



// Instrument News & Reviews

David Gallant and Mike Flynn check out the latest instrument and technology launches

Jody Jazz Jet Baritone Sax Mouthpiece

We had already tested the Jet tenor in the July 2015 issue of *Jazzwise* and were so impressed by the playability of the product that we promptly purchased it as our new 'benchmark' tenor mouthpiece. So, when the baritone Jet arrived on the test bench, we were understandably intrigued and excited about how the 'bigger brother' would match up to the smaller sibling. Like the tenor, the baritone Jet is manufactured using Jody Jazz's proprietary polycarbonate alloy, which not only allows for super fine tolerances, but also offers an outer surface that is silky smooth to the touch. It's vented rubberised cap just adds a certain style and class to its appeal. We also think that the Rico 'H' ligature is the Jet's perfect partner.

Given that the house baritone was in the process of getting a new set of pads, we borrowed a silver-plated low A Elkhart for this particular test – and what a beauty it was!

The baritone Jet immediately reminded us of what we liked so much about the Jet tenor – the well-centred warm, rich tone. And like its stablemate, the baritone Jet is very free blowing, has spot

on intonation and wows us with the ease with which you're able to manipulate the sound. The altissimo is a dream and surprise, surprise, this mouthpiece plays just as easily in the bottom register! Needless to say, if you're a baritone player, we suggest

that you give the Jet a blow. We can all but guarantee that you won't be disappointed!

www.jodyjazz.com



Casio GP-400BK Celviano Hybrid Piano

Launched at the 2016 Frankfurt Musik Messe trade show, the GP-400BK is the latest model in

Casio's Celviano Grand Hybrid range. Like its predecessors, the GP-500BP and the GP-300BK, it comes equipped with the same AiR Grand Sound Source, a feature jointly developed with world renowned piano makers C. Bechstein. Indeed, Casio have fastidiously recreated the details and mechanisms of the acoustic grand piano with keys made from high-quality spruce, fashioned in the same manner as traditional grand piano keys and what they've called the Grand Hammer Action Keyboard, a faithful reproduction of the action mechanisms and the hammer movements of the traditional acoustic grand. Equally, the height from the keyboard to the

music stand has also been made the same as a conventional grand piano. Not a great deal bigger than a standard house-bound electric piano, the 400BK is a truly remarkable instrument. The weighted keyboard has all the feel of the conventional grand, responding to the touch in exactly the same way as its acoustic sister. Then there's the sound. In collaboration with Bechstein, Casio have sampled a trio of great European pianos to offer the player the choice of three very individual and unique sonic characters, each of which has been enhanced by Casio's String Resonance System. The Berlin Grand is known for its elegant clear and expansive sound that gives each performance a rich and melodic colour, while the Hamburg Grand delivers plenty of power and strength together with a lot of string resonance. The Vienna Grand, on the other hand, offers a soft bass, but with a solid feeling along with a beautiful and velvety middle and top range.

Like any Casio piano, electronic sound-modelling plays a major role in enhancing the playing experience, and there are plenty of options available with the 400BK. 'Concert Play' gives the player the feeling of accompanying an orchestra, while the 'Hall Simulator' enables "the pianist to enjoy the immersive sound found in different types of venues". Players can create and save their own presets. There are, of course, also the standard connections for midi in/out, USB flash drive and USB to host.

The 400BK is fitted with six speakers that have been carefully positioned to create sound pathways which, it is said, faithfully represent the sound of a grand piano as it emanates from above and below the soundboard. In their own words: "The system delivers three-dimensional sound with tonal elongation, expansion and depth." Interestingly, we found ourselves preferring the overall sound that came directly from a set of quality headphones that, like any electric instrument, can be plugged into the sound system to circumvent the speakers.

www.grand-hybrid.com/uk



MONO Vertigo Bass Case and Producer Case

Whether it's bundling things into the boot or backseat of your car or braving the perils and perspiration of public transport, having high-grade cases and bags for your beloved gear is an absolute must. Hence bag specialists MONO have just about every instrument covered – with the two examples reviewed here part of extended bass, guitar, keyboard, cymbal and snare case ranges – they even do some nifty laptop cases and rucksacks too. The Vertigo bass bag lives up to its name with the bass sliding snugly into the case sideways with the case held upright. The instrument's neck is then held reassuringly in position via MONO's patented 'Headlock' – a black, plush-finished moulded support positioned halfway down the soft-lined interior. The innovative tractor-tyre style reinforced base on the bag's bottom end, aptly dubbed 'The Boot', will absorb any shocks *en route* to your gig. The Producer bag is a similar blend of cool urban styling and robust practicality, with four exterior pockets big enough to take two floor pedals apiece, along with enough room inside for a 17-inch MacBook Pro, MIDI controller, headphones and, hey, even sheet music! All of which is protected in MONO's military grade materials that include steel-riveted handles, high-density padding and waterproof outer shell. A little bigger than some gear bags, the Producer's foam-padded shoulder strap ensures balanced weight distribution even when it's stuffed full and, just like the Vertigo bass bag, is extremely comfortable on the shoulders. This is stylish gear with a serious practical edge. (MF)

www.monocreators.com

