

PAR BENOÎT NAVARRET
Translation from French:
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CHRISTIAN KOEHN

CONCERT CEDAR MODEL

For an optimal sound

At a young age Christian Koehn discovers guitar-making when reading the reference work "Making Master Guitars" by Roy Courtnall. He makes his first guitar and then decides to go to in England, to study with Roy Courtnall at the Newark College. There he learns the traditional approach to making classical guitars and builds contacts with other luthiers associated with the school. Top of the class in 2006, he is lauded by his peers and was awarded with the Ashley Mark Publishing Price (Classical Guitar Magazine UK) for the quality of his work. He pursues and continues his training for a while, learning restoration and repairs alongside violin-makers of the Newark Violin Making School, and then sets up his own workshop in the heart of Berlin in 2007, in the Kreuzberg district.

A remarkable finish

If you love beautiful instruments, you will be charmed by this guitar, with its remarkable finish, and refinements to be seen in every detail. The delicacy of every feature, the elegance of body shape, the refinement of the bracing, the subtlety of the veneers inlaid and of the marquetry, all of this makes this guitar an "object of desire" that is removed from the case with enthusiasm and handled with great pleasure. These words may appear excessive, but they simply express the fact of extremely attentive instrument-making.

One example: the complex inlays seem, at first, to be composed from a simple alternation of light and dark stained woods, aligned within a black and white heringbone. In fact, they are created out of a dozen folds in a composition of black, chestnut, pear, white and very luminous green purfling lines. The removable arm rest (optional), made to measure, repeats these motifs stylishly.

The rosette constructed from spalted maple, Japanese oak and English yew, is equally beautiful: it repeats the strand motifs which gently emphasize the contour of the rosette. The top of the headstock is conceived all in curves, while the upper face in stippled dark ebony engravings, bestows a very beautiful textured effect to the surface. The marquetry inserts, also seen on the armrest, are pleasing. The design of the bridge asserts itself in its pure simplicity.



The top of the headstock is conceived all in curves, while the upper face in stippled dark ebony engravings.

An extra ear

An additional soundport is positioned on the shoulder of the upper bout. This soundhole offers the player a more intimate experience of the sound and gives the impression of a more extended range of sonic diffusion around the instrument.

It enhances the listener's comfort because it provides a reflection of the acoustic characteristics produced at the front of the guitar. In concert conditions, this can be a valuable help, especially if the acoustics of the room are not very good. The sound has greater presence, high notes are clearer and the bass range is reinforced. The opening at the shoulder allows a view of the body's interior, with the multiple braces (these are giving greater rigid strength to the top and back). The workmanship on the bracings as well as the layout of the bracing bear witness to the research and questioning of more traditional approaches of construction. An innovative aspect, which is unique to find on a soundport of an instrument, is the extended length of the opening by a wooden funnel.



The back is made out of solid rosewood



The removable arm rest is custom made for each guitar.



A magnetic cover plate, beautiful in design, allows the guitarist to close the soundport partially or totally.

This method, usually encountered under the main sound hole of the sound board, is called tornavoz. It was originally employed by Antonio de Torres on some of his guitars such as those of Francisco Tarrega, Miguel Llobet, Julian Arcan or Emilio Pujol. It influences of the resonant frequency of the body (Helmholtz frequency): this resonant frequency drops when a Tonavoz is installed. Christian Koehn using this feature, so that the negative effects of adding a second sound hole are compensated. A magnetic cover plate, beautiful in design, allows the guitarist to close the soundport partially or totally, and therefore to adjust his sound according his likes or the location he is playing in.

All in all

The overall sound character of this guitar is well-rounded, with a very fine dynamic in the lower register and a beautiful polyphonic clarity, even on the metal wound strings. The lows have full body, a wonderful consistency, with an even and homogeneous and steady length of sustain across the whole of the fretboard.

High notes never sound muffled, or, on the contrary, shrill. They can be played easily, even when the string sections are shortened (the notes beyond the 12th fret sound and project really well).

Control over colors of notes during play and variations in timbre are expressed without difficulty, but it is necessary to emphasise attack to enrich the im-

pressive sound spectrum. The dynamic range is consistent, bringing a level of comfort necessary for a musical interpretation free of all constraint as regards the eventual thresholds that can be imposed by an instrument.

Amongst the options, are offers without extra charge, of a left hand version and a soundboard in spruce (rather than in cedar), for musicians seeking a brighter sound character.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Scale length: 650 mm / 640 mm

Top: Canadian Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), solid

Back: Rosewood, solid

Ribs: Rosewood, laminated

Neck: Mahogany

Fretboard: Ebony

Bridge: Rosewood

Saddle/Bridge: InlayBone

Finish: French polish with shellac

Tuning machines: Sloane

Weight: 1600g

Optional: Tuning machines by Scheller or Alessi, soundport, armrest, cutaway

Price: 7000 €