



Roger Sadowsky Electric Nylon

Professional-Grade Hybrid Guitar

In the late 1980s, luthier Roger Sadowsky began to hear complaints from New York session musicians about the shortcomings of the Gibson Chet Atkins solidbody nylon guitar. So, he decided to build a better one. In 1990, Sadowsky unveiled his Electric Nylon Guitar, a true professional-grade hybrid instrument designed to offer the nylon string experience to non-classical players.

At the time, Gibson's Chet Atkins model was the only option available in the electrified nylon string category, but it had a few drawbacks in terms of its excessive weight, intonation problems and issues with tone. Sadowsky took all of this into consideration in building his nylon hybrid and went with a chambered body design to reduce the instrument's weight and increase resonance. This is accomplished by routing out numerous small pockets in the guitar's two-piece mahogany body. Upon completion of his first Electric Nylon, fate stepped in when Sadowsky, who was then working with the Rolling Stones to prepare for their Steel Wheels tour, was asked to

recommend a nylon guitar that Keith

Richards could play in a stadium environment.

The Electric Nylon was the perfect fit. Since then, Sadowsky's Electric Nylons have been well received by jazz musicians such as Pat Metheny, John Abercrombie and John Scofield.

The Electric Nylon is part of Sadowsky's NYC line of guitars hand-built in his New York shop. At first glance, the high-level craftsmanship is obvious. The guitar we tested had a beautiful figured koa top, but maple is also available as an option. The body is constructed from two solid pieces of African mahogany called okoume, which is then capped with the koa wood. The bolt-on neck is made from maple and features a Strat-style peg-head with Sperzel gold tuners. The bridge is Sadowsky's own design, and its flowing asymmetric shape really adds to the guitar's "cool" factor.

Picking up the guitar, I was immediately impressed by its light weight. The second thing that hit me was how comfortable the instrument felt in my hands. Classical guitars can be quite awkward for players who are not used to them, and building a nylon-string that would fit into the hands of a non-classical player was a priority for Sadowsky. "I designed it for someone coming to it from the steel-string acoustic or electric world as opposed to classical," he said. The guitar features a hybrid 1 7/8-inch neck width that is slimmer than a traditional nylon but wider than a standard steel-string guitar. In addition, the morado fingerboard has a slight radius to it as opposed to the typical flat board on classical guitars.

Although the Electric Nylon feels more like an electric than a classical guitar, the instrument definitely has its own voice. A customized Barbera transducer system is installed into the saddle under each string and controlled by a simple volume and tone knob. Sadowsky's onboard buffer pre-amp insures that the guitar will sound good through a wide variety of amplifiers and also when going direct into a PA system.

Overall, the Sadowsky Electric Nylon represents everything that a good hybrid guitar should be: functional, comfortable, versatile, reliable and with great tone. Available for \$4,700, it's no surprise that this model has become popular among jazz and Latin jazz players. —Keith Baumann

Ordering info: sadowsky.com

Fishman TriplePlay FC-1 Controller

Versatile MIDI Guitar at Your Feet

When Fishman released its TriplePlay wireless guitar USB controller in 2013, MIDI guitar was forever changed for the better. Offering an affordable, highly accurate plug-and-play solution, TriplePlay has given guitarists access to an entirely new world previously dominated by keyboardists. Pushing the door open even further, Fishman has introduced the TriplePlay FC-1 Controller, a \$199.95 floor pedal unit that provides direct access and control of MIDI synths and sound modules.

Prior to the availability of the FC-1, use of the TriplePlay required connection to a computer or iOS device in order to trigger software patches. This could be done through the bundled TriplePlay software or via any MIDI-compliant application. Although the wireless USB connection made things fairly easy, hauling an expensive computer to a gig or recording session can definitely be seen as a drawback. According to Triple Play Product Manager Jason Jordan, Fishman wanted to eliminate this potential obstacle and provide access to MIDI sounds through a floor pedal. The

FC-1 was the solution, and although it is a fairly simple device that stores very little actual data and mainly functions as a controller box, it offers a significant boost to TriplePlay users in terms of added convenience and increased possibilities.

The FC-1 appears as a fairly standard floor box with three momentary foot switches and an LCD display. Wireless connection to a TriplePlay-enabled guitar is accomplished by simply plugging a USB dongle directly into a port on the FC-1. The controller uses the same dongle that comes with the TriplePlay pickup and is hot-swappable between the controller and computer. Once paired with the guitar, the FC-1 can be connected to any MIDI device such as a sound module or synth via a standard MIDI out connection on the controller.

For basic guitar synth capabilities, this simple configuration is all that is required, but the FC-1 is capable of a whole lot more. The unit also has a hardwire USB connection that allows it to connect to your computer for