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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Ernie Ball Music Man Displays 40th Anniversary “Old Smoothie” StingRay Bass**

*The StingRay, one of the world’s most iconic and successful bass designs, turns 40*

*Leo Fender made “Old Smoothie,” catalogued as prototype #26, for Ernie Ball CEO Sterling Ball, who was a beta tester in the 1970’s*

*This follows key product launches of Ernie Ball Music Man’s St. Vincent, John Petrucci and James Valentine models*

**(Summer NAMM, Nashville, TN – June 23, 2016) –** Ernie Ball Music Man (Booth 1122, Hall D), one of the world’s premier guitar, bass and amp manufacturers, offers its 40th Anniversary edition of the StingRay, nicknamed “Old Smoothie.” Named for a prototype from 1976 — designed by Leo Fender and gifted to Sterling Ball — and featuring a one-of-a-kind design and unique tonal characteristics, the bass features a rare ten pole piece pickup design, resulting in a smooth, full tone that gives Old Smoothie its name and is reminiscent of the highly-sought-after vintage 70’s Music Man StingRay sound.

Watch Sterling Ball discuss the history of StingRay, his relationship with Leo Fender, and “Old Smoothie” here: <https://youtu.be/R2ZRWzEBIzE>.

The StingRay is an American classic, used over the last four decades by such diverse players as John Deacon (Queen), Robert Trujillo (Metallica), jazz great Marcus Miller, Garry Tallent (Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band), Mark Hoppus (Blink-182), Randy Jackson (Journey, *American Idol*), Benjamin Orr (The Cars), Carol Kaye (session musician legend), Lenny Kravitz and many more.

“Since its introduction in 1976, the Music Man StingRay bass has been embraced as one of the world’s classic electric bass designs, and Old Smoothie was an interesting – and great-sounding – variation given to me by Leo Fender during the time I spent testing and developing the original prototypes back in the 70’s,” said Sterling Ball, CEO for Ernie Ball. “We recently revisited the bass and were knocked out by its rich, deep, beautifully sweet tone. We knew we had to make it available to today’s bass players and celebrate one of the most iconic instruments of our time.”

The Ernie Ball Music Man “Old Smoothie” 40th Anniversary bass is a faithful reproduction of the original, with its custom-made ten pole piece pickup design precisely reproduced. “We analyzed the original with a spectrograph, micrometer and other measurement tools and examined and re-created it to the smallest detail to deliver the exact tone of the original,” said Ball. All the other attributes of the original Old Smoothie have been duplicated, including its body, headstock and pickguard shape, 34-inch scale maple neck and fingerboard, frets, active electronics, hardware and exclusive chocolate-burst finish.

The Ernie Ball Music Man Old Smoothie Bass is supplied with a hardshell case and is now available at a U.S. MSRP of $1999.

Photo file 1: MM\_OldSmoothie.JPG

Photo caption 1: Ernie Ball Music Man “Old Smoothie” 40th Anniversary StingRay electric bass

Photo file 2: MM\_OldSmoothie\_PromoGraphic.JPG

Photo caption 2: Ernie Ball Music Man “Old Smoothie” 40th Anniversary StingRay electric bass promotional graphic

**About Ernie Ball:**

In 1962, veteran player and guitar teacher Ernie Ball created Slinkys®, the innovative light gauge electric guitar strings widely revered by thousands of iconic players including Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, Jimmy Page, Paul McCartney, Metallica, Brad Paisley, Slash, John Petrucci, Angus Young and John Mayer. The strings are all crafted in Coachella, CA. Ernie Ball also offers state-of-the-art instrument accessories that are carried in more than 6,000 stores in the U.S. and 120 countries worldwide.

Officially purchasing the Music Man® company in 1984, Sterling, joined later by his sons Scott and Brian, has built a team of dedicated professionals based in San Luis Obispo, CA who collectively share a common goal: crafting the highest level of hand-crafted instruments available. Originally founded by Tom Walker, Forrest White and Leo Fender in 1974, Music Man built its name leading an industry revolution, introducing active electronics on its production instruments. As part of the team during the 70’s, Sterling Ball played an important role on the design and development of the iconic StingRay basses.

The family-run company maintains its founder's dedication to preserving the musician's playing experience and delivering superior sound quality through the development of new products, such as Cobalt Slinkys, M-Steel, Earthwood and the revolutionary Element Shield Packaging, which hermetically seals guitar strings to keep each set as fresh as the day they were made. The company also fosters artist development through musician-focused programs such as the world's largest and longest running unsigned artist programs, where bands compete each year for the chance to play live on national tours, festivals and events. Visit them online at www.ernieball.com and www.music-man.com.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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**Ernie Ball Music Man is exhibiting at Booth 1122 (Hall D) at the 2016 Summer NAMM Show in Nashville, TN.**