

COLIN KYO LAMINATED TIMBER BAGPIPE

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A set of Colin Kyo laminated timber bagpipes have arrived and they look absolutely spectacular. Murray Huggins, the maker must be very pleased with the result. I think this is a great development in the manufacture of the bagpipe, given the potential shortages and continuing suspect quality of blackwood supplies.

The laminated timber has a striped grain pattern which is very attractive, and Murray states that some colour variation may be available, but I really liked the appearance of this bagpipe. Murray is keen to point out that the laminated product presents with the same density as blackwood. It certainly sounds like wood to my ear!



I really like the hemp retainers on the bottom (stock) tenons. I would love to do that to my old Hendersons which tend to drop the hemp regularly. The bottom of the stocks are slightly flared which Murray says gives a little better airflow and volume.



The bass is “as straight as a die” and I assume will not warp, buckle or crack due to the material used. I would assume that this is a highly stable material subject to little change. The quality of the workmanship on these pipes is as good as I have seen from any pipe maker.

Turning the timber to almost meet with the outside ring of the nickel mounts (rather than just below) gives a chunkier appearance to the drone tops and stocks. I like the squarish cord guides, they give the pipes a modern look without interfering with the classical appearance and shape.

These pipes were mounted in imitation ivory with nickel ferrules, ring caps and slides. The nickel mounts are really well made and give the pipes a great look. The projecting mounts are also very elegant in shape.

On to what's most important. The sound of the drones is very impressive indeed. A good full, robust drone sound with excellent bass projection. The drones were very stable and present with a good oneness of sound. Against the chanter there was an excellent balance with the drones presenting a good umbrella of sound to support the chanter. The laminated chanter plays very well and is indistinguishable from a wooden chanter. The same applies to the drones as they present a quality of tone that is as good as I have heard (and in many cases better) from the best of instruments.



Setting the pipes up was a breeze. They are very easy to reed. I first used a set of Ezeedrone reeds that plugged in and played with little alteration. They went well with Crozier, Kinnaird and also Kyo reeds that were very well suited to the pipe. The chanter was initially reeded with a Warnock reed as recommended by Murray (but went equally well with a straight cut reed) and both chanter and

drones played without any fault noticeable. They struck in well, were stable and sounded great with little need for significant alteration of reeds. Both the drones and chanter were accepting of most reed types.



This is a very robust instrument due to the materials involved in its construction. The pipes got an absolute soaking during testing and this had no affect on the finish of the laminated wood at all. The sound however is really first class. This is a truly desirable instrument that I would be happy to play at any level and in any weather conditions. Genuinely a top class instrument of the highest quality of manufacture and tone.

More of the Colin Kyo workmanship can be seen at their website:

<http://www.colinkyobagpipes.com/>

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