

JodyJazz Giant

'Stealth Metal' Tenor Saxophone Mouthpiece

When DownBeat contacted me to review the new Giant for tenor saxophone from JodyJazz, I asked what makes it different from the rest of the company's premium mouthpieces. I learned that it was made out of aluminum, which produces a darker tone than brass or steel. I was also informed that it was capable of producing a sound with characteristics of both metal and hard-rubber mouthpieces.

When I received the Giant a couple of days later and unpacked it, I thought a mistake had been made. The mouthpiece looked identical to the JodyJazz HR (hard-rubber) model, except when I held it, it felt twice as heavy. Without any closer inspection, I threw it on my tenor, slapped a reed on it, and the experience immediately became very interesting.

The feel in my mouth was comfortable and familiar right away—not a big surprise considering I've been playing hard-rubber mouthpieces most of my life. But once I got blowing on it, a number of unexpected things occurred.

The tone was very focused and with a little push sounded like an incredibly good metal Otto Link. When I relaxed my air column a bit, it began to sound more like a hard-rubber piece. Initially, I played on it for 10 minutes and rapidly became more comfortable with it. I picked it up again a while later and dug it even more. These short episodes continued throughout the day until it became evident that this was one bad-ass mouthpiece.

The range of sounds the Giant can produce is remarkable. Play it hard, and the tone is extremely centered and focused. But it is also easy to produce a beautiful, lush sound that stays even all the way up and down the horn.

Each JodyJazz Giant mouthpiece is machined from an aluminum billet then hard-anodized and finished in black matte, giving it a very cool "stealth metal" look. Although it shares the same outer dimensions with the JodyJazz HR, the Giant has a bigger chamber and slightly more resistance. It is available in 6* (.095"), 7* (.105"),

the size tested here), 8 (.110") and 8* (.115") tip openings.

I played the Giant on a variety of gigs: a straightahead drummer-less trio, a Latin jazz quintet and a couple of extremely loud rock/r&b jobs. The Giant was absolutely stellar on the jazz gigs and held up quite well on the loud stuff considering it is not a "paint peeler." When played hard, it had a centered sound that packed plenty of punch but without the "shriek" factor.

I also had a chance to use the Giant on a solo overdub recording session with awesome results. Once again, the sound of this mouthpiece just knocked me out. The response and tone were even in all registers, and articulation was nice and clean. And that's not all: The altissimo range absolutely killed.

All in all, I had a total gas playing the JodyJazz Giant tenor mouthpiece. It's a truly unique product, combining elements of both hard-rubber and metal pieces in a way that could appeal to players of either camp. The machining is beautifully done, and the stealthy look is way cool.

At \$350, it's definitely more affordable than a lot of metal pieces out there today. But most of all, it plays like crazy. Whether you prefer hard-rubber or metal, check out the Giant—there really is nothing else quite like it out there.

—Steve Eisen



Ordering info: jodyjazz.com