



Rapier Symphonic Bass

Sixties silver

With the Symphonic Bass, Rapier once again presents a bass that harks back to the past Vox this time. And then also in sparkling, striking silver.

Rapier is a collaboration between sixties freak and element builder Alan Entwistle (no relation to The Who's John) and JHS. And JHS is the parent company of, for example, Vintage.

Together they have a beautiful series of guitars and basses with a lot of influences from the a past British guitars from the sixties. Then immediately comes my only complaint: there are a lot of cool, special guitars, but in terms of basses it could be a little less conservative in my opinion.

If you look quickly or if you are not a bass connoisseur, the Rapier just looks like a P, but actually everything is different and that makes it fun. If you google a bit further, it turns out that Vox also had a Symphonic Bass in 1966 and

Vox also had a Symphonic Bass in 1966 and '67 and this Rapier is almost an exact copy. It was probably Vox's intention at the time to compete with a certain American brand with this bass. The type of knobs in particular differs, as does the headstock. And the Vox has a wider, P-like cover over the rear element.

The narrow headstock has the Rapier logo and the so-called mod target: a logo with red/white/blue circles that bands and artists such as The Who, Oasis, Paul Weller and Ocean Colour Scene use. The fingerboard has a zero fret. This makes your open strings sound the same as your fretted ones and this is also typical of the sixties, although there are brands, Sandberg and Hafner for for example, that still or again use it.

The combination of binding and dots is not seen that often and is chic. The neck itself is narrow and flat. It could have been a bit boiler, but that is a matter of taste. I did not have an old Vox to compare, by the way, so I do not know how the original neck feels.

Vox

The beautiful neck ends in a body that is not quite P-style, with a thick 3-ply white/black/white pickguard that is also not quite P-style. It is sprayed in beautiful silver and that must look very nice under stage lights! The two pickups are from Entwistle and are called Astrosonic VX, where the VX - you guessed it - refers to Vox. We find these pickups on the



Entwistle website under the guitar pickups, but more basses than you think use the same pickups as their guitar brother. The pickups are unique in appearance: they are a kind of flat lipsticks that are reminiscent of larger versions of Telecaster neck pickups. Look up some old Vox basses and you will see that they often had these pickups. The front one sits flat against the neck, the back one approximately at the P position and is covered with a chrome Jazz cover.


Over the bridge we see a P cover. Furthermore we see three knobs and a nice old-fashioned finger rest. Put your fingers under it and play with your thumb. Until the mid-seventies, the finger rest was also in this place on the brand with the F.

The Symphonic weighs what you expect from such a bass. Not light, but fine. The balance is good, the neck fast and for Fender players it immediately feels familiar. Your thumb automatically falls on the chrome cover.

The bass is passive and has the controls that we know from J models: a volume knob per element and a master tone knob. While playing you can feel the body resonate nicely and that is a good thing. The solo neck element gives a nice, warm and open sound. Nicely vintage and nice for ballads. It sounds a bit neater than a P, but nice and usable. This position is also nice with a plectrum for the sixties combination of a bright tap and a warm underlayer. With the tone knob back it gets a bit thicker, but not muddy. The rear element, which is located approximately at the P position, is more reminiscent of a J than a P. It is a bit tighter and neater, less open, but also

very usable and works well with effects. It is a somewhat modern sound. The elements together give a somewhat pinched sound, which is less to my taste. In any case, for a pop/rock band you have two nice flavours.

Conclusion

Are you used to a Fender-like bass and are you looking for something that is pleasantly different or you want to stand out on stage with fairly familiar sounds? Check out the Rapiere. Because it is a fairly faithful copy of an old Vox, it can also be used in a sixties band, garage band or as an accompanist for a singer-songwriter. With a price of just over 400 euros, it is never a bad buy. Not so into silver There will be a red and white version. 

Rapiere Symphonic Bass

Colour: Metallic Silver

Body: Okoume

Neck: Maple, Bolt-on, 4 screw

Fingerboard: Palissander

Frets: 20 jumbo frets plus zero-fret

Pickups: Entwistle Astrosonic VX

Controls: Volume, 1 tone

Electronics: Passive

Machineheads: Wilkinson

Bridge: Wilkinson with cover

Scale Length: 3 inch

Top Nut: GraphTech 40mm