



// Instrument News & Reviews

David Gallant checks out the latest jazz-related instrument and music technology launches



Mooer Slow Engine compact digital effects pedal

Mooer have been steadily making a name for themselves in the digital effects field. Their micro series measures a cool 93.5mm x 38mm x 49.5mm and weighs in at just 160gms – and that's with a full metal jacket! Granted, the unit doesn't come with its own battery supply and has to be powered up by an external nine-volt unit, but these are pretty impressive credentials. And as if this wasn't enough, these micro units really take some beating when it comes to sound quality – this may be digital, but we reckon it's about as close as you'll get to analogue. A true bypass unit, the 'Slow Engine' – essentially an auto swell pedal – simulates the effect of a bowed instrument and comes with a small 'sense' knob to adjust the sensitivity of the effect together with a larger 'chicken head' attack knob to adjust the speed of attack. There is also a solid workmanlike on/off switch. Plugging in the house Fender, it took a few moments to find a combination on the sensitivity and attack modes that we were happy with, but when we'd found that sweet spot – you've got a violin on steroids! A similar effect can of



course be achieved with the E-Bow, but this is a battery operated hand held device that replaces a pick and won't suit every player. Personally I prefer the simplicity and flexibility of the Slow Engine and have subsequently added it to the house effects collection.

For more info see www.mooeraudio.co.uk



Bach Artisan 7C Trombone mouthpiece

We already have a standard Bach 7C on the bench, so the arrival of the 'Artisan' model presented the perfect opportunity to compare and contrast. The Artisan is slightly heavier than the standard 7C, with most of the weight seemingly being placed around the throat and is beautifully formed with a nice defining edge to the rim, making it very comfortable on the lips. Placing it in the leadpipe, the mouthpiece is exceptionally easy to play in tune and you immediately appreciate how free blowing it is with a warm, well-centred and nicely focussed sound. And there is a wonderful elasticity to the Artisan; it's very smooth across the registers with a uniformity of sound. There are no cracks and there is a real consistency to the timbre and tone. If we had to make one criticism, it would be that the Artisan lacked edge and brightness – so you're not going to want to use it to solo in a big band! But if you're playing in a small combo and are after an ultra



smooth sound, then we reckon this mouthpiece would serve the purpose perfectly. Used with the right kind of microphone – perhaps a Beyer Brass – it's going to be spectacular. OK, it's not a mouthpiece for all seasons, but if you didn't know there was anything else, we'd wager you'd fall in love with this smooth and sweet sounding beauty.

For more info see www.vincentbach-ltd.co.uk

Yerasov GTA 15 Guitar Amplifier

Ever fancied a tone machine pure and simple, where you can add your effects pedals to taste? Well, this is exactly what the Russian-built Yerasov GTA15 offers: a straightforward, no frills, no nonsense 15-watt Class A valve combo that will have you searching for superlatives from the moment you pluck a note. This solid little 15"x15"x8" combo with its steel mesh grille reminds me of that Russian built Fed film camera from the



1970s that was built like a tank, had slightly dubious interior mechanics but was fitted with an Industar lens with a resolution that matched the very best money could buy. And like the Fed, this Yerasov has been built to withstand the rigours of the road and comes fitted with a 10" C10 Q35 Jensen speaker – as fitted to the 1960s Fenders. But these days the Russians seem to build the business end like they do the shell, and in this particular case the manufacturer has once again sourced top quality components. The GTA15 is loaded with two ECC83 pre-amp valves and two EL84 output valves. The control panel couldn't be more straightforward with a quality French APEM on/off switch with red neon, two chicken head knobs, one for tone and one for volume, a line input and a guitar input. Plugging in, we were treated to an amazingly clean, warm and rich sound with not a hint of hiss: this amp is super quiet. Turning up the volume knob not only slowly increased the power output, but also at around 10 smoothly moved the amp into a creamy overdrive – heaven! It's difficult not to overstate the Yerasov's credentials, but there are some nice finishing touches like the simple velcro pad to keep the plug in place on the back floor of the amp. And with a price tag of around £320, this, as they say, is a no brainer.

For more info see www.yerasov.co.uk