Review – Canning Blue Drone Reeds

The latest drone reeds from Canning Reedmakers are the Canning Blue Drone Reeds. This came in one design only, a carbon blade bass and polycarbonate blade tenors. The body is now a blue plastic, which does not absorb moisture like the previous cellulose material and gives a pleasing, more vibrant sound.

Canning Blue Drone Reeds showing Carbon blade bass and Polycarbonate tenors.

The reeds come in a very professionally designed package, which is quite robust ensuring they get to you in good condition, even from the most negligent of postmen.

The reeds no longer come with instructions, obviously the maker is assuming that everyone now understands the basics of how a synthetic drone reed works.

The reeds themselves are well made precise and clean. Great care had been taken in assembling the reeds as well.

After applying hemp to the reeds and installing them in the drones, the first thing we noticed was an improved end on the reed which enabled insertion into a wider variety of reed seats, which could be an issue with the old design, which not only wider but tapered. Our first test was to see what they were like straight out of the box using the Carbon bass reed. These were truly plug and play with just a few minor alterations for set up and pitch.

Canning Blue Carbon Bass Reed

The Carbon bass is deep and resonant with strong bottom end harmonics. It was also very stable. We found in some drones, a little experience was required to overcome a few minor tuning spot issues, but this was not difficult. We also found the bass could be a little more stable in a couple of sets, but replacing the rubber bridle with an O ring gave a considerable improvement in stability in some drones.

Tenors were again virtually plug and play. There is a nice unison and melding between the tenors, which I like, without losing out on vibrancy and brightness. The bass is dominant but not over bearing. It does have a good range of adjustment from the bridle alone.

As with all drone reeds that have very small blades/tongues, the tenors change quite drastically in response to even the most minute bridle adjustments, so great care and ongoing testing is essential when first setting them up. However, once they are set, that's pretty much it.

Canning Polycarbonate Tenor Reeds.

Adjustments to pitch are made by a significant rubber bridle or a grub screw inserted into the nose cone of the reed. The bridles made a significant adjustment as compared to the grub screws, but a wide range of overall pitch adjustment using the two methods was possible. The hemped tenons on the tenor reeds are not tapered and narrower than the older versions, allowing them to be better inserted into a wider range of reed seats.

We would suggest properly seating the reeds, adjusting the bridles for strength and balance and then doing any fine adjustments to tuning height using primarily the grub screw in the nose cone which is press fit into the end of the reed.

Nose cone on end of reed that houses the pitch adjustment grub screw

The reeds were easy to balance for strength and stability. Very reliable and the tenors gave a good bright vibrant tone and the bass reed has good strong lower end harmonics with a vibrant tone and good volume. A great blend together without the need to find a different bass reed. We highly recommend these reeds.

Canning Brue Drone Reeds are now available from us at the School of Piping Shop. Contact us at schoolofpiping@gmail.com to order.