

orient one side of their brain to appreciate the acoustic sound of the Mojo as this one was set up—which, while very musical, might prove a tad analytical and monolithic for their tastes. Still, given its absence of weight, incredible playability, robust stability and tonal versatility, the Parker Fly Mojo is a uniquely flexible, expressive instrument that certainly merits a serious audition.

CHIP STERN

## JodyJazz ESP Mouthpieces

I have to admit that I have an addiction. No, not drugs or alcohol. I have an addiction to saxophone mouthpieces. Be they stock, custom, silver, gold, hard rubber, vintage, new—you name the mouthpiece, I have either owned it or tried it. But I know I'm not alone. If you're reading this, chances are you have the addiction as well.

Why are so many saxophonists afflicted with this problem? Because we want it all: projection, warmth, ease of play and ease of altissimo. For once it would be nice to find a mouthpiece that could adapt to the variety of styles I have to play.

With my pessimisms fully intact I tackled the new ESP line from JodyJazz mouthpieces. After playing these mouthpieces I think the name is perfect because JodyJazz read my mind as to what I have been looking for in a saxophone mouthpiece.

This mouthpiece design came about almost by accident. In a quest to improve the sound of his Runyon Custom model, JodyJazz owner Jody Espina went to fellow mouthpiece-maker Santy Runyon to further customize his mouthpiece. Next thing you know Espina had the guidance and support of the master mouthpiece-maker to create his own line.

JodyJazz offers a complete line of hard rubber and gold plated metal

mouthpieces. The ESP line is the top offering, with mouthpieces for soprano to baritone. Prices range from \$299 for the soprano to \$330 for the alto and \$350 for the tenor. (Prices for the baritone model have not been set yet.)

Each piece is machined from fine bar brass, taking three state-of-the-art CNC machines to create the shape of the mouthpiece. Additional work, including baffle and tip work, sanding, buffing and polishing is all done by hand. The mouthpieces have thin rails and a flawless, thin tip. Depth of sound comes from a long facing. Espina personally tests each mouthpiece before and after the heavy 24K gold-plating process. Once completed, each piece is matched with a Rovner ligature, cap, velvet bag and is custom-fitted with a removable plastic baffle. This feature comes from Espina's association with Santy Runyon. The device, patented by Runyon, is a removable plastic baffle and metal reed. When inserted into the mouthpiece it makes the sound brighter and more powerful without loss of control and pitch. I preferred the ESP without the baffle, but I could see how it would be useful to those who demand maximum projection and greater brightness.

I had the fortune to play the full line of mouthpieces including: soprano, alto, tenor (both the ESP and a brighter ESP-X) and a prototype baritone mouthpiece. From big band to funk to small jazz settings these mouthpieces were outstanding. They offered a centered sound but were flexible enough to obtain a variety of tone colors.

In a big-band setting the ESP alto performed like a champ. I have never liked the sound of a metal mouthpiece on alto. The sound has always been too bright for me. Not with the ESP. I had projection with excellent pitch control and complexity of sound. I used the tenor and baritone mouthpieces in a funk/rock band. Both allowed me to push the tonal boundaries without fear of distortion. In each en-



# GigBag

## Mackie Spike

The jump into computer-based recording shan't be such a daunting endeavor any longer thanks to Spike, Mackie's new USB recording system. Made up of a nominally sized, two-input hardware interface plus multitracking software and a host of plug-in effects, Spike can turn a computer into a studio right away. It's MIDI-equipped and the onboard mike preamps are in line with Mackie's high standards, but we admire its ease of use most of all. Operating a 4-track is more work than this. [mackie.com](http://mackie.com)



## Planet Waves Swivel XLR Cables

For the true techies: These microphone cables swivel at the cuff, from an in-line position to a right angle—in two directions. Sounds like a silly feature, but think about how many times your life was saved by a flexi-straw.



