

KB Saxophone Services Tenor Necks

Make Your Horn Sing Again

Kim Bock of KB Saxophone Services has developed a wonderful line of handcrafted saxophone necks that saxophonists would be well advised to check out. The neck is the most critical part of the saxophone, affecting everything from tuning and tone color to overall quality of sound.

Bock originally had the idea to craft new saxophone necks as replacements for the older Super Balanced Action, Balanced Action and Mark VI models from Selmer. Now, he will make a neck for most (but not all) old and new tenors made by Selmer, Yamaha, Keilwerth, P. Mauriat, Eastman and others. He has special gauges to measure the tenon opening, and he'll send them to you to get the exact fit for your particular instrument. He even asked me for the serial number of my Selmer Reference 54, because sometimes companies make subtle changes to their tenon designs over time and the size of the tenon opening changes.

The new KB necks are remarkable as replacement necks, even for new horns. And in most cases, they're going to be better than the originals.

Boch sent me three necks to try: the Canyon (made of brass) and two Redwood models (one brass, one copper). I found advantages to each. The Redwood brass model had a full, meaty sound, closest to my Selmer Reference neck; it was very responsive up and down the instrument with excellent pitch. I found the copper version of the Redwood had a slightly brighter sound with a little buzz, great response and evenness throughout. Saxophonists playing a darker-sounding horn will find that this one can

add some projection and brightness. I found the Canyon to be the most subtle of the three—very even, centered and in tune.

All three necks offered something for everyone. I feel like I could play any of them and be comfortable. All KB necks are handmade, and the Redwood copper is hand-hammered, making it very different than the necks that come standard with the horn you buy.

Traditionally, most necks are put together on a mandrel, where the brass is wrapped around the mandrel and then silver-soldered together. Boch's are two pieces of metal that have identical measurements and wall thickness on both sides and are then silver-soldered.

Finding good vintage necks has become increasingly difficult these days. Having this option is a great opportunity to find the missing link—so you can make your horn sing again.

—Mark Colby

Ordering info: kbsax.com

