



// Instrument News & Reviews

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

Kef Q100 speakers

This is the eighth generation of KEF's hugely successful Q Series traditional box hi fi loudspeakers and comes with a quantum leap in performance due in no small part to the fact that for this particular range, the design team has worked from a "clean sheet" base and incorporated technologies that were originally developed for the groundbreaking Concept Blade loudspeaker. At the heart of the all-new model KEF Q Series is the very latest Uni-Q driver array, which is derived directly from the Concept Blade product. This embraces a new, larger, high performance vented tweeter mounted at the acoustic centre of a new resonance damped, metal cone LF/MF Driver and gives the new range the sonic capability of much more expensive speakers. Like the Uni-Q array, the new Q Series advanced bass driver is a tour de force in its own right. A die-cast aluminium chassis rigidly locates the high efficiency vented magnet assembly to prevent unwanted resonance, and the large (50mm) voice coil ensures impressive power handling and output levels. But do these speakers really deliver? The short answer: yes. They have an extraordinary right-there live sound that really cuts through – you can hear that hi-hat, the ping on the ride and there's a real tone to the bass. With exceptional separation, the Q100s seem to be balanced more towards the treble and mid-range, which makes them great for vocals. Putting on a couple of old Chess vinyl albums, the only thing missing was the dim lights and the thick smoke. For more go to www.kef.com



Ortega D3C-5

Ortega D3C-5 deep five-string acoustic bass guitar

Whether you consider an acoustic bass guitar a necessity, a luxury or a curiosity there's now no need to spend a fortune to acquire a high quality pro-level model. Indeed it's the combination of fine workmanship and a price tag of £600 that distinguishes the sumptuous looking German made Ortega basses, available in a variety of finishes from the classic blonde spruce topped, flamed-mahogany bodied KTSM-5 model, high gloss black finish version in the D1 series, or the stunning golden brown Dao wood and mahogany of our D3C-5 review bass. Indeed, there's no doubting the wow factor when pulling this beauty from the accompanying padded snug-fitting Ortega gig bag, that also comes complete with comfortable leather strap, security strap locks and a handy allen key. All of which adds up to a thoughtfully produced package that Ortega should be proud of. Good looks are one thing but this bass also scores highly on playability and sound as well. The long scale neck has a 22-fret rosewood fret board, with the high gloss finish on the back of the neck enabling easy mobility across the full tonal range. The discreetly embedded Fishman Isys+

pickup system includes bass and treble controls and a handy inbuilt tuner, all configured on the compact control panel that's conveniently positioned on top of the bass' upper body curve for easy access while playing. The electronics produce a wide range of resonant tones from deep yet punchy bass notes to clear guitaristic sounds for chords or melodies. The stylish Florentine-style cutaway allows for greater access to the upper register and when strapped on the bass is wonderfully comfortable and lightweight. The Ortega website features a video of these instruments getting the full hand-crafted treatment and it's Ortega's attention to detail and elegant styling that's produced one of the best looking, most playable and rich-sounding acoustic bass guitars we've ever seen. (MF) For more go to www.ortegaguitars.com/en/products/acoustic-basses



Ahead AR5012 Armour drum cases

Ahead AR5012 Armour drum cases

As any drummer will tell you, standard circular drum cases can be a pain, particularly when you've just finished a gig, you're dog tired and trying to get your kit packed up in reasonable time to get on the road and hopefully get some kip. The American Ahead company has clearly been out there talking to gigging musicians to find out what's their ideal semi-rigid drum case and it isn't circular! When you're

talking toms there's the mounting hardware to consider, so they've come up with a teardrop design along with an ingenious zip configuration that by way of a cutout, allows full access to the case, where the head of the case acts as a hinge. This also allows you to get your hand into the case so that the drum can be easily removed or placed back into the unit. Made from twin layer DX-Core high impact foam padding for both protection and stiffness, with a weatherproof nylon denier cover, premium grade Sherpa fleece lining and a patented heavy duty nylon DynaZip, the Armour cases are not dissimilar to another well known brand that is currently the market leader. With a padded grab handle and a rather fetching rubberised logo, we reckon they're worth your attention.

For more go to www.brddistribution.co.uk

Odyssey Premiere Reeds woodwind reeds

Odyssey has just released the Premiere Reed series to complement their recently launched Premiere series of woodwind instruments. Crafted from the finest French cane by one of the world's leading reed manufacturer's (on which we're still laying bets!), these reeds have a balance, timbre and response that is really impressive and a texture that would seem to indicate longevity. No doubt cheaper than the branded product, they cover clarinet, alto sax and tenor sax and range in strength from 1.5 to 2.5.

For more go to www.jhs.co.uk

Meinl Byzance series Sand Ride cymbals

Yet another striking cymbal from Meinl's Byzance series, the 20-inch Benny Greb signature Sand Ride cymbal is handmade in Turkey and finished in Germany. Greb comments that he was trying to produce the sound qualities of the bell of a heavy cymbal alongside the vintage stick definition of a light cymbal in one model, and in this he's clearly succeeded. With a sandblasted top and a raw mostly unlathed bottom the Sand Ride has a beautiful Latin bell and crystal clear stick definition. *Jazzwise* tested the ride in a 20-piece big band setting where it more than held its own – its light wash performing with clarity across all volume levels. It has a great crash sound if needed and with the perfect combination of a clear bell and the ability to be crashed, this ride could cover any situation.

For more go to www.activemusic.co.uk

Meinl Byzance series Sand Ride cymbals

