

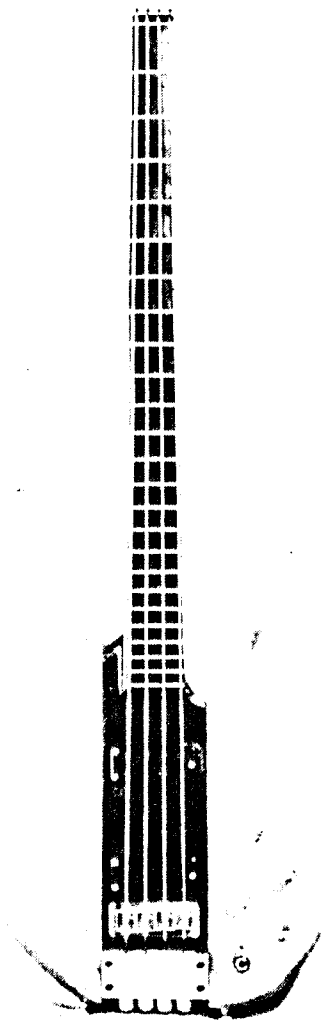
The bass revolution, if recent introductions onto the U.K. market are anything to go by, seems to be continuing. Initially it might have seemed as if the money wasn't out there to pay for all this increased awareness of sound quality for bassists, but when one considers what the average synthesiser player is prepared to pay for his gear these days, maybe it was always inevitable that the changes in bass equipment would come and stay?

Top Strata

Of the new breed of four stringed wonders that I've had the pleasure of trying in recent months, the best, by far, is a new British bass called the Strata. It's manufactured by Rob Green of Green Machine Technology Ltd. and it really is a remarkable instrument by any standards. It has much in common with the U.S. made Steinberger (still, perhaps, the bass by which ones status as a pro player is judged!) in that it features a carbon graphite neck/body moulding which affords it virtually unprecedented sustain and harmonic transference qualities, not to mention an almost tank-like robustness! Again, like the Steinberger, it features tuning machines positioned down on the body and uses ultra-high quality pickups, although these come from one of the U.K.'s finest makers, Kent Armstrong (son of the legendary Dan).

Where the Strata really differs from the Steinberger in its ideas is in the body because hand-carved hardwood is crafted onto the sides of the carbon graphite mouldings, giving the bass the conventional 'feel' of a normal bass, but with all the special qualities of a new technology product in the other departments. The neck on the model I tried was really well proportioned and the sound — well, if you haven't yet played one of the really modern high tech. materials instruments then you're in for a shock!

Of course, all this cleverness costs considerable money and the retail price of the Strata is £995 so it isn't the sort of instrument you'll be ordering by the crate load and selling by the dozen! Nonetheless, retailers who have a market for professional instru-



The Strata from Green Machine.

ments really should look to the Strata as being probably the peak of the current wave of luxury instruments. I'd go even further, personally, and say that it's the best bass I've played to date — bar none.