

JodyJazz Saxophone & Clarinet Mouthpieces

Saxophonist Jody Espina's line of saxophone mouthpieces, appropriately named "JodyJazz," has been steadily making its mark on the saxophone world since the company's inception in 2000 and there are several very good reasons as to why this is. To use a baseball analogy, Jody's mouthpieces cover all of the bases and consistently hit home runs. Jody Espina is a working professional musician (and an excellent saxophonist I might add) who has created products that he himself uses on the job. It is obvious from playing Jody's mouthpieces that he has a very high standard for quality and perfection, and that he has a keen sense of both the practical and artistic needs of today's professional and amateur saxophonist.

Jody, who was mentored by the late Santy Runyon, first created the JodyJazz Classic line of mouthpieces in the Spring of 2000. The Classic line, which is injection molded from a combination of high quality plastic and 30% (hard) synthetic rubber, was Jody's first foray into the creation of saxophone mouthpieces. The defining feature of these, and many of Jody's mouthpieces is what's called a "spoiler", which basically is a removable wedge inside the chamber that acts as a secondary vibrating reed. The spoiler adds a touch more edge and brightness that is extremely useful in situations where being heard is a priority. Amazingly enough, the spoiler enhances the sound without adding shrillness. All of the overtones remain in tact and one is able to play subtone and full volume throughout the registers. When playing these mouthpieces, the altissimo register is crisp and clear. This is a great all-around mouthpiece for the saxophonist that works in a variety of situations. I have found that my students really like the free-blowing qualities of the JodyJazz Classic mouthpiece.

The ESP line of 24kt gold plated metal mouthpieces, which was named by Jody for its seemingly extra sensory ability to perceive the needs of the player, has been getting rave reviews for many of New York's top session and Broadway players, as well as from the jazzers. The ESP mouthpiece line is available for alto, soprano, tenor, and baritone saxophone. These mouthpieces, which also include the spoiler, were designed by Jody from scratch and continuously perfected throughout the course of one year before being made

available to the public. I really like these mouthpieces for their versatility as well. It has a rich, warm dark tone with just the right amount of brightness that packs a lot of projection power when needed. I have used the ESP mouthpieces on soft jazz restaurant gigs, high-powered shows, recording sessions, and screaming pop gigs, and I am always impressed at how incredibly well it performs in all of these different musical situations. Baritone sax players should really check out the ESP bari mouthpiece. It packs a punch without losing the harmonic range, and really brings the sound of the baritone saxophone to life.

The newest addition to the JodyJazz inventory is a line of hard rubber mouthpieces (JodyJazz HR) that are comparable to hard rubber Meyers and Otto Links. I tried both the alto and tenor mouthpieces and found them both to have a clear sound, good solid intonation, great dynamic range, and room for a lot of self-expression. These mouthpieces, which are hand faced (poured), as are all JodyJazz mouthpieces, have a round chamber with no baffle and do not use a spoiler. I must mention that Jody personally tries and tweaks (if necessary) every mouthpiece before it is sold. Fans of Meyer alto

mouthpieces and tenor Otto Link mouthpieces should definitely check out this line.

The most exciting news from JodyJazz is a soon to be released line of metal tenor mouthpieces that are precision crafted using the latest digital proprietary facing technology. The computerized production guarantees a high degree of accuracy. In a nutshell, Jody has developed some kind of secret chamber design that will blow other tenor mouthpieces out of the water—no joke. I say secret, because at the time I tried them, he wouldn't let me look inside of the mouthpiece. I played several of these new tenor mouthpieces and they have just the right amount of brightness for the modern saxophonist as well as super projection power, without sacrificing warmth and dynamic range. I will be first in line when these mouthpieces become available, which should be around the time this review is published. To explore the full line of JodyJazz products, including a line of clarinet mouthpieces, visit www.jodyjazz.com.

— LauraDreyer

