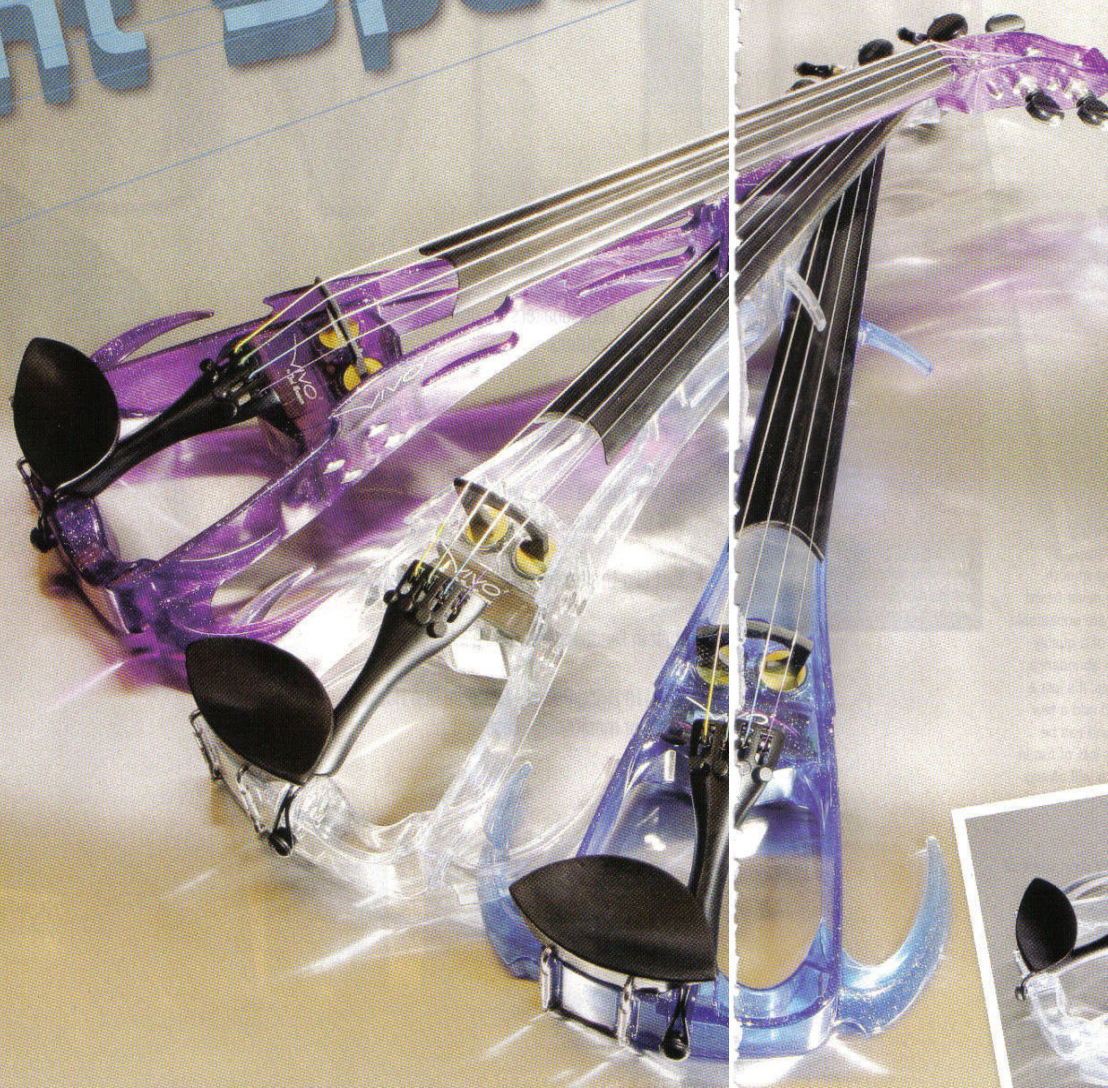


# Light Speed VIOLIN



**It's got lights and sound, and it's probably the most advanced electric violin on the market today.**

**David Etheridge bows the Vivo 2.**

**There's a good range of electric violins on the market, a few of which I've investigated in these very pages over the years. While most of them take a traditional approach to the art of violin making by fitting the standard bridge and body with electronics, few (if any) have taken a completely revolutionary approach - until now.**

Ted Brewer started off as a violin-maker in 1993, but quickly started to make use of acrylic compounds for his instruments, letting the combination of new shapes and advances in electronics provide eye catching instruments. He first exhibited his violins at the Bracknell Music Festival in 1999 with an exhibition called 'Sculptured Sound'. In 2001, he received a commission from Vanessa Mae for her album *Subject to Change*, providing here with a custom *Crossbow* Violin. The *Vivo 2* has been released to meet increased demand for Ted's instruments, and this is the one that we're looking at this month.

