

Instrument News & Reviews

David Gallant looks at the latest must-have gear, tech and notation for professional and serious amateur musicians

Peters Edition: The Complete Pianist

The Complete Pianist is a mammoth volume that literally does what it says on the tin. Written and compiled by Penelope Roskell (pictured), a professor of piano at Trinity Laban College in London, it is as exhaustive as it is detailed and covers mechanics, methods, techniques, physiology and style - which we will collectively call 'the elements'. The author clearly understands the entity of the pianist to the fullest degree, while circumstances have caused her to look deeper and broader than most - and it shows. You not only have the explanations and education, but you also have video examples and demonstrations. Whilst the book is dense in volume, it is concise and all content is relevant.

Don't be put off by what is clearly a classical approach (the

chords and scales are an obvious example) and the rigour of the elements. After all, these are as relevant to any jazz pianist as they are to a classical performer, and this book should enable you to improve on all of those skills.

There are a few 'elements' which are clearly in the domain of the 'real piano' ie, the acoustic instrument. Those using the book should, if they do not have an acoustic instrument, seek to gain access at times to a real piano to experience those elements. And there are two where a real piano is all but essential. Most pianists are aware that hand placement is important and the section on hand position, posture and movement shows the reader the different ways, which includes downward, upward, sideways, and rounded movements from a varied group of practitioners. The author not only examines the hands position and movement, but also goes into the



whys and wherefores and provides exercise both to build strength correctly and also to create good habits such as minimising stretch.

Roskell also goes into ergonomic fingering and ways to finger and practice segments, scales and arpeggios that help to reduce practice time to achieve the same end result. This approach could easily be applied to the likes

of bebop scales and extended chord arpeggios.

Alongside the text and illustrations, there are also helpful QR codes for smartphones. And for those who prefer the screen to the printed page, there is also an online version. One for pianists to dip in to whenever they feel the need for guidance and inspiration! www.editionpeters.com

On-Stage PS1000 Rechargeable pedal powerbank

The recently-released PS1000 Rechargeable Pedal Power Bank (RRP £89.99) by On-Stage gives the musician the opportunity to power up their pedalboard anywhere in the world without the need for international power converters.

As a stand-alone portable power supply, the PS1000 eliminates the many pitfalls associated with traditional pedalboard power, such as the uncertainty of batteries, or the annoying AC buzz and hum caused by grounding issues. Delivering up to 6 hours running time from a single USB charge (lead supplied), the PS1000, with two 9V DC outlets comes with a small footprint, is portable, compact and lightweight (0.5 lbs/227grams), and effortlessly runs four 9V DC volt pedals daisy-chained together (leads supplied), avoiding the need for individual adaptors. There's also a handy battery level status LED, which takes the guesswork out of determining how much power remains, whilst a built-in flashlight assists in setting up and dismantling equipment. Added to this, the PS1000 power bank eliminates the inconvenience of running an extension cable or finding an outlet near the front of a stage. It also provides the freedom to use mains-free pedals outdoors with battery powered equipment. The PS1000 is an essential accessory for pedal-powered musicians.

www.jhs.co.uk



Yamaha Keyboards PSR E473/EW425

Yamaha is introducing two new portable keyboards to its very popular PSR 400 series. Both the 76-key PSR (EW425) and the 61-key PSR (E-473) come with touch sensitive keyboards for an authentic response and tone. They also feature 'pro-sound quality', something that we are told was only previously available on 'high end' models. Both the E-473 and the EW-425 feature the latest LSI tone generator and are equipped with Super Articulation Lite, which offers 820 high resolution instrument voices that 'realistically simulate each instrument's unique resonance and tone for authentic acoustic results'.

Both models have had their control panels and LCDs completely redesigned. The numeric keyboard has been phased out, and Direct Category Access Buttons have been added, offering the player a quick and more simple and straightforward access to all the voices, styles and other functions while playing.

But perhaps the most extraordinary thing that these two keyboards carry is the so-called 'Mega Boost Button', raising the volume by no less than 6 dB, which in the majority of scenarios will allow the instrument to be heard without the need to go through a PA system. The PSR E-473 and EW-425 also come equipped with left and right audio outputs, separate from the headphones jack, which allow players to connect to PA systems (if necessary) and other studio equipment.

Both, we are assured, will hit the high street at around the £500 mark and with these credentials, should be well worth checking out. www.uk.yamaha.com/

