

REES RAPPORT

PRICE
£885

Louis Thorne builds a rapport with a semi-hollow electric from Cambridge luthier Clive Rees...

Luthier Clive Rees builds guitars and basses in his well-established Cambridge workshop, offering a small but ever-growing range of individual looking models that are available 'from stock', as well as providing all manner of bespoke custom-build options, of course. Mr Rees's Rapport model, reviewed here, is the latest addition. It's a Seymour Duncan-powered, semi-hollow design which also features his versatile '2010 switching system' and some nice hardware. What is more, this guitar is available for rather less than you might expect.

Body & Neck

The Rapport has a solid korina body that has been given two hollow side chambers and a single f-hole, which reduces its weight of course and should contribute to the guitar's sustain. Interestingly, a couple of small wooden plates on the instrument's rear reveal that the chambers have been routed out from behind, enabling the body to comprise a single piece of wood. Some gentle carving around its edges mean that this relatively diminutive guitar is very comfortable to hold, whether sitting or standing and, despite its light weight, it still balances very nicely on a strap.

One reason that Clive Rees favours korina for his guitar bodies is that it takes colours well and this Rapport model has been given a warm sunburst hue, with a wax and oil finish that sits somewhere in between gloss and matt. While this guitar may lack the pristine shine of some instruments, it feels organic and 'woody' – after being



The Rapport is kitted out with quality hardware and Seymour Duncan pickups

THE HOLLOW CHAMBERS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE RAPPORT'S KORINA BODY HAVE BEEN ROUTED OUT FROM THE REAR

perhaps a little underwhelmed on first sight, this finish has really grown on us.

The guitar's neck is home to 22 well finished frets and has a profile and dimensions that should appeal to a broad spectrum of players, being slim but still with enough meat to get hold of. The instrument's pau ferro fingerboard

has a compound radius, starting with a 10-inch radius at the nut and flattening out in the upper reaches to 16 inches. This means that wide bends don't fret out at the top of the neck, even with the low action that this Rapport has been given.

In fact, the playability of this instrument is generally excellent

with our only small gripe being that the guitar's square heel doesn't allow quite the effortless top fret access that a slimmer design might. Some decoration is afforded by the fingerboard's lovely looking abalone dots and by Mr Rees's rabbit logo on the guitar's slim headstock. In keeping with the finish, these appointments are smart and well executed without being flashy.

Hardware & Parts

The Rapport features a Gotoh wrap-around bridge. This allows for Tune-O-Matic style height adjustment at either side and individual intonation adjustment for each string, as well as making efficient use of the space available on the Rapport's modestly proportioned body. As for the pickups, the review model features the perennially popular pairing of Seymour Duncan's Jazz and JB humbuckers, but players with more specific tastes in such things should bear in mind that Mr Rees is, of course, well able to fit whatever units might be required.

Knurled metal knobs take care of master volume and tone duties and their pots feel to be of a high quality. While a three-way toggle switch selects the pickups in the usual manner, a further knob controls a four-way rotary switch that provides access to a "voice character" selection that is the essence of this guitar's '2010 switching system'. Besides regular humbucking operation, the rotary switch allows additional 'single-coil', 'pair-coil' and 'triple-coil' voices and this should provide a somewhat broader tonal palette than is the norm for





REES RAPPORT

Price: £885
Built in: UK
Scale length: 648mm (25.5 inches)
Nut width: 43mm (1.69 inches)
Body: Korina, semi-hollow (solid centre with two side chambers)
Neck: Maple, bolt-on
Fingerboard: Pau ferro, 254-406mm compound radius (10-16 inches)
Frets: 22 medium
Pickups: Seymour Duncan Jazz & JB humbuckers
Controls: 1 x volume, 1 x tone, 3-way selector, 4-way rotary coil selector (single-, pair-, triple-coil, humbucker)
Hardware: Sperzel locking tuners, Gotoh adjustable wrap-around bridge
Weight: 3.2kg (7lb)
Finishes: Violin sunburst (shown), many other options available; oil and wax finish
Case: Hiscox hard case available separately
Left-handers: Yes, no extra charge

CONTACT DETAILS

Rees Electric Guitars
 Tel: 07889 160660
 www.rees-electric-guitars.com

GB VERDICT

GOLD STARS

- ★ Solid and dependable feel
- ★ Versatile set of tones
- ★ Great value for a UK-made instrument

BLACK MARKS

- A slimmer heel would be a welcome enhancement

IDEAL FOR...

Those after a reliable and versatile guitar for stage or studio

GB RATING



THESE SEYMOUR DUNCAN UNITS TREAD THEIR WELL-WORN PATH WITH EASE

a twin-humbucker guitar.

A Fender roller nut provides a friction-free route for the strings to take towards the Rapport's set of Sperzel locking tuners, arranged on Rees's new three-a-side headstock shape. These are among the easiest to use and most reliable machineheads in our experience and their presence on this guitar is a welcome one.

Sounds

On first strum, this guitar reveals a sound with a defined top end and plenty of sustain, which bodes well for its amplified performance. With the bridge humbucker selected, it is clear that this guitar

can rock out if needed. Things still sound defined even at very high gain settings and the volume pot's smooth taper provides a useful route to cleaning up the sound a bit. The neck pickup is much more plummy and round sounding, with these Seymour Duncan units treading their well-worn path with consummate ease.

Switch to single-coil mode and the Rapport shows that it can cope with these sounds with much greater aplomb than many a coil-tapped axe. The bridge is the place to go for some Tele-esque twang and the neck coil should please fans of Brent Mason's jazzier moments, with both coils together perhaps a little less inspiring overall.

As for the extra tones, the Rapport's 'triple-coil' sound is the most worthy of note. By combining one fully humbucking pickup with the nearest single coil of the other, it really adds a bit of beef to the proceedings, with the pickup selector switch now providing two different sounds, in either the bridge or neck position. The bridge setting is particularly



The headstock design is brand new

good, especially with some crunch dialed into the amp, with the sound somehow a little broader and thicker.

The 'pair-coil' setting, which lets you combine the inner or outer coils of the two pickups, also brings something extra to proceedings – though perhaps without being quite as useful – but these are worthwhile extra options that make this guitar rather a lot more versatile than most.

Conclusion

The Rapport feels like an instrument that has been designed with the player in mind, with its comfortably contoured body, solid hardware and enhanced switching options. If you want a handmade guitar, but don't require a great deal of ostentation, then this Rees Rapport will fit the bill admirably. Of course, there is great scope for tailoring the design to your own specification but as an "off the shelf" instrument, the Rapport is a versatile and great sounding guitar that represents excellent value for money. **GB**



The neck joint uses recessed screws



We really like the wrap-around bridge