

# Music Trades

DECEMBER 2016

## Jody Jazz

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to U.S.-made mouthpiece line**



# JODY JAZZ

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Jody "Jazz" Espina in his advanced manufacturing facility in Savannah, Georgia, where all of his mouthpieces are crafted.

**BEFORE HE STARTED** designing saxophone mouthpieces, Jody Espina had played more than a few of them himself. A 1983 graduate of the Berklee College of Music, Espina went on to tour with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and teach in Barcelona before settling in New York City as a performer, recording artist, and educator. Between playing in Broadway pit orchestras and teaching, he took an interest in the power of the mouthpiece to refine a professional's sound or shape a student's development. It didn't become his career, however, until he got to know Santy Runyon in 1999. An eminent sax artist and mouthpiece maker, Runyon made Espina a customized mouthpiece that he fell in love with—sparking the attention of other sax players who wanted one of their own. With Runyon's blessing, and using his Louisiana factory, Espina spun off that first "JodyJazz" mouthpiece into an original product line, traveling the world to promote it. By 2008, when JodyJazz opened its own factory in Savannah, Georgia, it was already an established mouthpiece of choice for sax players everywhere. In 2011 the growing company moved to a new Savannah location, and in 2015 completed an expansion that tripled its square footage: incorporating state-of-the-art

CNC machines and a sleek showroom while bringing the entire operation in-house. From raw materials all the way to the finished product, it can truly be said that JodyJazz makes every mouthpiece



Every JodyJazz mouthpiece is made from scratch, from the raw material to the finished product, with a blend of precision automation and skilled handwork.

from scratch.

"From day one we have gauged and play-tested each mouthpiece we make—which separated us from many of our competitors and helped us to gain a great reputation early on," Espina says.

"Everything we do is so our customers can realize their musical dreams and goals. We want our mouthpiece to be the best mouthpiece they will ever play."

Toward that end, every JodyJazz mouthpiece starts with a blank, a round bar of material that's turned on a lathe to make the bore and the basic cylindrical shape of the mouthpiece. While many mouthpiece makers order their blanks pre-made, JodyJazz's are made on-site. From there, CNC machines are used to refine the mouthpiece to nearly its final form. Last, expert handwork goes into each mouthpiece "to make it truly sing," Espina says.

To date, the JodyJazz process has yielded six distinct mouthpiece series, each with its own tonal character. The hard-rubber HR\* (pronounced "HR star") is its all-purpose go-to mouthpiece with its medium chamber, warm sound, and versatility across genres from traditional jazz to big band to bebop. In its JET series, JodyJazz tackled the altissimo register, combining easy-playing high notes with a bright yet versatile tone that's a good match for rock, funk, blues, and Latin styles. A concept JodyJazz calls "stealth metal" led to its GIANT series, which combines the outside shape and look of a hard rubber mouthpiece with the precision of aerospace-grade Hard-anodized aluminum. Characterized by its dark, full sound with strong projection and cut, it's recommended for straight-ahead jazz, big band, and rock. As for the three remaining mouthpiece series, all are variations on JodyJazz's "DV" design—DV as in Da Vinci. Using proportions based on the Renaissance genius's concept of the Golden Mean, the original DV mouthpiece in 24-karat gold-plated metal is known for its unusually full tone as well as its free-blowing nature and its power. From there, JodyJazz has spun off the DV NY and the DV CHI. With its darker tone and deeper chamber, the DV NY yields a classic sound reminiscent of the great jazz artists of the '50s and '60s. The silver-plated CHI version, designed for the fullest possible sound, has a character that's darker than the original DV but brighter and more modern than the NY version.

"We have designated 'benchmark' mouthpieces for every model in each series," Espina adds. "These are what I con-



# SCHOOL MUSIC DEALERS



"I teach my employees to embody the principles of excellent service, craftsmanship and attention to detail each day. It's about delivering quality so the musician can deliver a quality performance, which is why we are a proud retailer of a true standard-bearer, JodyJazz Mouthpieces."

**Rick Verfaillie**  
Rick's Musical Instruments Inc.  
Cumberland, RI



"We love the fact that JodyJazz really cares about brick and mortar stores. The mouthpieces sell themselves, and it's nice to have a product that turns so much we don't have to dust it."

**Cris Behrens**  
Summerhays Music Center  
Murray, UT



"JodyJazz has been a favorite for many of our middle school and high school students, as well as professional and collegiate musicians, in our area for many years. The clarity of sound, intonation, projection and control is awesome. We are very happy with JodyJazz mouthpieces and their staff."

**Jimmy Oliver**  
Oliver Music  
El Paso, TX



"I have had very good success moving JodyJazz mouthpieces. They offer good margins and are willing to help market through clinics for students and customers, which drives traffic to the store. It's a no brainer to pick up the line. Customers come in for the mouthpiece and walk out with a horn."

**John Jarvis**  
Music Man Inc.  
West Palm Beach, FL



"We love how each student and player can find a JodyJazz mouthpiece that truly helps their unique sound. From middle school students to professionals, the mouthpieces are responsive and the unique models allow each person to play with confidence."

**Joel Hoekstra**  
Meyer Music  
Grand Rapids, MI

School Music Dealers  
Best Sellers  
HR\* and JET Series



## HR\* Series

This Hard Rubber Sax Mouthpiece features a round, medium size chamber and produces a beautiful warm sound with free blowing ease. Suited for Traditional Jazz, Big Band, Straight-Ahead and Bebop, but also has enough power for more modern styles. A favorite of band directors for its ability to blend in with a section.



## JET Series

Brighter, with more power and clarity than the HR\* Series, the JET has a clean focused sound with excellent projection, extra easy altissimo register and yet can be played with a warm versatile feel. The JET is a free blowing, easy and fun to play Sax Mouthpiece that captures the full range of instrument.

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sider to be the very best piece I have ever made in that series, and we use them as the standard when testing the mouthpieces coming through production. I am somewhat obsessively committed to ensuring that we deliver the ‘benchmark’ sound to everyone.”

Today, JodyJazz mouthpieces are played by such artists as George Garzone, Jeff Coffin, Tom Scott, and Andy Snitzer. A new generation of educators

has also in welcomed them into the classroom. In response, Espina plans to expand his concert band and clarinet offerings while building on outreach efforts into schools. “Professionals should have the best equipment that they can get,” he says, “but we think it’s just as important for students to have great playing mouthpieces so they can make the most progress and not be hindered by a poor-performing mouthpiece.”

All told, JodyJazz sales have gone up 5-10% per year for the past several years running. It’s pushed into every major market in Europe, Asia, Australia, and North and South America. “The markets in Asia are growing exponentially,” Espina says. “The China market especially has exploded and is second now only to the USA. We see great opportunity across the globe.”

[www.jodyjazz.com](http://www.jodyjazz.com)