



# Instrument News & Reviews

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



## DW Collector's Series Cherry 'Bop' Drum Kit

We've been waiting with bated breath for a couple of months and then they finally arrived fresh from the DW factory in sunny California: an undrilled 18" x 13" bass drum, a 12" x 8" tom, a 14" x 15" floor tom and a 14" x 5.5" snare, all in an incredible Natural Satin oil finish, with nickel hardware. The drums were fitted with what appear to be DW-branded Remo coated Ambassador drum heads and DW's 'True Hoops'. Also included in the package were a selection of DW's solid stands and a DW 9000 pedal. So what's all the excitement about? This 'Bop' kit is made out of pure cherry shells, which was previously only reserved for exotic outer ply material. For sonic reference, cherry sits between birch and maple, offering more punch than maple without being as bright as birch – with an overall darker sound. John Good (of DW) has hand-selected this wood and used it to craft the eight-ply shells with what they call HHLT (vertical low timbre with a horizontal outer ply), which according to DW has been developed to offer a 'warm tonality with plenty of resonance and high end bite'.

The snare drum has a lovely warm projection and, once we'd cranked it up a turn or two, it had a loud crack. Cross-sticks were very cutting, which was great, and

the snare 'throw off' mechanism is the best we've ever seen. Our initial thoughts on the toms were that they wanted a little more projection and we set them to a slightly higher tuning – and got that high-end attack; and the 'cherry' sound gave us all the warmth we could wish for. Our favourite though was the 18-inch bass drum. An amazing sound – and it arrives with an installed pillow! We wonder whether it would have sounded even better with a Remo Powerstroke 3 dampening head. But it's an absolute classic bass drum with the ability to deliver in a small trio and we suspect even in a big band setting. Paired with DW's superb hardware this Cherry Bop is some kit. **For more info go to [www.dwdrums.com](http://www.dwdrums.com)**

## Headway EDM-1 Pre-Amp

The EDM-1 is a totally new pre-amp unit from one of the UK's top acoustic stringed instrument amplification companies, Headway Music Audio. Small, neat and virtually indestructible (it's an all metal construction), the EDM-1 has a clean, simple design, and although very user friendly, comes

with the standard Headway instruction manual that will tell you all you need to know – it deserves a prize in itself for being one of the most useful and jargon-free in the business!

The unit can be free standing on its rubber feet, mounted on a mike stand with its recessed screw thread or on the body using the supplied optional belt clip. Plug in and choose your instrument (be it a bass, baritone, cello, D-guitar, bouzouki, tenor G, viola, violin/mandolin, ukulele or 'rock' acoustic guitar) on the anti-feedback range dial. We set up for our old 1860s East German double bass on the bass setting (40hz) with the input impedance on active/low (our baby's under bridge pickup is active), the bass, mid and treble all at zero and the volume at 3 (out of 10). We always thought we achieved a pretty good sound with the 'under the bridge' p/u, but this was immediately upstaged by this little unit's monster sound – our old bass was suddenly transformed and she sang like never before! The EDM-1 has 'mute' and 'live' settings with green and red LEDs respectively, which is useful when you're on a dark stage, but even more useful when you want to put your instrument down – switch to mute and you won't hear a thing – it's completely silent. There is also a balanced DI output with a stereo XLR adaptor. We couldn't let this remarkable little unit go, so we've added it to the *Jazzwise* 'effects' box.

**For more info go to [www.headwaymusic.com](http://www.headwaymusic.com)**



## Timber Tones Groove Tones guitar plectrums

Being a traditional finger pickin' player, I rarely pick up a plectrum. And I've always felt those triangular bits of flat plastic feel like some foreign part attached to your body that you've never been completely comfortable with. These Groove Tones however with, their indented faces and natural surfaces, have made me reassess my whole approach to the plectrum. For the first time I've found something that feels comfortable between the thumb and forefinger that you can actually grip with confidence and that doesn't feel like a barrier between you and the strings.

Like their cousins in the Timber Tones family, the Groove Tones are made out of timber, bone and horn. They come in two sizes, the



standard Groove Tones and the Groove Tones Mini. The Groove Tone Mini is about 3mm shorter in width and length and has a more pronounced tip than the standard Groove Tones. The marketing blurb tells us that the standard Groove Tones are more comfortable to hold and offer a more enhanced tonal response, while the Minis give fluidity and accuracy. My hands aren't exactly small and I went straight for the Minis. Why? Well, in truth the standard Groove Tones once again gave me that detached feeling. Sure they're comfortable to hold and the tonal response is all in there – but so is it with the Minis. Like so many things, it's down to individual preference.

But one thing's for sure, these Minis have opened up a whole new world for me – I'm actually acknowledging the pleasure of playing with a plectrum. **Go to [www.timber-tones.com](http://www.timber-tones.com)**

