

The Magazine of Acoustic String Instruments

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# FRETS®

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Renaissance Man

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3 Luthiers Compare Notes.



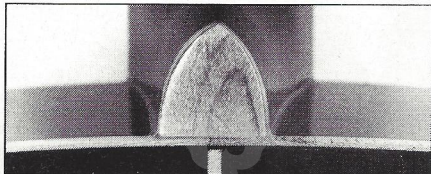
# FRETS Looks At....

## Daion's "The '78" Guitar

MANY OF THE instruments available in this country today are produced in foreign countries. "The '78" is a dreadnought-sized guitar manufactured in Japan and distributed by MCI, 7400 Imperial Drive, Waco, TX 76710. The instrument was shipped to us in its hardshell case for evaluation this month.

The guitar's top, sides, and back are all made from laminated woods. Although laminates are often considered to be a "second-best" choice for guitar bodies, they offer some structural and cost advantages.

The soundboard's outer laminate is from a member of the spruce family, although we cannot identify the exact species. The grain is generally tight and straight, but that would have little bearing on the acoustical qualities since the soundboard is of three-ply construction. The soundboard is bordered by a natural wood binding strip of maple, with a darker inside strip.



The back and sides are laminated figured mahogany, and the back edge of the instrument is also bordered by the light-and-dark-wood combination binding. A 1/8" strip of maple also joins the two back halves and runs the full length of the guitar body. The bracing configuration is the common X design, and the overall bracing construction is generally light. The two bass tone bars are scalloped, and the X members have been both nicely shaped and shaved of any excess mass. All of the brace fitting and joining is well executed. The bridge plate inside the instrument has been stained dark to look like rosewood; but a light-colored splinter near one of the bridge-pin holes indicates that it is probably maple, or some similar hardwood.

Checking inside the instrument, we note that the neck joint features a special fretboard extender, which assists in maintaining the straightness of the fretboard at the intersection of the neck and body. We believe that extender to be part of the neck; and if so, it is a well-thought-out feature.

The neck is luan mahogany and is a bit fatter than we would prefer. The peghead and fretboard are also bound with the maple/dark-wood combination, and the peghead is veneered in rosewood. Six gold-plated geared machines are fitted to the peghead, and their action is satisfactorily smooth. An adjustable truss rod is accessi-

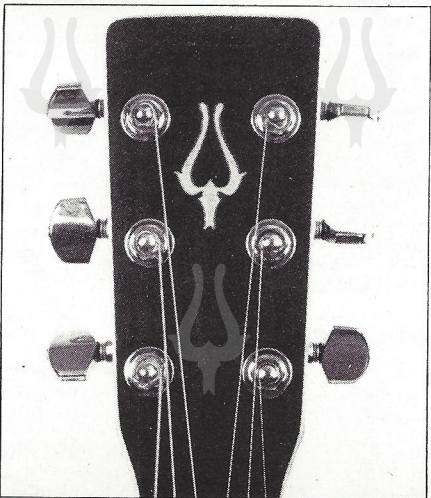
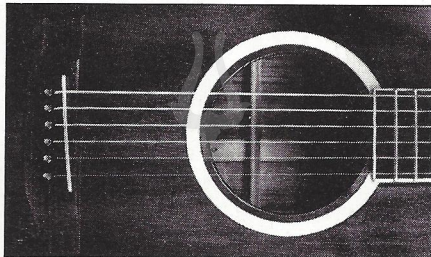
### CHECKLIST

Model .....	"The '78"
Retail price .....	\$399.00
Hardshell case .....	\$78.50
Availability .....	dealers
Weight (on strap) .....	4½ pounds
Weight (in case) .....	11½ pounds
Back/resonator material .....	mahogany laminate
Rim material .....	mahogany laminate
Soundboard material .....	spruce laminate
Neck material .....	Luan mahogany
Truss rod .....	adjustable
Fretboard material .....	rosewood
Frets .....	.095"
Bridge .....	rosewood/brass
Tailpiece .....	n/a
Hardware .....	geared, enclosed
Plating .....	gold
Scale length .....	25¼"
Neck width at nut .....	1¾"
Body width .....	15¾"
Body length .....	19¾"
Body depth .....	4¾"
Overall length .....	30½"

ble through the soundhole, with adjustments made via an allen wrench that is provided in the case pocket.

The rosewood fretboard is ovaled, and it features round brass position dots. The side position markers on the neck are likewise round bass dots. This model's nut and bridge saddle are also made of brass. The bridge base is Indian rosewood, and it has real ebony bridge pins with pearl center dots.

The guitar is finished in a deep caramel color, which imparts a pleasant richness to



the wood. All lacquered parts have a high-gloss finish.

Two features detract from the instrument's cosmetic attributes. A ring of plain maple is used as a soundhole rosette. Although something plain can often be very pleasing here, we feel it would be more acceptable if the wood were figured maple of some sort. Our second thought relates to the peghead decoration, which is a design routed into the peghead veneer and partly filled with lacquer. In our opinion it should either be filled or routed out fully. ■

The graph below represents the consensus of the *Frets* editorial staff, based on our collective experience. The sample instrument, as received from the manufacturer or supplier, was evaluated on its own merits, relative to other instruments within its price range; and on its commercial acceptability in today's market.

