



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSEPH BRANSTON

Godin Multiac Encore Nylon £1,199

This new Multiac has under-saddle and soundboard transducers for accurate tonality *by Dave Burrluck*

Mention nylon strings and thoughts tend to turn to classical guitar. It needn't be the case, especially with Godin. Classical purists are served well by the brand and its 12-frets-to-the-body Grand Concert Multiacs, which have a virtually flat fingerboard and 51mm (two-inch) wide nut. This one, however – the Encore – appeals to players crossing over from steel strings. As such, it has a reduced nut width, a more cambered fingerboard and the neck joins the body between the 15th and 16th frets.

The Encore's body is 360mm wide, 440mm long and just 48mm deep. Almost hollow, it has back and sides cut from silver leaf maple, generously radiused back edges and a slight ribcage cut. The cedar top is

quite wide-grained and is edge-bound with cream plastic. Internally, the top has a large cross brace under the bridge, which sits over five fan braces, while the back has three thicker cross braces. All the bracing and strutting is spruce and nicely tidy. The bridge, like the fretboard, is rosewood and has a Tusq-compensated saddle, which mirrors the nut material.

The neck is well proportioned with a flattish 'D' profile, topped by a slotted headstock. As with many modern nylon-string guitars, there's a truss rod, adjustable at the body end. Along with the four-screw attachment, it's certainly more flexible than a conventional nylon-string classical design.

The Multiac's distinctive upper shoulder control area

features eight mini sound ports and five slider controls: master volume, treble, mid, bass (the EQs are centre-notched for flat response positions) and blend. At its lowest point, the blend

slider voices only the undersaddle piezo, but as you move it upwards towards the headstock it introduces the dual soundboard transducers that are placed bass- and treble-side under the top, below the bridge. The active preamp is powered by a single 9V battery (in its own rear flip-top cavity), the mono output jack is on the body's edge, as with a Telecaster, and there are regularly placed Schaller strap lock-style buttons.

Sounds

Unplugged, not surprisingly, the Encore has a quiet acoustic



Classical-style gold/black tuners with cream pegs



The Rivals

Direct rivals are hard to find. **Takamine's ETN60C FXC** (approx £850) is an all-solid cutaway electro with 47.5mm nut, 14-fret neck and a CT48 preamp. **Yamaha's spruce/rosewood NTX 1200R** (£1,098) has a 48mm nut and ART pickup system. The **Alhambra Crossover CS-3 CW E5** (£1,256 with case) is a cedar- or spruce-top cutaway electro with rosewood back and sides, featuring a Fishman Premium pickup system, 48mm nut width and a cambered fingerboard.



Tiny soundholes surround the controls for the guitar's electronics

Godin Multiac Encore Nylon

PRICE: £1,199 (inc gig bag)
ORIGIN: Canada
TYPE: Single-cutaway, semi-hollow nylon electro
BODY: Hollow silver leaf maple back/sides with solid cedar top
NECK: Mahogany, bolt-on
SCALE LENGTH: 648mm (25.5 inches)
NUT/WIDTH: Graph Tech Tusq/48.6mm
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, pearloid dot markers, 406mm (16-inch) radius
FRETS: 22, medium
TUNERS: Gold/black-plated classical style with cream plastic buttons
BRIDGE/STRING SPACING: Rosewood with compensated Tusq saddle/57mm
ELECTRICS: Custom electronics by EPM – undersaddle transducer and acoustic soundboard transducer; slider controls
WEIGHT (kg/lb): 2.5/5.5
OPTIONS: None
RANGE OPTIONS: Grand Concert Duet Ambiance (£1,899), Grand Concert SA (£POA), Nylon Fretless, Nylon Duet Ambiance and Nylon SA (from £1,859), and the more solid-bodied ACS-SA USB, ACS-SA Slim and ACS-SA (from £1,299)
LEFT-HANDERS: No
FINISH: Natural semi-gloss
Blue Rock Distribution
0845 388 1183
440 Distribution
0113 258 9599
www.godinguitars.com

The Multiac has a lot more give and projection than its solidbody-like dimensions would suggest

tone, but one that's perfectly useful for practice. It also has a lot more give and projection than its solidbody-like dimensions suggest. Plugged in, with the EQs set flat, things sound a touch more realistic. There's quite a lot of crisp presence, especially with the soundboard transducers in play. In fact, you may need to tone down your amp or PA settings as, even with the treble slider fully down, that high, crisp edge is audible.

The mid-range slider also benefits from some reduction to avoid the output sounding over-hard, especially for more percussive Latin styles. With occasional help from the presence control on our test AER Compact Classic combo, we manage to pull a selection of

styles out of the bag using the guitar's onboard EQ. Crisp flamenco, smoother jazz styles, new-age scooped and effected arpeggios and percussive African voices, which can actually sound quite like steel strings, are all possible. Over a couple of gigs, the Encore really proved its worth. On stage, with a big PA and vicious monitors, it edged into feedback but in more usual circumstances that isn't an issue. At higher volumes, the piezo is the best option to avoid handling noise and feedback but in the studio, and at more sedate gigs, the soundboard transducers add realism.

Verdict

If you're not going to perform, then you don't need to own this guitar. In fact, even if your gigs

are limited to small venues you could survive with one of the seemingly thousands of standard nylon electros out there. Where the Encore comes into its own is at those difficult shows, especially with a full band, when issues such as loud monitors or little or no soundcheck time can make a full acoustic a difficult proposition. But this hybrid steel-meets-nylon design is not only highly practical, it's also classy looking and has an appealing feel – plus some excellent and highly adaptable, realistic sounds. **G**

The Bottom Line

We like: Design; competent build; feedback rejection; blendable sounds; EQ
We dislike: Nothing
Guitarist says: A versatile guitar with realistic amplified sounds – a great addition

Test results

Build quality	★★★★☆
Playability	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★☆

GUITARIST RATING ★★★★★