

## Human Base: Roxy B4

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DURING THE RENAISSANCE, LEONARDO da Vinci's now famous drawing of the Vitruvian Man, with his multiple arms and legs spread wide in a circle, symbolized symmetry, balance, and the perfect blend of art and science. With this iconic image as their logo, and perhaps inspiration, German bass company Human Base keeps da Vinci's ideals alive through the design of their instruments. Founded in 1997 by Sigg Jager, Human Base typically offers high-end custom basses in very limited quantities. Their newest axe, the Roxy 4B, lives up to these same Renaissance principles by providing a well balanced instrument that looks good, feels great, and sounds fantastic, but at a more affordable price.

### THE BALANCE OF POWER

When I first picked up the bass, I immediately appreciated its lightness and weight distribution. No neck dive here, folks. The Roxy B4 balanced perfectly on my lap, and the contoured lightweight ash body was ergonomically friendly and comfortable against my body, whether I sat or stood. In short, the B4 just felt good. It looked good, too. My test model sported a thin and smooth flat-black finish that subtly showcased the ash body's grain. According to Human Base, the thinner finish was not merely aesthetic; however, it combats a heavier finish's negative impact on tone. The svelte maple neck and rosewood fingerboard include a zero fret, a welcome bonus for those of us who like our open strings to closely mimic the sound of fretted notes. The Roxy B4 was solidly constructed. The neck joint was tight, deep, and extended well into the body. The control cavity was well shielded, with tidy and efficient wiring. In every way, the construction of the Roxy B4 demonstrated a careful attention to detail.

### SINGLE, BUT NOT LONELY

By their very nature, single pickup instruments are somewhat sonically limited, and some bassists tend to shy away from them, opting for more complicated and typically more flexible electronics. Human Base challenges the assumption that single pickup design equals singular tone. The Roxy B4 is equipped with a German-made Delano oval shaped dual-coil pickup (which includes a molded thumbrest) designed for versatility. The Glockenklang 3-band preamp incorporates a series/parallel switch for further versatility from the single pickup.

Curious as to whether B4 could adequately serve a variety of musical genres, I set up a jam with a fellow guitarist and put the instrument through a variety of "style trials," from funk to speed metal. The bass performed well in each genre, although it seemed most at home with rock and funk tunes that required thick bottom end and crisp, but not harsh, highs. I was also pleased with the forceful growl gained by rolling in some lows and slightly boosting the mids. Most of the time, I preferred to keep the pickup in series mode because I liked the extra punch it provided, but parallel mode worked well for mellower blues and jazz. In the end, I was pleased at how easily I could dial up a variety of tones from this single pickup bass.

The number of high-quality basses available for under a thousand clams is perpetually growing, and the Roxy B4 is a nice addition to the world of affordable but distinctive basses. Solid construction, first-class German electronics, and sharp looks make this bass a bargain for the price. I doubt da Vinci had bass guitars in mind when he sketched the Vitruvian Man, but, since we're talking about a guy who conceptualized helicopters 400 years before the first plane, who knows. Regardless, I hope the ideals exemplified in his drawing will continue to inspire more basses like the Roxy B4.

### HUMAN BASE ROXY B4

**Street** \$899

**Pros** Comfortable, well-balanced bass with dynamic electronics

**Cons** none

### TECH SPECS

**Weight** 8.2 lbs

**Made in** Indonesia (assembled and set-up in Orange, CA)

**Warranty** One year

**Contact** [www.humanbaseusa.com](http://www.humanbaseusa.com)