



1954 Gibson EB-1 Bass

Date

1954

Primary Maker

Gibson

Medium

Wood; Metal; Plastic

Description

1954 Gibson EB-1 bass guitar, "The Gibson Electric Bass," serial number 4-0216, in natural mahogany finish. The bass features a mahogany body and neck and a rosewood fretboard. In an original brown hard shell case with an included plastic stand for upright playing. Although companies quickly developed other electric stringed instruments throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the electric bass guitar did not become popular until the 1950s. Though Paul Tutmarc's 1936 Audiovox Model 736 Bass Fiddle is the first horizontal electric bass, it wasn't until

the release of the Fender Precision Bass, produced in 1951, that the electric bass guitar became a staple of popular music. Gibson created its own solid-bodied electric bass in 1953 to compete in the new bass guitar market. Gibson's EB-1 (a name not used until 1958 with the introduction of the EB-2) adopted a violin-shaped body to give it a distinct appearance compared to the Fender bass. The EB-1 included painted (and superfluous) f-holes on the solid body to increase the fiddle-like illusion. Gibson only produced a limited number of the EB-1, with 105 guitars sold in 1953 and 546 sold in total before being replaced by other models in 1958. Demonstrating that no design choice is inevitable, the EB-1 could be played two ways. It could be worn over the shoulder and played horizontally, like the Fender Precision, or played upright like a traditional bass, using a telescoping end pin that attached to the body. Although the EB-1 never sold well, its clear tone and distinctive appearance made it popular with influential bass players Jack Bruce of Cream and Chris Squire of Yes.