

When I first decided to have a 7-string fretless bass custom-built, I diligently researched various luthiers, trying to take all aspects of the process into account. In the midst of all that, I discovered David Segal and New York Bass Works. The instruments were beautiful, reviews were stellar, and I was really drawn in by some more personal comments people made regarding the commission of their instruments. Even better for me, David is relatively close by on Long Island; as an upright player from north Jersey, I had driven out to the Kolstein shop many times, which is close to David's shop.

So, I took the leap, contacted David, and commissioned the instrument. He hadn't made a 7-string before, so there was a significant amount of original and unique design involved. Even though I felt completely included in the process, I really wanted Dave to have total artistic freedom in building the instrument. To me, that's the proper way to approach the process; once you find the person you want, rely on their expertise. I wanted him to build an instrument HE loved.

Along the way I discovered that Dave is a genius with wood AND electronics, incredibly meticulous and patient with design and ergonomics, and a total sound guru (I had suspected all that before, but.....wow). Best of all, he is simply a great human being, an American original, a GREAT bass player, and now someone whom I am privileged to call a friend. Can you tell I'm a fan?

As far as the instrument itself is concerned, it is the finest electric bass I have ever laid hands upon. With, perhaps, the exception of my latest acquisition, an NYBW RS24 5-string. You can see pictures of my fretless 7 on the NYBW website, so you can get an idea of how stunning it is.

But here's the thing: plenty of luthiers can produce stunning instruments. Dave has managed (largely because he himself is a bassist of significant stature, and also because you wouldn't want a vegan to cook you a steak) to produce something which in my 30 year experience as a professional bassist, musician, and educator, is unique, which I would call, for lack of a better term, the non-bass, or non-instrument, even.

What the heck do I mean by that? Well, in all those years, I have played a ton of basses, many of which I have loved and some of which I still own, or lament having sold because of the stupidity of youth. But all those instruments have had one thing in common, which is that I was always physically aware that I was playing a bass, a device strapped to my body. More than any bass I've ever played, Dave's basses have seemed to remove any boundary between my imagination and the sound coming my out of the amp. They play so easily and responsively, and are so ergonomically perfect, that it truly feels like there is no bass there at all, hence 'non-bass'.

I put it in those terms because I really think that's what he's created. Any deficiencies in anything I do musically won't be because of the bass; I will never be able to out-play, or need to upgrade from, my NYBW basses. It's such a great feeling for my search to be over! Thank you David. — —Kevin Brown