

# Instrument News & Reviews

David Gallant checks out the latest musical instruments and technology

## Fibonacci 'The Londoner' Archtop Guitar

Archtop guitar manufacturer Fibonacci recently launched The Londoner, born out of a collaboration with British jazz guitarist Nigel Price. Boasting a Venetian cutaway body in bister sunburst nitrocellulose, it features a hand-carved solid flame maple top and three-ply laminate flame maple back and rims. Its 'thin line' profile offers 2" rims, while the lower bout is a sizeable 17". The flame maple set-neck is a 'one piece' neck/headstock design constructed in three sections, with the centre section rotated to add strength. Atop the neck is an ebony fingerboard with 22 stainless-steel medium jumbo frets and mother-of-pearl block position markers. The bone nut sports a generous 44.5mm width, while above (on the face of the headstock), the gold foil Fibonacci name and Price's signature are tastefully displayed. The encased SG310 gold Gotoh tuners have solid turned ebony buttons. All the bindings are in solid maple, including those around the 'f' holes, while the pickguard and floating bridge are in solid ebony. The tone and volume controls are, for some reason, turned in African blackwood, while the floating bridge has a fully adjustable tune-o-matic saddle section with strings

retained in a caste gold 'lyre' tailpiece. A Jon Dickinson 'Big Ben' PAF floating humbucker and a 'series to parallel' switch complete the picture.

In practice, the 2" rims make this guitar very comfortable to play. And the slim, shallow C-profile neck just adds to the pleasure: it's smooth and fast with the upper reaches easily accessible. The slightly wider than normal (for a jazz guitar) nut width, makes fingering at the head

of the instrument that much easier (*Steady on! - Ed*) – particularly for those with oversize digits! Naturally bright, due to the all-maple construction, The Londoner has excellent note separation, while the tone is crystal clear and clean, particularly at the bottom, where there is no muddiness whatsoever. A full five stars go to Jon Dickinson for his 'Big Ben' floating PAF humbucker pickup, which really helps bring out and enhance the guitar's natural acoustic qualities, while also adding sonic depth and rich tonal character. Interestingly, there is more of an 'electric' sound coming out of this pickup than you would normally expect to hear from a 'floater'. We

suspect that this is down to the pickup windings being in both series and parallel, but also perhaps due to some judicious 'overwinding'. Whatever the intricacies of the wiring, the Big Ben makes this instrument sing!

This archtop can undoubtedly compete with the best of them. At £3,499 it may not be the cheapest, but you'll be hard pressed to find an instrument that has both the musicality and character of The Londoner.

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



## Morgan 'Excalibur' Tenor & Alto Mouthpieces

This American saxophone and clarinet mouthpiece manufacturer has a proud heritage. It was initially founded in 1980 by Ralph Morgan, after he had retired from his position as the chief woodwind designer at the Selmer factory. Like the Selmer mouthpieces of old, the Morgan model comes in hard rubber, with each one expertly hand finished. We took delivery of the latest design to come off the production line, the Excalibur, in both its alto and tenor forms.

Both were comfortable and free-blowing, though, as you might expect, there were some obvious differences between the pair in tone and sound quality. The alto produced a sweet, warm sound and articulated well. The mid-range was very positive, though it became a little edgy at the top. However, it was particularly good in the altissimo. The tenor (which we preferred), like the alto, articulated well and produced a good solid, rounded overall sound with a full tone. It was particularly impressive in the lower reaches.

Like their well-respected predecessors, both of these mouthpieces have the qualities to shine in almost any musical scenario, be it big band, lounge jazz or just plain pop. As an aside, we should just mention that, compared to many mouthpiece caps (often seen as an afterthought), the supplied cap on both models fits the mouthpiece perfectly with the ligature and reed in place.

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



## Isoacoustics Stage One Board

Canadian company Isoacoustics have recently launched the Stage One board, designed to be used in conjunction with their ground-breaking Stage One isolators. The latter, sold in boxes of four, offer an isolation solution for speakers and amp/cabs that all but eliminates the vibrational variables from a performance environment by fully decoupling the speaker/amp cab from the performance stage. This all works fine, but there is a downside. The



isolators have to be screwed into the baseplate of the individual speaker/amp cab, making it a costly exercise to fit a set to each and every unit.

Enter the Stage One isolation board. Made from ABS Thermoplastic polymer, it measures up at 25" x 10" x 0.8" (63.5cm x 25.4cm x 2cm) and can accommodate a speaker/amp cab up to 90kg in weight. Instead of the four isolation

feet being fitted to the baseplate of a cab, they screw fit into the base of the board, providing an easily portable isolation platform.

Coming in at £39.99 for the board and £129.99 for the set of four isolators it might, on the face of it, seem like an expensive indulgence. But, with the advantage of unparalleled sonic consistency from venue to venue, it is undoubtedly money well spent for the busy touring musician.

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