

Iain Culross – review of Willson Celebration 460 Model Cornet

Build Quality and Design

The cornet is of a similar design to the old 921 model Boosy and Hawkes Sovereigns and original Besson Prestige, and plays with the much favoured “traditional British” style and sound that most brass band players want from a cornet. The build quality is far superior to most of the other competitors on the market and I was very impressed by the craftsmanship and finish of the instrument.

The valves work very well, fast and slick, although had the odd moment of stickiness due to the instrument being a new demo model and most likely needing played in and some cleaning. The only slight criticism I have of the overall design is the adjustment mechanism on the main tuning slide trigger-it’s a bit over-complicated and fiddly I found.

Playability

As mentioned above, the instrument is very responsive and gives a desirable traditional cornet tone, and the valves are fast and slick and respond well. It is very free-blowing, giving very little resistance when playing low or in the extreme upper registers, and the intonation is very level and well balance, requiring little alteration by the player. The 460 model may perhaps be too big for some players and they may find the smaller bore 420/430 more suitable to them.

Value for Money

The Celebration is competitively priced, at around the same price of a Besson Sovereign, but you get a lot more cornet for your money with the Willson in my personal opinion. The name is perhaps not as well known, or as in-your-face as certain other manufacturers around at the moment, but the instrument speaks for itself and all-round stands out for me as the best cornet on the market today.

Overall I would not hesitate in recommending this cornet over all others, nor in playing it myself.

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