



// Instrument News & Reviews

David Gallant checks out the latest musical instrument and technology launches

Jody Jazz Super Jet Tenor Mouthpiece

Expectations are always high with Jody Jazz mouthpieces and they rarely, if ever, disappoint. The Super Jet Tenor is no exception. Beautifully made and finished, this mouthpiece is about as free blowing as it gets. It has a terrific conversion to power and volume for very little effort, plus a full dynamic range in all quarters. Once tamed however, pianissimo is a breeze and those low sub-tones are all in there, rich and resonant. Altissimo was a revelation: we can't remember having a mouthpiece for test that reached the heights with such sweetness and ease. We repeatedly switched from a standard ligature to a Jody Jazz Power Ring and found that we would probably use the former for performing rock and soul, while the Jody Jazz Power Ring would excel for all other genres. Needless to say, the Super Jet, its Power Ring and velveteen slip purse have found their way into the Jazzwise kit bag. www.jodyjazz.com

Trevor James SR Evo Alto Sax

The new SR Evo series of saxes from Trevor James is the latest in their ongoing quest to develop and produce the ultimate instrument for those players wishing to upgrade from their starter horns. Like all Trevor James instruments, the SR Evo Alto has been designed in the UK before being built in Trevor James' own factory in Taiwan. It is then set-up and finished in the UK. Solidly built with exceptional finishing, it comes in gold lacquer and has a larger than standard body bore, which incorporates a strengthened crook receiver and what seems like a slightly relaxed neck. The keyword has been redesigned to be more rounded and we particularly liked the large concave metal thumb rest. The overall action is very positive under the mother of pearl finger-pieces, with the Italian leather pads sitting tight and fitting well behind metal reflectors. The dished bottom table key is very smooth and easy to play through, as are the ergonomically positioned palm keys. Using a Rousseau ebonite mouthpiece set with a Vandoren 2.5 Java reed, it was immediately apparent that this horn has a smooth, full and centred tone, with a good spread across all registers and a very impressive dynamic range. The altissimo was particularly sweet and extremely easy to reach, while the lower register produced

a very soft, yet clear response. Shipped in a semi-solid denier covered sax-shaped case, with a moulded plush-lined closed-cell foam interior, including a neck and a mouthpiece pocket, there is a three-quarter length zip, grab handles to the head and side, hard rubber feet, a back harness and large zippered score pocket to the front face. The SR Evo is the perfect upgrade for a player wishing to graduate from their 'starter' instrument. At just a whisker under £900, it would seem like money well spent.

www.tjsaxes.co.uk

Radioshop ID Evolution Stratocaster Pickups

For the electric guitarist, switching from an instrument loaded with single-coil pickups to one loaded with humbuckers midway through a performance requires not only volume adjustment, but also having to potentially alter EQ settings. The problem is, that humbucking pickups are inherently much more powerful than their single-coil cousins. The boutique pickup manufacturer Radioshop has sought to address this problem and have come up with the ID Evolution Stratocaster pickup (there is also a Telecaster set). ID stands for 'increased

dynamics' and this new pickup delivers vintage humbucker output and drive while still retaining that bell-like Stratocaster tone. Though they appear the same as regular Stratocaster pole-pieces from above and fit into standard 52mm spaced pickup covers, the Alnico V magnets have been subtly increased in both diameter and height. The copper winds have also been increased, boosting output to a more vintage humbucker style 7.2k Neck and Middle and 7.8k Bridge, but with none of the usual darkening of tone thanks to the increased magnetic response of the pickup. Wax potting has also been reduced, with only the outer winds being so treated to protect from microphonic feedback, while the inner core of copper winds is left un-potted, giving players 'increased dynamics' off the strings and boosting the tonal clarity. This is particularly useful for finger-style players who, until now, have struggled to get power and clarity into their playing over single coils. We took delivery of Radioshop's latest offering, a full Stratocaster set mounted in a pickguard and ready for installation, bar some soldering. Once we had removed the original pickguard and pickups on a rather road worn 1980s model, the new unit slipped into place with surprising ease. It was like giving the old beast a new lease of life! The tone and clarity that came out of the house Yerasov GTA15 with its Jensen 10-inch speaker was to die for. With a retail price of £272, we can only recommend that if you are a single coil Strat or Tele player you give these pickups a try. You won't be disappointed.

www.radioshoppickups.com

