

5 STRING Performer BASS

Obviously this Bass was heavily influenced by a well-known design – the reason I started building it? I just liked it. I refer to it as the “Beluga Whale! I wanted to build a 5 string single cut, using the Ash-Ash combination.



The body features a very nice Curly Redwood top, accented by laminates of Ebony and Maple. The body wings themselves are not the expected Swamp ash, but rather Northern Ash. I wanted to tie the neck and body together using the same species, in fact, the neck and body come from the same plank of wood! The neck also features a 5 A grade Curly Maple Tone Block.



The bass itself is extremely light as a result of chambering the Ash body. The truss rod is titanium and these are of a special manufacture in order to help keep the overall weight down, but also to achieve balance. By using a Titanium truss rod, I have actually saved more in overall weight, than the addition of the Hipshot D-Tuner. The bass weighs 3.8kgs, which for a bass of this nature is very light. Without any hint of feeling flimsy, this bass stays put on the player. There will be no need to book the Chiropractor after a long gig!



The neck is a 5 piece laminate with Purple Heart stringers. The fingerboard is ebony from Madagascar. It is known for its uniform blackness. This species is next to impossible to source due to the political instability of its source nation. The fingerboard also possesses Purple Heart binding, accented with Maple and Ebony laminates. Mother of Pearl blocks inlaid at the expected position all the way to fret 28. The side position markers are yellow L.E.D's centred inside Mother of Pearl dots. The L.E.D's are switchable as well as being dimmable to suit the taste of the player.



The overall design is of the neck through variety, in part as it is a single cut, but also as it features 28 frets. There are no problems at all reaching these notes, comfortably and effortlessly. The debate continues as to the virtues of neck through vs. bolt on. I don't believe any to be better to the other, just different.

The bass is finished in a traditional Nitro finish, whilst not being as durable as the modern finishes, its qualities are well known and often highly desirable. From a construction perspective, it is time consuming to apply, but again, its choice is up to the individual and their preferences.



This bass has a very fast action partly resulting a thin neck, but I believe that accuracy in construction is also a major contributor. Designed as a “Solo” 5 String, with a top C rather than a bottom B string, this bass is the machine to stand out with. The hipshot D-tuner on the E string allows for a bit more versatility by being able to quickly drop down for those lower notes. Do not let the shorter 33 inch scale fool you that this bass cannot handle the bottom end, it does it easily. The frets are also slightly smaller than usual, again to help with overall dexterity. The bass can also be strung low B, though there will be little point in keeping a D-Tuner on there.



The electronics run on 18 volts but are separate from the LED battery. This bass has my typical 3 band parametric EQ set up with the Delano SBC 5dual coil pickups. The bass frequencies have been shifted from the traditional 40Hz, this one was shifted to 70Hz, also in an effort to get away from the kick drum. Incidentally, the knobs are manufactured from the same piece of wood as the body top.



Each pickup is coil switchable and a passive tone control is also fitted, should the passive mode be selected. The tonal pallet of this bass is endless, and it is simply a joy to play.

