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### **Expert Profile: Donald Rickert, Ph.D., IDSA (Musical Instrument Design)**

Dr. Don Rickert is a uniquely-qualified, internationally known musical instrument designer and bona fide authority on musical instrument design and associated intellectual property issues. He is an Industrial Designer (IDSA Professional-level certification) with a rare specialization in the design and manufacture of musical instruments and musical instrument accessories.

Don is one of the preeminent designers of acoustic, electric and electronic (synthesizers) stringed musical instruments (violins, guitars, mandolins, basses etc.) and internationally-recognized authority on musical instrument design. In addition to past and present entries in prestigious musical instrument design competitions, many of his custom instruments are played by well-known recording artists in live performance and on their recordings.

What makes Don Rickert especially unique is that he is one of only a handful of musical instrument design experts who also has significant expert witness and expert consultant experience in major patent infringement cases in the U.S. District Courts as well as the U.S. International Trade Commission.



### **Expert Witness Experience**

- Experience as testifying expert witness on a landmark patent infringement case (U.S. District Court) and multiple ITC 337 Investigations
  - Physical Infringement Analysis: Don possesses beyond-the-usual experience as an expert witness in analyzing internal structures and electronic components of accused devices
- He also has rare (for an expert witness) experience in review and analysis of USPTO Patent Prosecution Records
- Dr. Rickert has experience in preparing most of the reports (Rule 26 Reports, multiple Rebuttals, and Expert Declarations) that are possible for an Expert Witness on a U.S. District Court patent infringement case to write.

## Industry Experience

- Deep familiarity with the large body of musical instrument utility and design patents, as well as trademarked characteristics of musical instruments, such as the body shape and distinctive branding decoration of specific electric guitar models
- Experience in Physical Infringement Analysis: Rare experience in analyzing internal structures and components of accused (or accusing) devices, as well as software and firmware in the case of electronic instruments and accessories, utilizing appropriate non-destructive techniques, including disassembly when possible, internal photography and even forensic x-ray technology. For example:
  - The circuitry of electric guitars and basses
  - The internal structures and bracing of acoustic instruments such as violins, mandolins and guitars
  - Sealed gear mechanisms for stringed-instrument tuners
- Authored 800+ white papers on musical instrument and musical instrument design topics...most re-published as weblog articles
- 110 Videos (available on YouTube and soon as podcasts) on musical instruments and instrument design topics, ranging from how to retrofit a modern violin as a gut-strung 19<sup>th</sup> century fiddle to demonstrations of Don's many custom instruments, his prototypes of violin synthesizers and electro-mechanically augmented acoustic basses, violins, mandolins and other instruments
- Don Rickert has appeared as a guest lecturer in seminars on electric guitar design in the School of Industrial Design at a top research university, where he has also served as an adjunct professor of design research, market research and new product development (NPD)

## Professional Affiliations and Related

- Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA Professional Member)
- Founder, Musical Instrument Design Group (1,300 members)
  - Currently in the process of establishing the affiliated Musical Instrument Design Society, the world's first formal certification organization for musical instrument designers
- Musical Instruments Manufacturers and Traders special interest group
- North Georgia Arts Council
- Southern Violin Association (SVA)
- Guild of American Luthiers (GAL)

## Noteworthy Shows and Design Competitions

- 2013 Guthman Musical Instrument Design Competition (semi-finalist, vying for the grand prize in April 2013)
- 2012 Guthman Musical Instrument Design Competition (semi-finalist)
- 2013 Fellowship of European Luthiers Electric Guitar Design Competition (contestant...judging in June 2013)
- IDEA (the IDSA International Design Excellence Award Competition)
- Musikmesse Frankfurt (exhibitor)

## Education

- Ph.D., Information & Decision Systems (Supporting Field: Human Factors)
- M.S., Planning & Policy Management
- B.A., Psychology

## Keywords

Music, Musical Instrument, Guitar, Violin, Fiddle, Mandolin, Bass, Electric, Music synthesizer, Electric, Acoustic