#### **FUTURISTIC DRAGON**

The *Vivo 2*'s body design eliminates all unwanted size and materials. The polycarbonate body flares out from the neck towards the base, which is wide enough to feel totally comfortable under the chin. However, there are many lightening holes on

the body ribs showing the high tech nature of the shape. Small wings at the base help you position your chin against the chin rest, and another small wing half way down the neck (where the body would start on a traditional violin) helps left hand positioning.

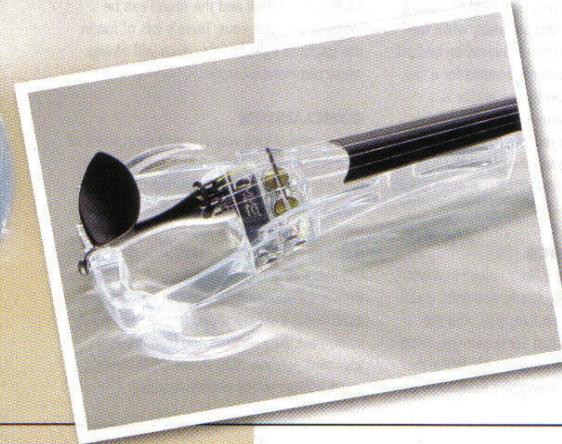
The fingerboard and chin rest are standard ebony, while the tuners are Grovers, which work beautifully and smoothly. There's none of the usual jerky slipping you can get with traditional wooden pegs here! Thomastik *Dominant* strings are fitted as standard (and very responsive they are too) but you can always fit your own choice if preferred. The tailpiece is aluminium, but is nicely painted to match the fingerboard; the only giveaway is that it feels cold to the touch and from underneath you can see it's not a solid moulding. This is fitted with knurled wheel fine string adjusters.

#### **ARE FRIENDS ELECTRONIC?**

The electronics side provides the cream on the cake here. The Carbon Fibre bridge sits on two piezo pickups, which are Ted Brewer's own design, and a radically new concept in pickup design in that all the functions are microprocessor controlled. This 21st century approach has paid off in spades in the sound and tone capabilities. On the right hand side of the violin (in playing position) there are four teardrop shaped touch buttons: two each for volume and tone control. The onboard microprocessor memorises your settings even when the PP3 battery is removed, while there are rows of white LEDs that indicate the volume and tone settings. There's also the sound to light facility which can be turned on and off, but when on lights up in response to your playing. The perfect thing for less shy and retiring violinists!

#### **PERFORMANCE**

The *Vivo 2* is an exercise in simplicity. To fit the battery, you simply remove the backplate with its thumbscrew, refit and away you go. Both LED banks may light momentarily. Press the volume and/or tone down buttons until you've got the results you want. There's both a 1/4" jack socket and a minijack/headphone socket available for practice ▶▶



