

Sound Advice

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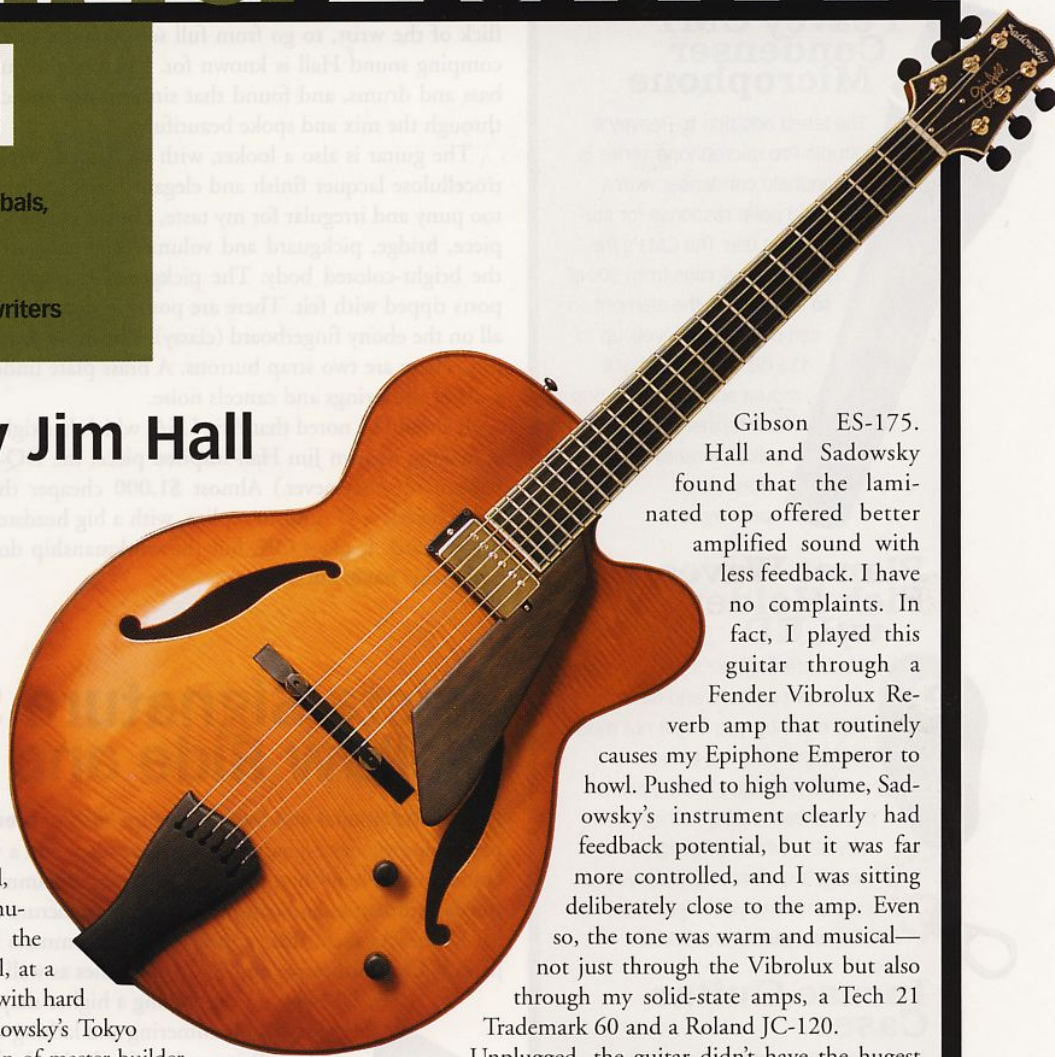
Mike Quinn on hi-fi writers

Sadowsky Jim Hall Signature Model Archtop

Fan of Jim Hall's? Thought so. Then you've probably seen and heard his beautiful reddish-orange D'Aquisto New Yorker Special. Roger Sadowsky's new Jim Hall model, built to Hall's specifications, emulates (but does not replicate) the look and sound of the original, at a nonstratospheric cost (\$3,895 with hard case). It is being built in Sadowsky's Tokyo workshop under the supervision of master builder Yoshi Kikuchi.

The first thing one notices about the guitar is its lightweight construction and compact feel. You could call it "little jazz." The body is 16 inches, the side depth 2.25 inches. The neck, 24.75 inches with a 1.75-inch nut width, is delightfully smooth and easy-playing. I'd prefer a grainier finish on the back of the neck, but as is, the lacquer is not at all sticky or uncomfortable. In short, the guitar fits the human body—at least mine—like a glove. It has plenty of beef for the bandstand, but its nonbulky design makes it easy to yank out of the case for casual, unplugged use.

Sadowsky's FAQ sheet includes a somewhat defensive note about using laminated 5-ply maple top instead of solid wood. Solid tops, favored by many high-end builders, are thought to offer truer resonance. They also cost more and are more vulnerable to warping. As Sadowsky points out, Jim Hall's D'Aquisto is a laminate, and so is his previous guitar, a



Gibson ES-175.

Hall and Sadowsky found that the laminated top offered better amplified sound with less feedback. I have no complaints. In fact, I played this guitar through a Fender Vibrolux Reverb amp that routinely causes my Epiphone Emperor to howl. Pushed to high volume, Sadowsky's instrument clearly had feedback potential, but it was far more controlled, and I was sitting deliberately close to the amp. Even so, the tone was warm and musical—not just through the Vibrolux but also through my solid-state amps, a Tech 21 Trademark 60 and a Roland JC-120.

