

Epiphone®

review



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Allen Woody Rumblekat

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Construction

The Epiphone Allen Woody Rumblekat bass is one of the very few basses on the market measuring in at 30" scale length (compared to the "standard" scale length of 34".) That alone makes this bass feel, sound and play different to most people, but there are a host of other features that make this bass unique.

The Rumblekat also features a 2.1" thick sound chambered mahogany body of the Epiphone Kat series design. There are no f-holes in its design, and the body, neck and headstock have an off-white binding around the edges which beautifully compliments the wine red finish and gold hardware while adding a nice touch of distinction to the appearance of the instrument. The specs of the bass list the top as 5 ply flame maple, which is a great feature, but oddly enough, the finish on the top of the bass is opaque and shows none of that flame maple appearance so many of us love. The sides and back on the other hand have a translucent finish which does show the grain of the mahogany through it, and that looks fantastic,

A bound rosewood fingerboard and 20 frets top off the set-in neck which also

features truss rod access through the Clipped Dovewing 2+2 headstock. Naturally, an Allen Woody signature graces the face of the headstock as well.

Electronics/Hardware

Two mini-humbucker pickups mounted in the middle and neck positions are the source of the passive electronics. Each of these pickups features its own volume knob alongside a master tone knob. Personally, I prefer a single volume and a panpot, but this was built to Allen Woody's specs after all, not mine and this configuration doesn't take much getting used to.

The bridge is an interesting piece of hardware, adjustable in height at three points, which really opens up some set-up options, but once again, takes a bit of getting used to. The only draw-back of this bridge design is that the screws to set the intonation are adjusted from the string side, not through the back. Nevertheless, it's not impossible to get at them if you have the right screwdriver. Other hardware features include sealed gear machine heads, a labeled tortoise shell control plate, and an output jack on the side of the bass right underneath the tone knob.

Tone

Perhaps the biggest drawback of this bass is that it doesn't sound quite the same plugged in as it does unplugged. Unplugged the bass has a sound that's deep and throaty, but also has an amazingly bright, sharp attack. Plugged in, the bass transforms. The brightness really dwindles, especially toward the lower lower range of the bass. My suspicion would be that this is due to the electronics. However, when plugged in, the Rumblekat really earns its name. If you're a bass player that like deep bass, this might be exactly what you're looking for. Using the tone knob and a little pickup bleeding, you can really get this thing to shake the walls in the lower register and have a nice open singing sound in the upper registers.

Playability

It's clear that this bass was built for the late Allen Woody. If you play with a pick, a lot of that brightness comes back to the tone. The short scale length took some getting used to, but it definitely has its advantages. I, like most other bass players out there, am used to a standard 34" scale length on the basses I play. I've often wondered how bass players with long fingers or large hands can navigate their way around a short scale bass as easily. The difference is that due to the short scale length, there doesn't have to be as much string tension to tune the strings to their usual pitch. This means you can really push this thing around. Attacking hard with the right hand and bending notes with the left has an unusual comfort level that's easily addictive. While it's not necessarily one of

the best basses around for slapping or tapping, aggressive finger and pick players will fall in love.

Value

With an MSRP of \$799, this bass is a great value for many people. It makes a great bass for anyone who thinks 34" is too much. It's affordable to many people new to bass. It also makes a unique addition to anyone's bass arsenal since it's got a very fun and useful sound and feel that's different from any bass you probably own. Check it out!

--Evan Rusackas
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