Commission (EDC) and a STEP grant through the Town of North Wilkesboro, said Dan Little, president of the Wilkes EDC.

Keith Johnston and Gary Cogdill, formerly with Greene Brothers, have also assisted with the expansion of Moravian Percussion.

The BoxKit line of cajons from Moravian Percussion are also sold in music stores and distributors across the country. They can be found in retailers such as Sam Ash, Volkwein’s Music in Pittsburgh, Pa., Musician’s Workshop in Asheville, Separk Music in Winston-Salem, Fork’s Drumcloset in Nashville, Tenn. and several other locations.

New vendors are being added all the time.

Trask, 33 and his wife were recognized during the EDC’s Christmas Open House at the Wilkes Art Gallery on Tuesday night. Little said the success of Moravian Builders was one of the top achievements for small businesses in Wilkes, helped by the EDC this year.

Trask, 33, and his wife, Jenny, moved to Wilkes nine years ago from central California. They were looking for a more child-friendly location to raise their four children.

Trask is a musician who plays a variety of instruments. He is also a builder of homes. On his website, Trask says he has always been drawn to percussion, recognizing that drums and percussion in particular, add an element of richness and texture that no other instrument can bring on its own.

The cajon has been used since the late 18th century. It originated with slaves of west and central African origin in the Americas, specifically Peru.

One theory on the origin, says that slaves used boxes as musical instruments to get around bans on music in predominantly African areas. Cajons could easily be disguised as seats or stools.

Another theory is that Peruvian slaves used shipping crates at their disposal for instruments.

In 2001, the cajon was declared National Heritage by the Peruvian National Institute of Culture. In 2014, the Organization of American States called the cajon an “Instrument of Peru for the Americas.”

The modern cajon is often used to accompany the acoustic guitar and is becoming popular in blues, pop, rock, jazz and country.

For more information on Moravian Builders go to www.TheBoxKit.com.