



WALSTEIN

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**All instruments come with standard 1 year warranty. All prices inclusive of VAT.
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New kid on the Chinese block

Alexandra Kerwin, principal cornet of YBS Band, road tests the latest additions to the *Walstein* brass range

Aimed at the beginner and intermediate player, *Walstein* is beginning to make a name for affordable, quality instruments. *Walstein* instruments are manufactured in two factories that stand side-by-side in China. There are a few professional players choosing the company's saxophones over the more traditional brands. The attraction? Price and playability. So, how will the brass instruments fare? I had a look at two cornets, two flugels and a trumpet. All the instruments come with very sturdy cases, all with rucksack-type straps, with the more expensive cornet and flugel models having deluxe cases. Inside the cases, the instruments are supplied with a cloth bag and in the trumpet case there is even a pair of white gloves!

***Walstein* Flugelhorn phosphor bronze Model fl-ph – R.R.P. £249.00**

On first inspection, this instrument is beautiful, with a wonderful bronze finish. It sits snugly in its case and is supplied with a *Bobby Shew* mouthpiece. What is initially surprising about it is the addition of a third valve trigger, which really is excellent at this price. The valves worked perfectly, even after standing in my house for a few days before I opened the cases. The valve tops are very similar in style to the Yamaha *Xeno* trumpets and cornets and look very stylish. The horn blows very freely throughout the middle and lower registers, and has a lovely, bright tone. Going into the upper register, it was noticeable that there was quite some resistance in the horn; from top A upwards took real control. Intonation was generally excellent throughout.

Overall – What a price! This flugel is a beauty to look at and has a very appealing tone. It needs control in the upper register, but what a bargain considering the build quality and extras.

***Walstein* Flugelhorn Gold Plate Model fl-GP – R.R.P. £499.00**

Another stunningly finished instrument, this time in gold plate. I was immediately thrilled with the richness of the sound throughout the range. The instrument was very open in the lower and middle registers, although there was some resistance in the upper register, but not as noticeable as in the fl-ph model. The valves moved very freely and didn't stick at all throughout the testing. The only note that was suspect in terms of tuning was a middle D, which I found to be slightly flat. The tone quality was very warm and comfortable, and the trigger action was easy and sturdy.

Overall – Excellent value for this eye-catching horn - a snip at this price and I would not limit its use to just student and intermediate players. I think this would suit all abilities up to professional level.

***Walstein* Trumpet Model tr-LQ – R.R.P. £189.00 (also available in silver plate at £199.00)**

This is an excellent price tag for a trumpet that comes with a third valve slide ring and a first valve finger hook. The instrument feels quite strong and sturdy, although the valves weren't quite as smooth at first, but after a quick oiling were fine.

I found this model to be very restrictive in the top register, although pretty easy blowing in the middle and lower registers, and the sound was good. It really was quite hard work to blow from a top G upwards. I believe this model trumpet would be very much suited to a beginner player and then replaced later on. Intonation was fine across the registers and the trumpet was supplied with an unbranded 7C mouthpiece.

Overall – Good value for money as a beginner instrument. Nice tone in the lower and middle registers, but suffers in high register.

***Walstein* Cornet Model cr-LQ – R.R.P. £189.00 (also available in silver plate at £199.00)**

What a revelation this cornet is. It is a real stunner of an instrument and very difficult to fault. Instead of triggers, it comes with slide ring and finger hook on the third and first valve slides respectively. The intonation was absolutely spot-on and it blew freely throughout the entire range. I was stunned at the quality of the instrument and how sturdy it felt to hold. It has a lovely resonance throughout the full range of the cornet and was a joy to play.

Overall – This is a first rate instrument and should prove to be very attractive to beginner players, schools and bands. A real bargain.

***Walstein* Cornet Model cr-SG – R.R.P. £389.00**

Silver-plated with gold trim, this has everything going for it in the looks department. Would it match up in the playing?

The cornet seemed quite compact, yet sturdy when picking it up. I used my own *Sparx* 2B mouthpiece on this cornet to give me a real comparison to the instrument I normally use. This instrument has a rich, silky sound and was a joy to play in all registers. I played a few of my favourite solos then moved on to the British Open test-piece and found it capable in all areas with a sonorous sound in the middle register. As with all the *Walstein* instruments I tested, there were no real intonation issues.

Overall - Aimed at beginner and intermediate players, I think this would compare favourably with the professional model cornets on offer today and at a very low price, but with a look of class.

Summary

When people talk about instruments from China, there is often a collective groan and at least a presumption of unfavourable quality.

What I can say is that the build quality here is of the highest standard. I have played instruments in the past where the finish has been poor at best i.e. valve tops and caps still rough and jagged, poor plating and all for a hefty price tag. There was none of this evident in these instruments.

The only potential problem could be wear and tear on the plastic valve guides, but they should be easily replaced. If we are to encourage youngsters into brass instrument playing then surely it is a must to have affordable, yet durable, instruments: *Walstein* appear to have this right.

Woodwind & Brass Ltd was established in December 2001, but its roots are found in a three-generation history of traditional music retailers and musicians. It is run by a small group of dedicated people, including a sales team and specialist repairers.

It is proud to be the UK's sole distributor for the *Walstein* brand of Woodwind & Brass Instruments and accessories.

Walstein small brass is the latest addition to the Company's growing range. After spending four years researching the Chinese market and looking for

suitable factories, it found long term commitment and production and quality control from a group of people responsive to the Company's needs regarding instrument development. It has also expanded to include a new range of quality cases and gig bags for brass – from cornet to euphonium.

All instruments are checked carefully and played by Peter Yetman, the resident brass repairer and a full member of NAMIR (National Association of Musical Instrument Repairers). He was with the Royal Marines for 41 years, playing cornet in the band and trumpet in

the orchestra. He was trained by the Royal Marines and, in 1996, was placed in charge of the Royal Marines brass workshop.

Walstein continues to foster a highly principled work ethic, particularly with regard to education – 'spreading the word' to players and prospective players in schools, bands, orchestras and the private sector. It is particularly keen to develop its relationship with schools, colleges and music institutions and invites all interested parties to contact it by phone, fax or e-mail for further information.