

# Epiphone®

# review



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## Broadway

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### Jumbo Archtop For Jazz... And Rock: The Epiphone Broadway

People generally equate fatbody archtops with jazz, and for good reason - they're responsible for the warm, woody tones that have fueled swing and bebop guitar for 60 years now. But jumbo hollowbodies also have their place in rock 'n' roll, all the way from early Chuck Berry and Duane Eddy to Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (four mondo Gretsch's onstage simultaneously!), not to mention '70's and '80's aces like Steve Howe, Who's Next-era Pete Townsend, and Triumph's Rick Emmet. Today, even former solidbody-users like John McLaughlin, Larry Coryell, and Al Di Meola can be heard blowing fusion solos on big-momma archtops. To that end, let's bring forward the Epiphone Broadway for inspection. Although this is a fully-functional jazz axe, replete with a grand 17" lower bout, the presence of two humbuckers deftly implies you can rock on this baby too.

Essentially an Epiphone Emperor Regent with humbuckers, the Broadway's body is made of a select spruce laminated top (FYI, most hollowbodies also have laminated tops), and laminated maple back and sides that are lightly figured. The 25.5" scale multi-piece neck is also maple, while the bound fretboard is stained rosewood to give more of a dark ebony appearance (the nut

measures 1.68"). A big thumbs up must go to Epiphone for the snazzy "block and triangle" abalone fingerboard inlays and vine headstock inlay, which are most impressive for a hollowbody in this price range. I would however, suggest replacing the cheesy black-and-silver control knobs with something more classy, such as gold ones to complement the the gold hardware. The guitar has a rosewood bridge and adjustable Frequensator tailpiece, as well as the obligatory pair of f-holes on the top. Workmanship is pretty good on this Korean-made guitar. There are a couple instances of filled-in gouges or uneven lacquering on the body, but when you consider that many archtops start around \$4000 and can work their way up to \$10,000 or more in a heartbeat, this doesnt concern me too much. The Broadway feels rock-solid and gig-ready.

To my ears, the Broadway's humbuckers are voiced with more of a rock/fusion slant, having lots of puckery mids and large bottom end. It may not have the woody, air-like tone of some jumbos, but it's still a perfectly serviceable jazz sound. I even drove it through the gain channel of a Crate amp as well as on the clean channel with a Tech 21 fuzzbox, and got some nasty early-fusion tones - think vintage McLaughlin and Coryell. (But, hey, watch that overdrive level, unless you really like howling feedback.) Of course, jazzers like a good unplugged sound and the Broadway has a pleasing-enough acoustic sound for practicing, though it's not on par with upscale jazzboxes that are made for non-electric playing. But again, expect to pay for that privilege.

Also, if you've never used an archtop before, beware of string changing. Why? Because the bridge is not attached to the body and if you're someone who takes all the strings off first, then your bridge will fall off and you might not know where to put it again (unless you mark it's location with masking tape or wax pencil). Instead, change the strings one at a time. But all told, the Broadway is a fine value for the money. Again, you can spend a mint on jumbo hollowbodies, but if you want to get into the archtop vibe on a budget and dont want to play a piece of crap, this guitar fits the bill nicely. It's also a great looker, being very sexy in both sunburst and blonde. I'll take the blonde, thank you.

--Pete Prown  
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