

**BARKER**  
Musical Instruments



**OWNER'S  
INITIATION  
GUIDE FOR  
THE BVB**

## *Our Promise*

*We're convinced you'll be 100% satisfied with your Barker Bass. Period. Each instrument is hand built and individually tested and will not leave the shop unless it is right.*

*If you find, in the three full days following delivery, that your expectations are not met, please call us toll free: 888.899.8302.*

*We'll give you authorization to repack the bass in the original packing foam and carton and return it to us with a written explanation and a daytime phone number and your time zone.*

*Following satisfactory inspection of the instrument, your investment will be refunded in full, less shipping.*

Lee Barker  
Barker Musical Instruments

## PLAYING IT STRAIGHT WITH THE BARKER BASS

### I. INTRODUCTION

You are a pioneer. By making the commitment to a Barker Bass you have shown the world that you are an independent thinker with confidence in your own analysis and your own ears. Clearly, this is an instrument that makes sense.

In a way, the development of our vertical bass (BVB, for short) is ironic because its orchestral forefather is the acoustic double bass, a massive beast that provided the bottom end for orchestras, and became a staple of jazz combos and, eventually, rock and roll bands. As we all know, the double bass is already vertical (except when strapped to the top of a car, illustrating one of the major drawbacks of the instrument.)

The double bass had other drawbacks in the emerging world of rock and roll. It was not loud enough and it was difficult to amplify effectively. Players were unable to put much nuance into their lines – they were too busy plucking for all they were worth just to be heard amongst the floor toms and electrified guitars.<sup>1</sup>

Electricity: This is where Leo Fender enters the picture. In 1951, Leo introduced the Fender Precision Bass to a not-anxiously-awaiting-anything-at-all population of confused musicians. The “Precision” in Fender Precision Bass referred to the guitar-like fretted neck, more accurate than the fretless double bass.

*“It is a guitar but it is a bass, but it’s a guitar...”*

The electric bass was more portable, more versatile, and louder than the double bass. Without Leo’s realization of the P-Bass, music would be entirely different today. People have, in the past 50 years, tinkered with Leo’s concept. They have added strings, removed frets, and

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<sup>1</sup>On the plus side, bass players were developing massive musculature in their right arms. Tennis backhands improved.

mounted the electric bass neck onto acoustic guitar bodies. Innovators developed new types of pickups and amplification. But the position of the instrument has been unchanged. Bass players still strap their heavy instrument around their body and play it in a horizontal position.

The BVB keeps the versatility of the electric bass while it positions the instrument free of the musician's body. The player's left hand fits naturally, comfortably, on the vertical fret board.

Your new instrument cuts a striking figure: A man in a linen suit striding through a South American farmer's market. It is a mahogany Chris Craft moored at the end of a dock full of aluminum rowboats. The BVB is a sunflower rising above a sea of dandelions. We could go on and on.

In addition to playability and style, The BVB has a unique tone: the large resonant body creates a rich sound. Maybe saying "rich" is saying enough, but let's try some more description: Wide and deep. Furbelowed with overtones.

Since the BVB is freestanding, the musician's body does not deaden the instrument. Hence: sustain. Play an open D, read the first two pages of the sports section....

Some people don't get it. That's OK. They are simple people, convinced that since they've seen only two kinds of basses — 42" uprights and 34" horizontals — that's the entire universe of basses. They fear change. They believe that there have always been electric basses, and that bass players have always limped around with sore wrists and bad backs. And so, they believe, it shall be for eternity. These people need to be reminded when Pluto was discovered.<sup>2</sup>

*But not you. You are not one of them. You have seen the future of the lower register - and it is Vertical.*

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<sup>2</sup>We're talking planets, here not Walt's dog. Discovered in 1930 by American astronomer Clyde Tombaugh



## II. SETTING UP YOUR BVB

We have found that setting up your Barker Bass quickly becomes second nature. Here is a general procedure to follow the first few times:

\* The first time through, it is a good idea to have a marker handy to mark the stand and endpin at the correct heights.

1. Spread the stand legs till the feet are about 17 inches apart. Tighten the knob to secure them. *fig. 1*



fig. 1

2. On the stand, loosen the riser knobs and extend until the mount stud is around hip height. Tighten the knobs. *fig. 2*



fig. 2

3. Point the mount stud parallel with one of the feet (in the direction the bass will face).

4. Loosen the locknut & set the mount stud one click above horizontal. Tighten the locknut. *fig. 3*



fig. 3

5. With the instrument laying flat, extend the endpin as many inches as you are taller than five feet. Slightly tighten the knob. *fig. 4*

6. Insert the endpin through the lower end of the leg and lean the instrument back onto the mount stud.

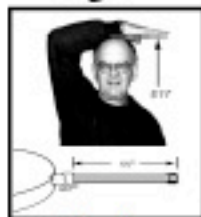


fig. 4

7. Adjust the endpin until all 4 feet are making even contact with the floor.

8. In the playing position, check that your eyes are just about level with the string nut.

Experiment with the position. There is a lot of room for personal style and preference. Some like playing higher, some lower. Some prefer the bass standing at a steeper or more shallow angle.

*Note* - When you get everything where you like it, discreetly mark the endpin and the stand with a marker so that you can easily return them to the correct settings. *fig. 5*



fig. 5

### III. Playing Position

Here we get to be like your first music teacher, tapping our lectern and yelping, "Posture! Sit up!" right in the middle of your best ever performance of "Hot Cross Buns." We encourage you to try our suggestions, and then go forth and ignore them.

- Stand behind and to the right of the bass.
- Set your hips at a 45° angle to the instrument.
- Bend your knees slightly (don't you hate it when we say that? But hey, the piano player may start a polka).
- Your left hand will naturally fret and start playing before you realize it.
- Let that right wrist relax. Note that caressing the strings with the pads of your fingers gives a different sound from using the tips.

*Play it! and rediscover how much fun Bass playing is!*



**Neck Health Note** - Sometime, perhaps in the first year of your relationship with your Barker Bass, it will need some neck attention. This is quite normal and is due in part to playing it and in part to changes in climate. Take it to your dealer or a qualified repair person. Be sure she or he sees your playing style. This can affect how high the strings, especially the lowest, are set.

### IV. Things to Say When People Ask About Your BVB

- 'I spilled some Miracle-Gro on it.'
- 'Studies have shown that the larger the bass, the bigger it is.'
- 'There is a cupboard in the back where I store my camping gear.'
- 'I can lay this thing on a shirt and it is pressed by morning.'
- 'I mounted a fuel cell in there. I can power all of Manitoba while I play.'
- 'It is a Barker Bass. Listen to it. Now you know why I own one!'

## V. Accessories for your BVB

Keep an eye out for our upcoming line of fantastic products and accessories for the Barker Bass, including

- The food processor attachment.
- The BVB DVD player.
- A German designed turbo.
- Guitar player (with leash).
- Endpins modeled after the legs of attractive women and hoofed animals.
- Our highly affordable line of signature wear (a 3-pack of plain white tee shirts & a felt tip marker).

## VI. Gig Check List

1. Polka, Polka, Polka.....
2. Bass Stand
3. Amp
4. Cords
5. Tuner
6. Bread, Mayo and Pickle (for tuner sandwich)
7. Breath Mints
8. Map to Gig
9. Bribe to get good parking space
10. Two (2) pens for autographing
11. Drummer
12. Drummer's handler

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