

SUPER BOWL '92

Ovation 1992-H



What kind of year have you had?
If it's anything like the majority
of the population it's been a bit
hairy. So why not celebrate the
fact that it's rapidly coming to an
end and invest in a poignant
musical reminder of 1992..?

Review by Eddie Allen.

And what could be better than a guitar which is guaranteed to be one of a limited number produced this year? The Ovation 1992-H Collectors' Series is a remarkable-looking guitar and comes complete with a Certificate Of Authenticity, listing its serial number, which in this case is 1574, and the signature of the President of Ovation Instruments Inc, Mr. C. William Kaman II.

What makes the Collectors' Series really special is the fact that this combination of colours and features is unique to 1992 and will never be repeated.

I'm sure everyone's familiar with the roundback or bowl design pioneered by Ovation and successfully used by them in their electro-acoustic guitars. The 1992-H has its shallow bowl in brown rather than the more common black, supporting a Tamo ash top with a single cutaway. Tamo ash is apparently a very rare, highly figured wood found only in a small region of Japan. It's been used for centuries in

the crafting of Buddhist religious statues and the grain is absolutely spectacular.

Around the edge the ivoroid binding sports a fine reddish line matching part of the oakleaf epaulettes around the multiple mini sound holes which, love them or hate them, help give the 1992-H a distinctive appearance.

The electric side of this guitar is taken care of by six bridge-mounted piezo electric transducers and an OP-24 preamp. The rotary volume pot and three (treble, middle and bass) tone sliders are housed in the top edge of the bowl. A battery check button and light are included and the handbook says an alkaline battery should be good for around 2000 hours of continuous performance under normal use. Replacing the battery isn't difficult, although it is fiddly and to accomplish this and to gain access to the truss rod a circular plate on the back of the guitar has to be removed. This done it's possible to reach all the electrics and the truss rod adjuster.

The bridge itself is a straightforward design with the strings fixing through the back before passing over the bridge saddles. It's made from walnut, matching the fingerboard and headstock veneer, and is glued and bolted to the top of the body so there should be no danger of it ever lifting.

The neck is a five-piece mahogany and maple laminate, featuring an oiled finish. It has a width of 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (4.23cm) at the nut and joins the body at the 14th fret. The neck's profile is a fairly pronounced V shape, and with a fingerboard radius of 10" the guitar is very comfortable to play without being too chunky. Maple is the material for the Collector's inlays, and they're superbly done – especially the '1992' at the twelfth fret and the Ovation logo on the headstock. The natural finish

review

contrasts nicely with the high gloss on the soundboard, and with the adjustable gold-plated Schaller machineheads adding the finishing touch the honey sunburst 1992-H Ovation is without doubt a stunner of an instrument.

IN USE

One of the things I really like about this Ovation is how it seems to be the ideal compromise, in terms of feel, between my ideal electric and acoustic guitars. It's not only a working instrument but the kind of guitar that you feel like picking up and playing at any time; when it's not wowing the punters it will probably spend its time lying on the sofa permanently on call.

Its unamplified acoustic properties are really quite surprising. It's fairly loud with good sound projection. Tonally there's a lot more bottom end than I was expecting, and while it wouldn't pass for the finest of Martins, it's good enough to fit into any acoustic line-up and would certainly be bright enough to handle picking and single line solos.

Of course the bowl contributes to the slightly boxy quality of the sound, and hooking up to an amp or PA this will also come across. However, the three-way tone section allows this to be EQ'd out and careful setting up of the guitar and amp or PA enables the 1992-H to put out a most convincing acoustic sound.

And if it's that modern, bright, electro-acoustic sound you're after (Extreme, Bon Jovi etc.), then this guitar is it. It will give that tight West Coast strum with the bass strings becoming almost percussive. It can also be made to sound so sharp that any movement of the fretting hand on the strings causes a loud squeak, ►





► but even set with this much top there's still quality to the tone.

Recording with this guitar is an absolute dream and with the EQ flat on both the guitar and the mixer the sound is remarkably close to that of a miked acoustic. Adding in more tone from the guitar has the desired effect, but the Ovation's EQ is very sensitive and there's a fine line between improving or overdoing it.

CONCLUSION

While I confess that when it comes to Ovation roundback instruments I've never really seen what the fuss was about, I've always had a sneaking admiration for anyone who uses them. The 1992-H has blown this antipathy completely away. Not only do I love the way this guitar looks but I can get some great sounds out of it, too.

The quality of workmanship is what you'd

expect on an instrument costing just under thirteen hundred pounds and even if it wasn't a limited edition I'd still say it was worth the money.

Towards the end of this review I put in a call to Ovation's distributors, Korg UK, to check on some details, and after raving on about what a great guitar I thought it was I was told that Korg didn't want it back. 'Great!' I thought. 'they're going to give it to me for being such a nice chap and because I want this guitar so badly.'

Unfortunately it's not me they want to love and cherish it. Oh no, they want me to give it away to a *Guitarist* reader,

and I suppose I can't argue with that. So if you like the look of this guitar turn to page 114 and check out the simple competition I've devised.

RRP:

£1269.00 inc VAT

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