#### **Quick Flicks - Performance**



Tribute Bands - pg 42



OLP Tony Levin - pg 50



Trace Elliott - pg 55



Combo 5-way - pg 58

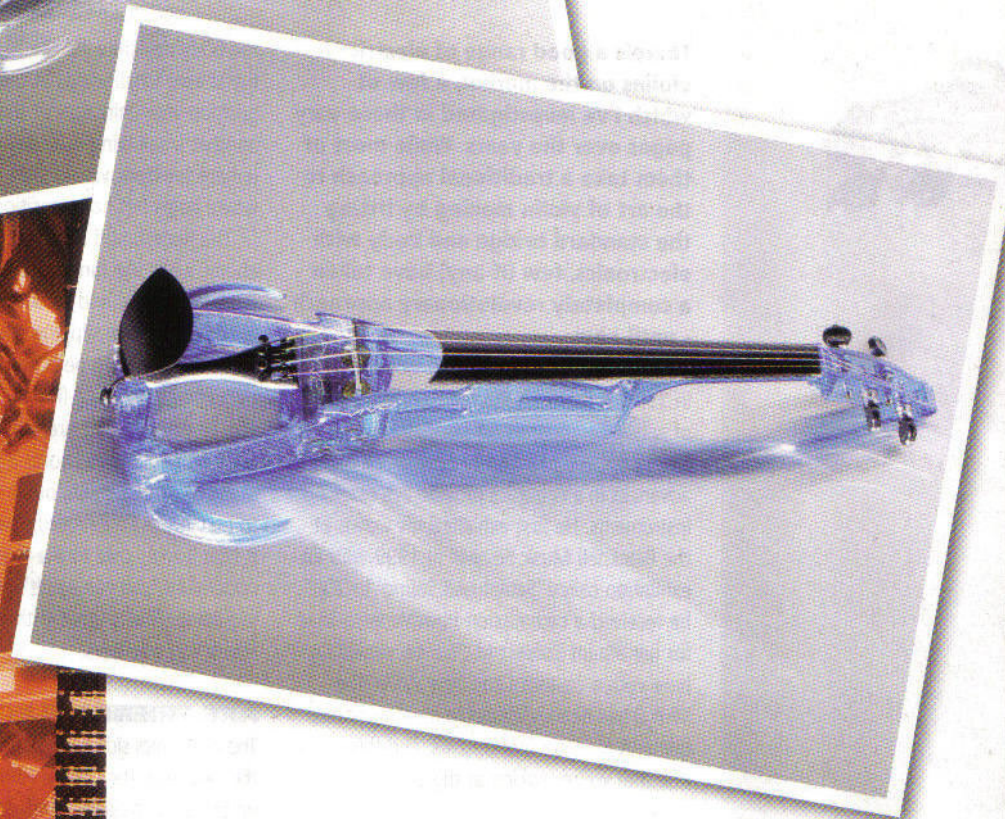


Laney CX - pg 66



X-Guitar - pg 70





purposes. This also has its own separate amplifier, so it can also be used as an on stage monitor source. Once the battery is fitted you turn the violin on by touching the volume up button for 2 seconds, and it auto powers off when not played for over four minutes. If you touch both tone buttons for a few seconds the processor will produce a 440hz tone for tuning purposes, while the Sound to Light function is turned on and off by touching both volume buttons for a few seconds. Situated under the bridge is a green LED which shows battery condition; this will change to red when the battery's on the way out, and switches off all the lighting functions, which gives you a few more hours playing time.

#### PERFORMANCE

So what's the *Vivo 2* like to play? In a word, fabulous. Immensely strong and light, you'll have no problems on long gigs, and the instrument itself is just SO responsive. There's bags of level into a mixing desk, while the tone control gives everything from an in your

face top end squeal to the most smooth and mellow sounds, which I've never heard anywhere else. The electronics are unbeatable, fully capturing all the nuances of a quality violin with warmth and tone in abundance, and absolutely no tinny qualities. It's just a delight to play as it stands, and add a few FX through a desk and the sound can be indescribably gorgeous. There's lots of fun in the sound to light facility, which will always cause comment on stage.

#### CONCLUSION

We've come a long way in a very short space of time with the high tech approach to the violin. It doesn't seem that long ago that players were stuffing their instruments with cotton wool to avoid feedback and fitting glorified guitar pickups. The sound was, well, electric, but that's all you could say about it. With Ted Brewer's instruments, you've got eye catching good looks, a superb sound from a responsive instrument, easy controls and features, and your own personal light show! What more could a 21st century violinist require?

## The Score

### KEYNOTES

- Electric Violin w/ Monocoque frame composed of advanced polymers
- Ebony fingerboard and chin rest, Grover machines and string adjusters in an Aluminium tailpiece, Carbon Fibre Bridge
- Thomastik Dominant strings, Piezo charge pickup
- Digitally controlled analogue charge amplifier
- Touch controls for volume and tone w/ separate headphone socket
- Onboard electronic tuner
- Auto power off
- PP3 battery supplied
- Available in clear, or clear, blue or purple with metallic particles.

**Price: £799.00 (inc VAT)**

### High Notes

- ▲ Exceptionally strong construction, allied with unbeatable lightness in use
- ▲ Terrific sound and very playable
- ▲ Cutting edge electronics give a faithful reproduction of all the instrument's nuances.
- ▲ Easy to use controls, with many nice touches
- ▲ The lights will go down a storm on stage!

### Low Notes

- ▼ None-it's all positive!

**Ted Brewer Violins:**

**(01522) 525161**

**[www.tedbreweriolins.co.uk](http://www.tedbreweriolins.co.uk)**