Unplugged, the guitar didn't have the hugest acoustic response I've ever heard, but it was quite respectable. Using flatwound 12-gauge strings, I found the tone to be round and nicely "thunky," even along the high-E string. There was noticeable fret buzz on the D string around the lower frets—probably nothing a neck adjustment couldn't resolve. The intonation was solid.

Sadowsky's FAQ also anticipates another criticism: his use of a set-in pickup. Many of the finer jazz boxes have floating pickups that sit just above the body rather than being set into the wood itself. Set-in pickups threaten the integrity of the top and can rob a guitar of acoustic purity and tonal personality. The Jim Hall model has escaped that fate, and the gold-covered pickup ("made to my specifications by DiMarzio," Sadowsky says) gives the instrument plenty of power, even at moderate volume.

The Sadowsky guitar has one volume and one tone knob, both very responsive. In fact, some may find the volume

Peavey CM1 Condenser Microphone



The latest addition to Peavey's Studio Pro microphone series is a handheld condenser with a cardioid polar response for studio or live use. The CM1's frequency range runs from 50 Hz to 16 kHz and the element can handle SPL levels up to 136 dB. A built-in shock mount and dual-layer pop filter further enhance the mike's already low noise floor.

peavey.com

Planet Waves Pick Holder w/LED



Got butterfingers? If you drop a plectrum onstage and have this fob close by, you might not miss a beat. It holds up to four medium-gauge (.71mm) picks, but the best part is its high-intensity LED, which can brighten a stage's dark spot to help you locate anything you might drop, butterfingers. planetwaves.com

Incuse Guitar Cases



Available in three styles (the Slimbag model is shown here), Incuse guitar/bass cases have loads of cargo space for extra sets of strings, pedals, method books, tuners, etc. They protect an instrument with a sturdy, dense foam support for the neck and a shock absorbing internal shell. They protect the player, too, with a load-balancing system to distribute the case's weight. Incuse also makes cases for iPods and laptops. goincase.com

knob a bit too responsive—the difference between, say, 10 and 8 is dramatic. But remember, this is a Jim Hall model, and the decibel fall-off makes it possible, with a flick of the wrist, to go from full solo volume to the kind of hushed, semiacoustic comping sound Hall is known for. I played the guitar on a gig with vocals, piano, bass and drums, and found that single notes and chords, whether loud or soft, cut through the mix and spoke beautifully.

The guitar is also a looker, with its flamed maple, distinctive sunburst, clean nitrocellulose lacquer finish and elegant black outlines on the body. The headstock is too puny and irregular for my taste, but the ebony appointments (tuning knobs, tailpiece, bridge, pickguard and volume/tone controls) make for a sleek contrast with the bright-colored body. The pickguard is nicely stabilized by two small wooden posts tipped with felt. There are position dots on the neck binding, but no inlays at all on the ebony fingerboard (classy). The input jack is on the lower side, not an endpin. There are two strap buttons. A brass plate under the tailpiece grounds the ball-ends of the strings and cancels noise.

It should be noted that Aria USA, which has rights to the D'Aquisto brand name, is making its own Jim Hall-inspired piece, the DQ-JZ model. (Jim Hall had no involvement whatsoever.) Almost \$1,000 cheaper than the Sadowsky, this guitar is more strictly a D'Aquisto replica, with a big headstock and large block inlays on the fingerboard. It plays OK, but the workmanship doesn't compare. Save and get the Sadowsky. **DAVID ADLER**

Paiste Signature Silver Mellow Ride and Full Crash

Paiste's Traditional and New Signature lines of premium cymbals employ the company's proprietary Signature cast bronze alloy and a variety of hand-hammering, machine assisted hand-hammering and machine-hammering techniques to approximate the dark tonalities and complex harmonic structure of its randomly hammered Turkish K line. As such, their appeal for jazz drummers is analogous to cymbals in Zildjian's K Constantinople and K Custom lines as well as Sabian's HH and HHX models. Likewise, by employing a higher shape and a more uniform, symmetrical style of hammering and lathing techniques in its premium Signature line, Paiste strives for the kind of glassy shimmer, brilliant projection, quick, bouncy feel and even tonal response that drummers would expect to find in correspondingly configured instruments from the A Zildjian and Sabian AA lines (which are primarily machine-hammered).

However, while certain Signature models—such as the Dark Crisp hi-hats and the Full crash, Mellow crash and Fast crash cymbals—have attracted a growing following among jazz musicians, the Ride cymbals in Paiste's Signature series seem maximized for amplified applications. Still, those jazz drummers with a taste for the classic A Zildjian sound of the 1950s (or Paiste's own Formula 602 cymbals of the 1960s and '70s) should take note of two exciting new additions to the Paiste Signature family that have by and large been overlooked in the excitement over the roll-out of the company's New Signature/Dark Energy series.

And considering the big bucks old Paiste Formula 602 cymbals currently fetch on eBay, the smooth, shimmering, full-bodied response of the new 21-inch Signature Silver Mellow ride and 19-inch Signature Full crash should have great appeal to those jazz drummers who, while they like the merlotlike body and red-wine complexity of randomly hammered cymbals, fancy a more piquant white-wine tang, with a sweet luminous layering of overtones and a bright, clearly focused attack—à la Papa Jo Jones, Chico Hamilton, Connie Kay and Paul Motian.