Spaces behind consoles, rack-mount recording gear and within a drum setup are often mighty tight and unaccommodating for the average, in-line XLR cable. The Swivels come in 10- and 25-foot lengths. [planet-waves.com](http://planet-waves.com)

## Zoom PS-04

People will believe you are just another all-business drone pecking away at a handheld computer, but in reality you are recording their conversations for future blackmail projects. Or maybe you'll use Zoom's tiny PS-04 Palmtop Recording Studio for music making. How virtuous of you. Belying its pocket-size, the digital 4-track includes a rack-full of effects, programmable drum and bass machines, a built-in condenser mike plus 1/4 and 1/8-inch jacks for input—and it runs on four AA batteries. Fantastic. And there's an optional belt-clip attachment available for showoffs. [samson-tech.com](http://samson-tech.com)





## Connolly Rosin

The jazz violinists are a neglected lot, but we know you're out there—with your horsehair and your cramped necks. So we'll hip you to Connolly & Co.'s new Dominant Rosin, a blend of fine natural resins and a wax described as "exotic," made for use only with synthetic core strings. It's soft and tacky, which, for a rosin, is a good thing. [connollyandco.com](http://connollyandco.com)



## Audio Technica Headphones

The cheapest way to score a pair of headphones is to book a flight on the company dime and swipe the ones they supply for the in-flight flick. But those are going to sound as bad as the movie they were made for. For those who demand higher quality sound, but who remain too hesitant to blow next month's rent on a set of cans, Audio Technica's ATH-M20s are for you. These modestly priced phones put out a balanced spectrum of sound, from deep bass to shining highs, that should suit most folks' needs—as well as the needs of project-studio engineers—just fine. And their padded headband rests on the dome more comfortably than any suck-airline set ever will. [audiotechnica.com](http://audiotechnica.com)



## Tascam CD-GT-1

If you're a little slow on the uptake when it comes to learning the licks of the masters, this one's for you. Tascam's CD-GT-1 is a phrase-trainer capable of slowing down a CD to as much as half its regular speed without lowering the music's pitch. You can cop lines at a snail's pace. A phono input lets you plug in order to play along and listen to your progress on headphones, but the input can also accommodate a microphone, a keyboard or anything else that terminates in a 1/4-inch plug. Tascam makes one especially for bass players, too. [tascam.com](http://tascam.com)



semble other players took note of my change of tone and complemented me my sound.

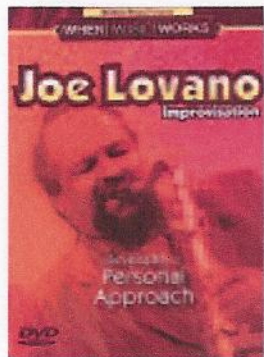
The soprano and baritone ESP models were the most fun to play. Using the soprano in big band and small group settings was a treat. I wasn't surprised that it offered excellent projection in a big band, but was really taken with the warmth and complexity of sound in a small jazz combo. It had beauty and softness when needed, projection and punch when called upon.

Playing the ESP baritone prototype was a real treat. Since I do a lot of baritone playing I was able to put this mouthpiece through the paces. It is

hands down by far the best baritone mouthpiece I have ever played!

For that matter, all the mouthpieces were excellent. It was nice to move from soprano to baritone with a sense of ease and familiarity. The tonal performance was everything a player could ask for and for the first time in my playing career I found merit in playing metal on soprano and alto. Additionally, one can look at these mouthpieces and know they are getting a mouthpiece that is not from the production mill but from real craftsmen. If you want to stop the insanity of the mouthpiece addiction, you owe it to yourself to try these mouthpieces out. **PAUL HAAR**

## Instructional DVDs



### JOE LOVANO Improvisation Berklee Press

Even if saxophone isn't your instrument, Joe Lovano still can teach you things about how to improvise on this hour-long DVD. This isn't about what to play but how to think about your own approach to playing. Lovano demonstrates what a good music teacher is by talking about what a musician can do to interpret melody, rhythm and harmony to facilitate his or her personal musical growth—and then he lets you hear what he's talking about by wailing away on his ax. Making you comfortable with the daunting role of the jazz improvisers seems to be Lovano's goal, and it's one he achieves. And no, he never takes off the hat. **RUSSELL CARLSON**



### BRUCE BUCKINGHAM 50 Licks Jazz Style Hal Leonard

Be careful with lessons like this, beginning guitarists. Bruce Buckingham, the disc's onscreen instructor, has a pleasant demeanor and means well by teaching you these 50 licks, lines and turnaround. The student who never strays from such tried-and-true phrases, however, will forever have that store-bought style. On the other hand, you do have to practice something, and if transcribing classic Barney Kessel runs on your own is more than you are able to do, this DVD lesson does give you something to work with. After all, it comes with a foldout sheet of tablature to guide you through all 50 licks, and Buckingham explains how each might be used in various contexts. Go ahead and learn these standard patterns—but please remember to forget them when you get on the bandstand. **RUSSELL CARLSON**