



YAMAHA CG-TA TRANSACOUSTIC

£619

Inbuilt reverb + classical guitar
= the perfect combination?

Preconceptions are a part of our lives as guitar players, but they can be obstacles – you can't use a single-coil for heavy riffs, tapping is for shredders and nylon string guitars are only for flamenco and classical music... all wrong, but the assumptions continue. While many of us might have got to grips with a bashed-up charity shop classical guitar, we usually moved on to steel-string acoustics or an electric. Are we missing out?

There's a unique feel and tonality to nylon strings that can bring things out of us no other guitar will. Good examples encourage you to dump the pick for finger skin on string action; a

body as the 'speaker' for built-in reverb and chorus effects without any need for an amp or pedals; the circuitry is inside the guitar. It was inspiring on the previous models, but with the marriage of reverb and classical guitar here, it's made in heaven.

The guitar itself is a standard classical body with solid spruce top, laminated ovangkol back and sides with a nato neck. Yamaha have form for producing bang for buck on the classical side; build and playability here are pleasing for your first classical guitar candidate. The satin finish on the back of the neck dispels the thick gloss memories of guitars past and the setup is welcoming. A 60mm string spacing at the bridge is

THE NOTES ECHO OUT WITH CONVINCING AUTHENTICITY

softer approach pays dividends, and the wider necks are great for newcomers to fingerstyle. Arpeggios take on new dramatic textures, and because bending nylon strings higher than the A strings gets you nowhere in particular, they coax more lead fluidity from us. Yamaha seems well aware of this and has a way to make all that even better. So much so it might just win you round to the classical guitar cause.

The TransAcoustic technology here is now three years old – after the launch of the solid wood L-series model and the laminated and more affordable F series guitars last year that TG tested, there's now a compact CSF guitar and this CG. TransAcoustic technology uses the guitar's own

going to take adjustment if you've been away from this style of guitar but we soon found ourselves at home with its low action.

The build spec here is the same as the £328 Yamaha CG162S, and the level of projection here is what we would expect from that price point. It's not unfair to say this doesn't seem like a £600 guitar on build spec and pure acoustic sound. What you are getting for that extra £291 is the TransAcoustic technology and SRT piezo. So what does that really add up to for a player?

The reality for most guitarists is they often play alone. So anything that makes that experience more inspiring and addictive is valuable, right? And when you start to dial in the TransAcoustic reverb here this

1 PIEZO
In addition to the TransAcoustic attenuator, the CG-TA also features a Yamaha SRT undersaddle passive piezo pickup for plugging in at gigs

2 FINGERBOARD
It's a welcome sight to see a rosewood 'board in this post-CITES age

3 CONTROLS
There are three TransAcoustic controls on the guitar; one that toggles chorus level, a volume control for the line out and one for reverb that takes you from subtle room to cavernous hall as you go past the 12 o'clock point. The TransAcoustic effect mode is activated by holding down the volume dial

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Electro classical guitar with onboard amplified reverb and acoustic effects

TOP: Solid Engelmann spruce

BACK AND SIDES: Ovangkol (laminated)

SCALE LENGTH: 25.5" (650mm)

