

KBW 12 STRING BASS

I have had several requests from players, asking for a working and playable 12 string Bass, but this in itself proved difficult. This became a personal challenge for me, stemming initially from the “heart ache” of designing a useable and functioning bridge. Then there was the engineering behind that many strings at that scale length, with getting the string spacing right, addressing intonation capabilities, and getting the bass to actually be “playable”.

I set about designing the bridge some time ago, which took many months. In conjunction with ETS I came up with a bridge and tail piece that I eventually was satisfied with. There are not many 12 string bridges on the market, if any. The others I have seen are simply not even worth consideration. I wonder if any thought was given to their designexcept cheap. The evolution of my design allowed for the independent intonation adjustment for the pair of octave strings from their respective fundamental brothers. One of the other challenges was to achieve correct string spacing between not only the octave strings, but between the octave pairs and its matching fundamental string.

The bridge tailpiece is top loadable, and given the complexity of a re-string and tune, this tailpiece allows for a string to be easily popped in from the top. Should a string break for example, the job of replacement is easily managed. The string also doesn't have to be *rasped* through the string feed hole. Ever wondered what this does to the life of a string? The tail piece also cleverly acts as a string guide, and keeps the strings aligned as they sit on their respective saddles.

The headstock angle on this Bass was kept to accepted angles This was not only to help with the simple practicality of being able to fit it into a case, but also to provide sufficient pressure at the zero fret. The neck is a bolt on neck and runs all the way up to the neck pick up, as I wanted to have an extended foot into the bass. There are 2 dual truss rods which are adjustable at the base of the neck. The truss rods also run at the matching string angles. The neck also contains 3 carbon fibre reinforcing bars. They run in a triangular fashion, keeping the neck stiff, but the centre bar also extends all the way down the long headstock. There is enormous tension on this neck. The neck has a zero fret. The bone nut is precisely cut, and basically acts as a string guide over the zero fret. Why a zero fret? This bass has such a powerful sound-that uniformity of this sound was imperative to translate to all the open strings vs fretted notes.



There are mother of pearl block inlays, with the Roman numeral XII at the 12th fret for a little artistic touch. The fingerboard has blind binding, which means the fret slots don't go out to the edge of the fretboard. It makes the side of the fingerboard smoother on feel, and if there is any expansion or contraction, the frets don't poke out and feel sharp. The side position markers are blue *Luminlay*.



Importantly, the strings run as straight as possible to each machine head, without touching other machine heads or other strings. I did not want any string to be dampened, nor any further cross talk, which I believe is an issue on some other 12 string bass designs. I used Hipshot Ultralite machine heads for the obvious weight and balance considerations.



I wanted to keep the design of the body a little more modern, with a slightly extended upper horn, in order to help achieve balance. This bass does NOT neck dive when strapped. The body is contoured, not only curved on the top, but also curved on the back.



This example was finished in Transparent Blue, no particular reason, it just seemed right to do so at that moment! It is a full gloss, 2 component transparent finish.

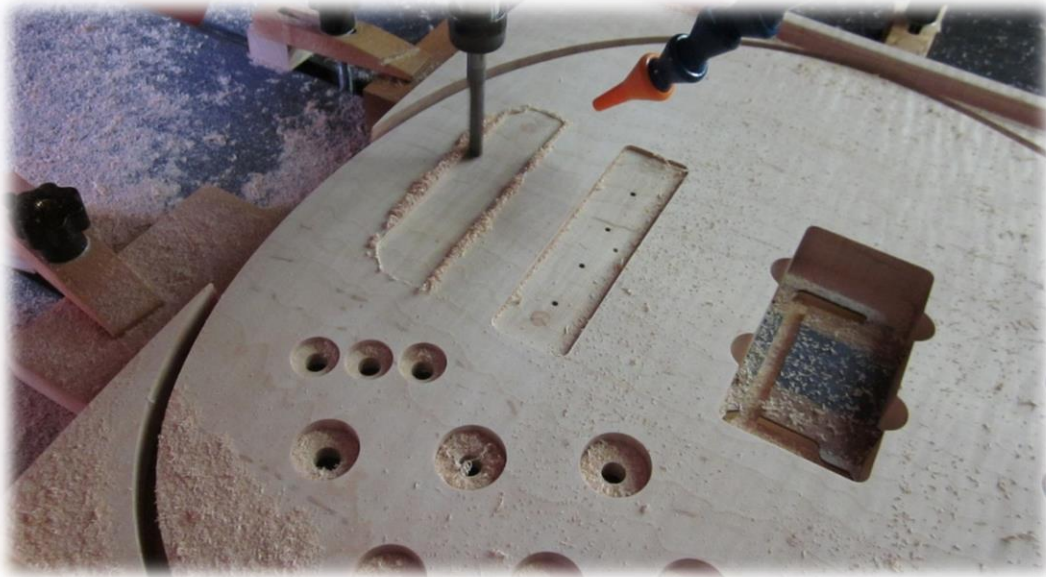


The hatches for the electronics bay are timber and magnetic for easy access. I also curved the hatches to match the radius of the curvature on the back of the bass.



The Delano pickups for this Bass had to be custom made specifically to suit the string spacing. The neck J pickup, slightly angled at about 6 degrees forward on the treble side. This was aimed to achieve a slight reduction in the upper registers, as 12 string Basses generally tend to be a little more “bright” in the upper registers.

The rear pickup is basically a double J, a quad coil, which can be switched and coil tapped. It can be blended with the neck pickup in any mode.



The EQ is a 3 band Semi parametric. The centre frequency on the bass control has been shifted to 80Hz, in an effort for more definition and “away” from the kick drum.

Probably one feature I consider really useful is the “Z” control. This effectively is a passive tone control, but it is possible to employ it in both active and passive modes. In active mode it acts like a tone roll off, and can be used in conjunction with all the normal active functions. In passive mode, it is your familiar passive tone control. The flexibility is achieved by being able to switch this function in and out. The flick of a switch can dramatically alter the tone pre-sets.

The EQ functions and tonal flexibility of this beast can seem a little overwhelming and a bit daunting. No-you do not have to be Captain Kirk to fly this monster, it can be as simple as you want. If you need something wild, it’s ALL there!



I have placed a lot of work and design into this 12 string and I believe it may well be the first 12 anywhere to be as practical and playable. I have even witnessed this beast being *slapped* to death, a feat just not humanly possible!!

If you need the perfect bass players' revenge-this could be what you are looking for! Low B 15 String coming.