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Bass Musician Magazine

In This Issue | **Basslab Soul IV and Hevos 800D Bass Head, 8/01/2007**

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Meet Chance Walte

Welcome to the first installation of *The Top Shelf*. For this column, I have the enviable task of playing, testing, and gathering opinions from my clientele on bass gear selected from the very top ranks. My goal is to get a feel for the gear, rather than pick it apart or simply restate specs easily found on manufacturers' websites. The gear will primarily be the sort of gear that is tantalizing but difficult to lay hands on. I hope to build interest in these pieces and help point players in the right direction for their specific needs and preferences.

The first piece I received was a **Basslab Soul IV**. The moment I picked up the Soul, I realized that this is a very modern, very well-conceived take on the basic Fender Jazz design, and so made me feel comfortable. The bass has a monocoque construction, meaning that it is one piece and, in this case, hollow (as opposed to having a neck-through-body design constructed of many materials glued together). It weighed in the 5-6 lb. range. The purity of the proprietary composite material—which the makers researched extensively over a period of years—and the hollow structure spoke with a lively voice.

The best word for the physicality of the bass is sleek. It feels seamless and, with low-profile hardware and the height of the fingerboard off of the body, it almost plays like it has a ramp. This encourages economy of motion and consistency from one right hand position to another. The sound of the bass matches its clean design: not foreign, but also not derivative. The overall impression is high-fi and defined, with a nice roundness on the bottom. The real magic is in the mid control. This is a two-part affair with a gain control and a frequency sweep that can truly refine the personality of the instrument. There are very few filter-based, on-board preamps, and this one is quite intuitive. The treble is also unique in that it cuts a different frequency than it boosts.

My clients were able to demo this acoustically as well as through the house Demeter VTB-1/Bergantino IP 2x12 rig. We also had a variety of Bag End cabs and pre/power combinations for rigs with more color. The consensus was the Basslab Soul IV gave you the best of both worlds: a time-tested look and basic design coupled with truly cutting-edge materials and components. Visit the Basslab website (www.basslabusa.com) to get your fill of scientifically intense graphs, charts, and studies, if you wish.

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MEET THE TEAM

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