

CLASSIC

Yamaha MSG Deluxe

I don't think M.S.G. has any particular connotation, but at Yamaha/Kemble they like to think of it as 'Martyn's Solid Guitar'...

Review by **Neville Marten.**

AS YOU MAY REMEMBER, when I reviewed the MSG Standard back in August '88, I mentioned that this is the guitar range designed by Englishman Martyn Booth (not as mistakenly reported elsewhere, an American living here). Martyn is Yamaha/Kemble's chief expert on string-driven things and had become fed up with pointed headstocks and 'available in red, white and black', so he took it upon himself to single-handedly design the replacement for Yamaha's weary SG line. The self-imposed brief was to create a tasteful, traditional guitar which

would put all that was best about Gibson, and all that is great about PRS, into a single guitar which played like a dream. And with the might of the largest musical corporation behind it, it needn't cost a fortune. Easy!

Construction

Well, you can see straight away what the idea is – it's a cross between a Les Paul and a 335 – and it's come off a treat. The lovely flamed maple top (with the edges masked off to look like binding – 'thank-you Paul') is fitted to a one-piece mahogany body into which is glued a one-piece mahogany neck. Recognise the formula? – it works so perfectly, why on earth piddle around with it? The antique cherry sunburst has to be one of the prettiest I've seen, with just the right degree of shading in exactly the right colour – whether Yamaha will succeed in supplying all MSGs with such delightfully figured tops as this one, we'll just have to wait and see.

It's carved in the old Les Paul tradition to highlight both the grain of the timber and, in this case, the flawless finish. Neat recesses have been added to allow the two control knobs and pickup selector to sit square, as opposed to Leaning Tower of Pisa-like, which they would otherwise do.

Neck

Paul Reed Smith says he used a cross between an old 335 and a '62 Strat for one of his neck profiles and you would believe Mr Booth if he told you likewise. But I happen to know that's not true, because he sat with a blade and a piece of sandpaper until "... it simply felt right".

The bound ebony fingerboard is neatly punctuated by abalone dot markers and the 22 wide oval frets are properly seated, dressed and polished. A narrower than usual headstock, along with the darker,