NECK: Nato

FRETS: 18

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood

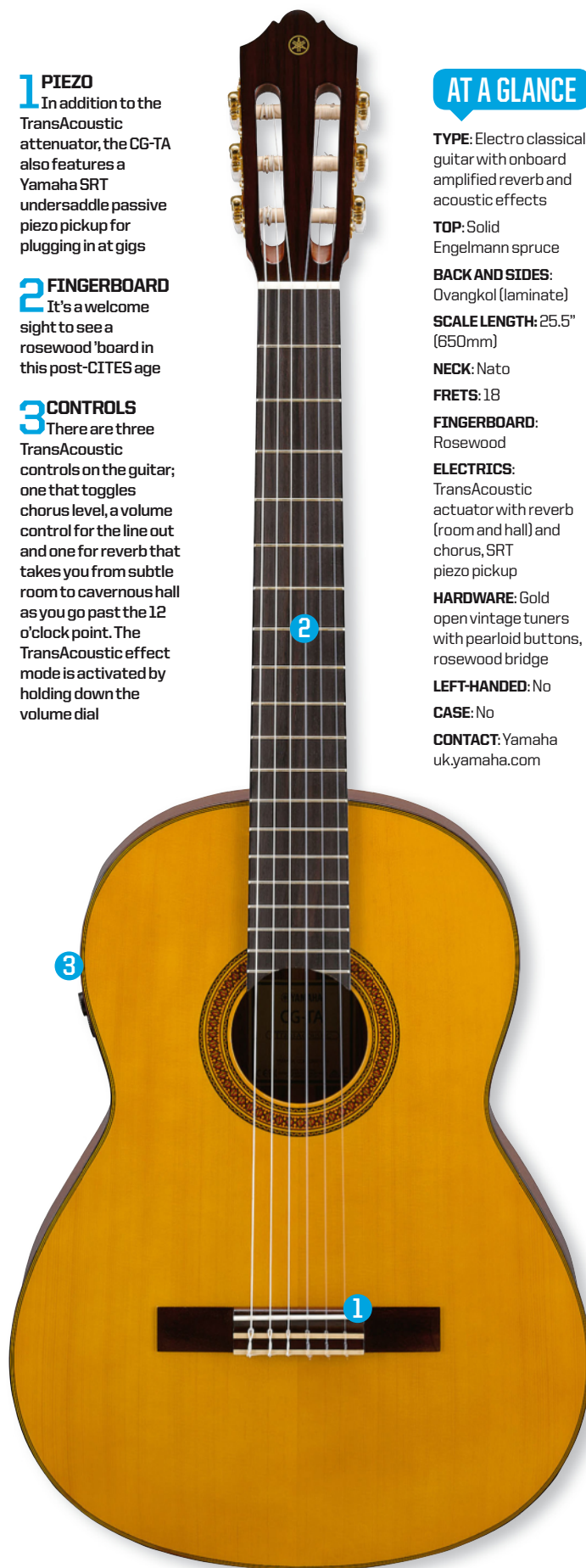
ELECTRICS: TransAcoustic actuator with reverb (room and hall) and chorus, SRT piezo pickup

HARDWARE: Gold open vintage tuners with pearloid buttons, rosewood bridge

LEFT-HANDED: No

CASE: No

CONTACT: Yamaha
uk.yamaha.com





Nylon Troubadours

Classical guitar players breaking conventions

Classical guitar has been in the mainstream spotlight in recent years for a variety of styles outside of tradition; Nick Mulvey drives his debut album's songs with a Camps Flamenco, Rodrigo y Gabriela meld genres with their Yamaha custom models (see p42) and Charlie Cunningham takes a flamenco influence into the indie-pop world. All make nylon string guitars sound percussive, vulnerable and a driving force with constantly evolving parts through a song.

Check out these five songs for some inspiration:

1. City and Colour - *Blood*
2. Charlie Cunningham - *Minimum*
3. Nick Mulvey - *Fever To The Form*
4. Rodrigo y Gabriela - *Hanuman*
5. José González - *Far Away*

instrument becomes hard to put down because it truly enhances the rounded tonality of this guitar type. Moving from room to hall with the control to suite your own taste, it's simply the perfect marriage; parts you've played a hundred times take on a whole new sense of atmosphere as the notes echo out with convincing authenticity. You can be sat in your lounge and transported to a cathedral. And it really encourages solo lead playing without accompaniment.

The chorus effect gets you into Sting and *Nothing Else Matters* territory and we found ourselves



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reining it back to avoid overly AOR tonality. The reverb is the main event here, making this kind of guitar shine in a way that makes other effects unnecessary. Best of all, you can take this experience anywhere with you, getting that reverb atmosphere without the compromises of piezo electro tone.

The CG-TA's worth is dependent on what's important to you. There are certainly better classical guitars out there for the same money, even in Yamaha's own range. But none have the TransAcoustic element. It's something that could be your go-to writing guitar in the

house or a travelling companion, but if you're serious about a classical guitar you can grow with, it might not go the distance. Nevertheless, we think it's the best showcase platform for the reverb side of Yamaha's TransAcoustic technology to date and sitting down with it in a shop could prove to be a persuasive experience.

SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	PLAYABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★

ALSO TRY...

TONEWOOD AMP

£226

The TransAcoustic attenuator's closest rival – you can fit it to the back of an acoustic with a pickup to offer eight effects (including reverb, delay, tremolo), each with three parameters, plus presets and gain control.



YAMAHA NTX700C

£638

A thinner body, narrower neck and cutaway enhance playability for electric guitar converts, while the two ART soundboard transducers make for a seriously impressive plugged in performance. Rodrigo's custom model (p42) is based on this.



YAMAHA CSF-TA

£663

Another TransAcoustic Yamaha, this has been released alongside the CG-TA but is a steel-string compact parlour. We're big fans of the previous CSF models as they offer a great blend of travel and folk guitar.

