

orient one side of their brain to appreciate the acoustic sound of the Mojo as this one was set up—which, while very musical, might prove a tad analytical and monolithic for their tastes. Still, given its absence of weight, incredible playability, robust stability and tonal versatility, the Parker Fly Mojo is a uniquely flexible, expressive instrument that certainly merits a serious audition.

CHIP STERN

JodyJazz ESP Mouthpieces

I have to admit that I have an addiction. No, not drugs or alcohol. I have an addiction to saxophone mouthpieces. Be they stock, custom, silver, gold, hard rubber, vintage, new—you name the mouthpiece, I have either owned it or tried it. But I know I'm not alone. If you're reading this, chances are you have the addiction as well.

Why are so many saxophonists afflicted with this problem? Because we want it all: projection, warmth, ease of play and ease of altissimo. For once it would be nice to find a mouthpiece that could adapt to the variety of styles I have to play.

With my pessimisms fully intact I tackled the new ESP line from JodyJazz mouthpieces. After playing these mouthpieces I think the name is perfect because JodyJazz read my mind as to what I have been looking for in a saxophone mouthpiece.

This mouthpiece design came about almost by accident. In a quest to improve the sound of his Runyon Custom model, JodyJazz owner Jody Espina went to fellow mouthpiece-maker Santy Runyon to further customize his mouthpiece. Next thing you know Espina had the guidance and support of the master mouthpiece-maker to create his own line.

JodyJazz offers a complete line of hard rubber and gold plated metal

mouthpieces. The ESP line is the top offering, with mouthpieces for soprano to baritone. Prices range from \$299 for the soprano to \$330 for the alto and \$350 for the tenor. (Prices for the baritone model have not been set yet.)

Each piece is machined from fine bar brass, taking three state-of-the-art CNC machines to create the shape of the mouthpiece. Additional work, including baffle and tip work, sanding, buffing and polishing is all done by hand. The mouthpieces have thin rails and a flawless, thin tip. Depth of sound comes from a long facing. Espina personally tests each mouthpiece before and after the heavy 24K gold-plating process. Once completed, each piece is matched with a Rovner ligature, cap, velvet bag and is custom-fitted with a removable plastic baffle. This feature comes from Espina's association with Santy Runyon. The device, patented by Runyon, is a removable plastic baffle and metal reed. When inserted into the mouthpiece it makes the sound brighter and more powerful without loss of control and pitch. I preferred the ESP without the baffle, but I could see how it would be useful to those who demand maximum projection and greater brightness.

I had the fortune to play the full line of mouthpieces including: soprano, alto, tenor (both the ESP and a brighter ESP-X) and a prototype baritone mouthpiece. From big band to funk to small jazz settings these mouthpieces were outstanding. They offered a centered sound but were flexible enough to obtain a variety of tone colors.

In a big-band setting the ESP alto performed like a champ. I have never liked the sound of a metal mouthpiece on alto. The sound has always been too bright for me. Not with the ESP. I had projection with excellent pitch control and complexity of sound. I used the tenor and baritone mouthpieces in a funk/rock band. Both allowed me to push the tonal boundaries without fear of distortion. In each en-



GigBag

Mackie Spike

The jump into computer-based recording shan't be such a daunting endeavor any longer thanks to Spike, Mackie's new USB recording system. Made up of a nominally sized, two-input hardware interface plus multitracking software and a host of plug-in effects, Spike can turn a computer into a studio right away. It's MIDI-equipped and the onboard mike preamps are in line with Mackie's high standards, but we admire its ease of use most of all. Operating a 4-track is more work than this. mackie.com



Planet Waves Swivel XLR Cables

For the true techies: These microphone cables swivel at the cuff, from an in-line position to a right angle—in two directions. Sounds like a silly feature, but think about how many times your life was saved by a flexi-straw.



Spaces behind consoles, rack-mount recording gear and within a drum setup are often mighty tight and unaccommodating for the average, in-line XLR cable. The Swivels come in 10- and 25-foot lengths. planet-waves.com

Zoom PS-04

People will believe you are just another all-business drone pecking away at a handheld computer, but in reality you are recording their conversations for future blackmail projects. Or maybe you'll use Zoom's tiny PS-04 Palmtop Recording Studio for music making. How virtuous of you. Belying its pocket-size, the digital 4-track includes a rack-full of effects, programmable drum and bass machines, a built-in condenser mike plus 1/4 and 1/8-inch jacks for input—and it runs on four AA batteries. Fantastic. And there's an optional belt-clip attachment available for showoffs. samson-tech.com

