

ELRICK EXPAT E-VOLUTION 4 TEST

FOUR-STRING ELECTRIC BASS

Lightweight with a modern look and sound

by Thomas Meinlschmidt | 29/10/2018

★★★★★ (5/5) 19



Elrick's Expat series is handmade in the Czech Republic to Rob Elrick's rigorous standards. In his own workshop in Chicago, Rob has been building high-end instruments for 25 years, which of course have their corresponding price. In order to make his vision of basses available to those who do not simply have a few thousand euros in the drawer, Rob called the Expat series into existence several years ago. Many components, such as hardware, electronics, pickups, etc., are identical to Rob's USA models and should be qualitatively on a similar level. The only thing that has to be done in terms of looks is the smaller one: while the basses from Rob's workshop score points with their spectacular ceilings, the Expat series looks much simpler. But that does not have to be a disadvantage

AUDIO EXAMPLES

Both PUs, fingers, bass: + 20%, Mid: 700Hz, + 20%

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☐ High Quality Audio

Both PUs, fingers, bass: + 20%, Mid: 700Hz, + 20%

Both PUs, Slapping, Bass: + 30%, Mid: 700Hz, -50%, Treble: + 20%

Both PUs, Tapping, Bass: -20%, Mid: 700Hz, + 30%, Treble: + 20%

Both PUs, Chords, Mid: 700Hz, + 30%, Treble: + 20%

PRO CONTRA

- + conclusive overall concept
- + great playability
- + very good workmanship
- + low weight
- + good value for money

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DETAILS

An important factor for a moderate price is the limitation of the possible options. That's why only two wood combinations are available in the Expat series. You can choose between a fingerboard made of ebony or Wenge - the latter also has my test bass. The basis of the expat basses are always a swamp ash body and a three-necked maple neck. My test bass has a thin transparent finish called "Natural".

By a long and curved upper body horn the body looks very modern in the shape and leans only very remotely on classical role models. Like many Edelbässe the Expat offers 24 frets, which can be reached also very easily thanks to the generous lower Cutaways. The neck was bolted to the body with six screws. Exotic: At the neck-body transition are a kind of rounded steps, which should offer the thumb better grip in the upper regions.



The Elrick expat from Czech production ...



Four Hipshot Ultralite tuners are in a 2: 2 ratio on the top plate. This is almost rectangular and seems to me almost a little clunky. It was attached at an angle to the neck; In this way, enough pressure of the strings is produced on the saddle, so that additional string hold-down are not required. And Rob also thought of a zero collar. This provides better intonation, reduces the tonal difference between empty strings and picked tones, and is also very conducive to a very shallow string position.



Four Hipshot tuners and a zero collar have found space on the headstock.



All hardware is black - which also applies to the bridge, which was developed by Rob Elrick himself! The pickups from Bartolini are jazz single coils, but sit in a soapbox case. The electronics are also supplied by Bartolini: In addition to the volume and pickup balance controls, it also includes an equalizer with three bands for bass, midrange and treble.

By toggle switch you can choose between three different application frequencies for the center controller. Although there are no details, my guess is that they are 250 Hz, 500 Hz and 700 Hz. These were at least the values in older Bartolini electronics. With a second toggle switch you can choose between active and passive mode.



The 3D bridge was developed by Rob Elrick himself!



A beautiful back can also delight - this old adage definitely applies to the Elrick! The cover of the electronics and battery compartment is almost invisible on the back, because it was very carefully worked out of the carcass and inserted seamlessly. In this way, no ugly black plastic cover deface the noble look of the instrument. The small disadvantage of this is that you have to first solve six screws for changing the battery. For my personal taste, however, clearly outweigh the optical advantages of this solution!

Processing, detail solutions, components used, optics, etc. make a very good impression so far - everything gives a very consistent and impeccable overall picture!



No ugly plastic lid clouds the view of the back of the bass.



