

I was fortunate enough to be offered an artist endorsement from Composite Acoustics back in the fall of 2007. Being something of a codger and old wooden soul, I was a little skeptical of a guitar made entirely of carbon fiber that is essentially molded and baked into form. I'm here to tell you, the Performer GX with the LR Baggs I-Mix onboard system has made a believer out of me.

Unplugged, the guitar has incredible balance across all six strings. From subtle fingerstyle to my mongrel thumb-thumping, percussive aggression, the Performer GX delivers equally well. The intonation is spot on (and superior to any instrument I've ever owned). Given the absence of a neck-body heel, I can (and have) literally capo'd as far south as the 12th fret. The integrity of the notes remain intact. I love the neck profile (which is something of a soft, broad "c-shaped" contour) and the 1 3/4" nut width. It really suits my left hand, strummed or played fingerstyle and takes well to alternate/open tunings.

The LR Baggs I-mix is straightforward but allows for a lot of tonal control. Given my thumb-heavy attack, some pick ups capture a lot of unwanted "whap" and rumble. Not so with the Performer GX and I-Mix combination: I can really crash the soundboard without worry. Plugged in, the Performer GX is warm, meaty and balanced. I carry a Feedback Buster in the case, but I rarely need to use it. It's a hassle-free guitar, plugged in and as such, is great for the mystery-meat of house PA's.

Given I play most of my shows close to home (in North and South Carolina), there are ample opportunities for outdoor gigs and festivals. The carbon construction allows me to focus on the tunes, not the humidity. Same goes for tossing her in the truck and traveling. No worries there.

Since early 2008, the CA Performer GX has become my main stage guitar and it seems like almost every other show, someone approaches and asks about it. Sometimes it's a slack-jawed, "I think I just saw a UFO" look (due to the unique construction and design of the guitar). More often it's a head-shaking "wow" from hearing that warm and meaty tone from a seemingly unlikely source. Not quite a year into owning this guitar, I'm an unabashed carbon convert.

I just ran across this great CA dealer from Salt Lake City, Utah who keeps a good supply of Composite Acoustics on hand and has genuine mom and pop store appeal: MacNichol Guitars and Mandolins. Michael's been great to deal with and I just ordered a Composite Acoustics Cargo from him. With a trip to the South Carolina coast and the Flat Rock Music Festival just around the corner, another CA guitar couldn't come at a better time .

Judging from my experiences with the CA Performer GX and all I've read about the Cargo (not to mention how difficult it is to locate one), I suspect I'll soon have another reason for shaking my head and keeping my hands busy.

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endorser of Composite Acoustics and MacNichol Guitars & Mandolins