

At a glance

Yamaha NTX700 BL

BODY: Solid spruce top,

nato back and sides

NECK: Nato**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood**SCALE:** 650mm**ELECTRONICS:** ART dual transducers, System 61 preamp**HARDWARE:** Chrome**LEFT-HANDED:** No**FINISH:** Black (pictured), Natural**CONTACT:** Yamaha Music UK 0870 444 5575**WEB:** www.yamaha.co.uk

£535

Acoustically this guitar has a very rounded tone without overbearing low end resonance

■ Electronics

The dual transducer system lets you blend between the low and high strings

■ Playability

You get style and substance with a solid spruce top and comfortable neck profile

■ Finish

The NTX700 is stylishly finished with an oval soundhole, detailed inlay and gloss Black paint job

Yamaha NTX700 BL

A nylon strung electro acoustic to quash classical guitar stereotypes

While it's unjustified, classical guitars do carry a stigma. Turn up to any elitist open mic night around the country with a classical guitar, and you run the risk of being stared at like you've just peed on your shoes. Still, if you're convinced that nylon strung guitars are used only for playing *London's Burning*, then it's time to rethink. Here's why...

Yamaha's NX range consists of two series: the classically derived NCX, and the more contemporary NTX. The latter is designed with steel string players in mind, and it's what TG has chosen to test here. Its body and neck are slimmer than a standard classical guitar, and they're joined at the 14th fret, instead of the 12th. Also onboard is Yamaha's dual ART (Acoustic Resonance Transducer) system, which lets you balance volume between the low and high string groups when you're amped up.

It's clear that Yamaha has paid attention to the aesthetics of the NTX700 too. The guitar is available in a natural finish, but our review model sports a contemporary gloss Black that – along with the tasteful inlay around the oval soundhole – further dispels the myth of a stuffy, traditional classical guitar.

The lower tension of the strings is instantly noticeable if

you come from an electric or steel string acoustic background. It's a lot more forgiving on your fingers (which is helpful for beginners). Nylon strings are obviously more mellow sounding than steel, but acoustically this guitar has a very rounded tone without overbearing low end resonance. Plus, you'll also find that playing harder adds a percussiveness to the attack of your notes.

Plugging in opens up some extra features. As well as an accurate built-in tuner (we used it to tune up straight out the box, perfectly), the blend control and the three-band EQ give a wide range of tones, and are particularly useful when switching between different picking styles or note registers.

Conclusion: The NTX700 is an extremely gratifying guitar to play. From strumming chords with a plectrum, to fingerpicking and drop D pedalling, playing this guitar is extremely fun, and has a strangely creative effect too. Die-hard classical guitarists would probably be better off looking at the sister NCX range, but if you've been raised on steel then the NTX should appeal. It offers a different acoustic sound without having to change your playing style – and at a mid-level price point. In short, we love it.

Stuart Williams

SUMMARY

For: Brilliant value tones and playability

Against: You'll have to learn to tie a string-knot

★★★★★

TG says... It's a 'Classical Gas'!



Yamaha's System 61 preamp is loaded with useful features