PRACTICE

The E-volution 4 is surprisingly light, it brings just 3.4 kg on the scales. And: These values are actually not isolated cases with Elrick and come about by appropriate selection of the used woods. So every bassist with "back" should listen up!

But every medal is known to have two sides: A low weight usually leads to top weight, so unfortunately in the E-volution 4. This can only be felt, however, if you want to juggle the bass freehand on the thigh. When playing the "neck dive" hardly noticeable - to balance the top-heavy standing, Rob has attached the Gurtpin accordingly high. This measure balances the bass, so that it maneuvers itself into a comfortable angle.



Due to weight, the Elrick brings a slight top weight with it, which, however, hardly disturbing.

The neck profile corresponds to a normal D. A thin and barely noticeable finish provides a pleasant feel and prevents any braking effect caused by perspiration. The string position of my test bass is extremely comfortable and adds to the overall very good playability. Noises like snarling or clanking are almost foreign to the Expat E-volution 4!

As mentioned earlier, the fingerboard is the key difference between the Expat series, as it is well known that this is an important factor in the sound of an instrument. My Testbass is "good-natured" by Wenge in a positive sense and seems to have excellent allrounder qualities. The four-string sounds much clearer, more direct and more transparent compared to cheaper basses and / or classic designs, and has a powerful low-end.

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Fantastic playability up to the high altitudes!

Let's start with the sound examples in passive mode without equalizer:

Both pickups, fingers

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Both pickups, fingers
Both pickups, slapping
Neck pickup, fingers
Bridge pickup, fingers
☐ High Quality Audio

And here are the sound examples with activated electronics:

Both PUs, fingers, bass: + 20%, Mid: 700Hz, + 20%

0:00 / 0:53

Both PUs, fingers, bass: + 20%, Mid: 700Hz, + 20%
Both PUs, Slapping, Bass: + 30%, Mid: 700Hz, -50%, Treble: + 20%
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Both PUs, Chords, Mid: 700Hz, + 30%, Treble: + 20%
☐ High Quality Audio

The direction here is clearly "modern": Transparent, direct and well-resolving sounds are the great assets of the Expat E-volution 4. The concise mids provide a decent presence in every mix, and the bass definitely wants to be in the foreground. The rather conservative-sounding Bartolini slows down the Elrick in the heights in time, so he does not tap into the precious bass trap and becomes too loud and heavy. Stylistically, the user without question open all doors, but the bass should play an important role in it, because the expat E-volution 4 wants to be perceived. Especially percussive playing styles and solo trips with flagoletts, chords etc. are a real pleasure with him!



No question: Modern sounds are the great strength of this bass!

CONCLUSION

★★★★★ (5/5)

The Elrick Expat Series bass are serious premium bass candidates for the budget-conscious consumer. Ingredients and processing rank at a high level, the offered sounds are modern and also very flexible due to the electronics. If you are looking for an instrument apart from the usual optical and sonic clichés, you should definitely take the Elrick to the chest. Especially fans of modern playing techniques, such as Palm Mute, Slapping, Tapping or Double Thumb, the Elrick comes very close, and even for soloist trips, he is ideally suited. Of course, he works equally well in the normal band life - but restraint is not his strength. Due to its tonal orientation it is certainly much more present than many famous bass classics. If that does not bother you or who is looking for it, I highly recommend the Elrick Expat E-evolution 4. I personally regard his optical simplicity as rather positive, but that is certainly a matter of taste. Special mention should be made of the very low weight, which is an important feature of all the basses of the Expat series!

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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS:

Manufacturer: Elrick

Model: Expat E-evolution 4

Country of origin: Czech Republic

Body: swamp ash

Neck: maple, three-strip

Scale: 86mm (34 ")

Fingerboard: Wenge

Frets: 24

Pickups: 2 x Bartolini

Electronics: Bartolini triple band with switchable center frequency

Mechanics: Hipshot

Bridge: Elrick

Hardware: Black

Weight: 3.4 kg

Scope of delivery: case

Price: 2.090,- Euro (as of August 2018)