GUITAR CENTER I PROMOTION

GOOD SUMMERTIME **BLUES FOR GC**

he biggest retailer in the music products industry didn't take a summer vacation. On June 8, Guitar Center hosted the grand finals for its 2006 Guitarmageddon: King of the Blues competition at House of Blues Chicago. New Jersev's Matt O'Ree, 34, received the nation's best undiscovered blues guitarist crown.

The event also served to kick off the Chicago Blues Festival with a collaborative performance by master bluesmith B.B. King and an appearance by Grammy award-winning artist John Mayer.

GC had assembled a group of L.A.-based hip-hop musicians to open the event with a special set orchestrated by the Beat Junkies' DJ J ROCC. It featured classic blues samples mixed in with today's top hip-hop tracks.

"The King of the Blues experience was bigger and better than I ever could have imagined," O'Ree said. "To share the stage and shake hands with B.B. King - one of the blues greats - was the

most memorable moment of my life. By being able to perform in front of industry legends and receive such recognition, Guitar Center has provided me with the opportunity to develop my career well beyond what I could have done on my own."

O'Ree was selected from more than 4,000 undiscovered

Matt O'Ree (left) and B.B. King witor record with producer Pete Anderson, a one-year Gibson endorsement deal, a Gibson '59 reissue and a Gibson GA20

guitarists nationwide who participated in the four-tiered competition that began in February. Along with the coveted "King of the Blues" title, O'Ree took home more than \$40,000 in prizes, including a 2006 Scion tC, a trip to L.A. to The move is the first phase Technologies. MI

ONLINE EXPANSION

amplifier.

In June, GC also announced that guitarcenter.com will become ecommerce functional. The company's online retail presence had previously been confined to über Web site Musician's Friend.

of the company's plan to become more integrated. The next phase will be to add kiosks in GC stores to let customers search for products in its brickand-mortar locations.

"From a long-term perspective, an integrated retailer can build stronger customer lovalty and, in turn, increase repeat traffic and sales," said Marty Albertson, GC's chairman and CEO.

NEW HIRES

C has also made two key Jappointments. Craig Johnson was promoted to president and COO of Musician's Friend. Johnson, who most recently served as executive vice president for merchandising and marketing, has nearly 20 years experience in direct response. Prior to coming to Musician's Friend in 2003, he was senior vice president of merchandising for Oriental Trading Co.

"Craig is a highly experienced direct response executive and has a deep understanding of our business and industry," said Robert Eastman, CEO of Musician's Friend.

The company also named Stan Morgan as vice president, accessories merchandising. In his new position, Morgan will be responsible for the merchandising of accessory products in GC locations. He reports to Jay Wanamaker, executive vice president and general merchandise manager for GC. Morgan most recently served as senior vice president of sales for Loud