



Steve Earle's 2006 Höfner 500/1 Vintage 63

Date

2006

Primary Maker

Steve Earle

Medium

Wood; Metal; Plastic

Description

Steve Earle's 2006 Höfner Vintage 63 Violin bass model 500/1 - 63, Beatle Bass, serial number L07011, in antique brown Sunburst finish. Violin style bass with German spruce top with laminated flame maple back and sides, two "staple top" humbucker pickups, with raised pearloid pickguard and controls mounted on a pearloid plate. In original hardshell case. Steve Earle (b. 1955) is an American singer-songwriter, best known for his debut

album *Guitar Town* (1986) featuring his bestselling single "Copperhead Road." Earle has released 21 studio albums and won three Grammy Awards. Walter Höfner designed the Höfner 500/1 Violin Bass, also known as the "Beatle Bass" or "Cavern Bass," in 1955 as an alternative to the traditional upright double bass. It was first shown to the public at the Frankfurt Musikmesse (Frankfurt Music Fair) in 1956 and has been in production ever since. The Höfner violin bass' popularity is most closely associated with its use by Paul McCartney of The Beatles. In 1961, Stuart Sutcliffe, then-bassist for The Beatles, decided to leave the band to attend art school in Hamburg. The band chose McCartney to take over bass playing duties, and he sought to purchase a bass of his own. McCartney went to the Steinway Musikhaus, a music shop in Hamburg, and found the Höfner violin model bass. He was drawn to the Höfner because he felt that its symmetrical shape would mean that playing it left-handed would not look as awkward as using a cutaway guitar designed for a right-handed player. As Höfner did not sell a left-handed version of the 500/1 bass, McCartney had to custom order his 1961 bass. It is believed that this custom-ordered bass is the first left-hand 500/1 model that Höfner had produced.