



CENTRAL FLORIDA'S OWN
Beaver Felton

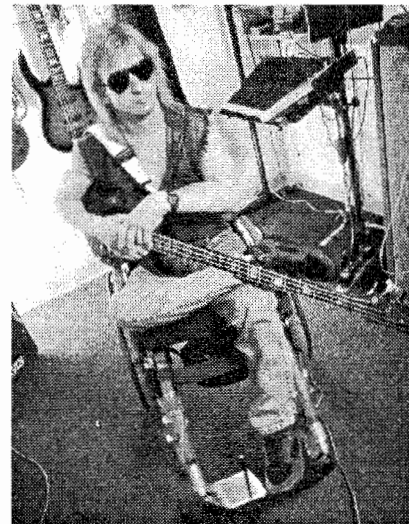
PRODUCT REVIEW
Dr. Sample

HOW TO GET A
UPC Number

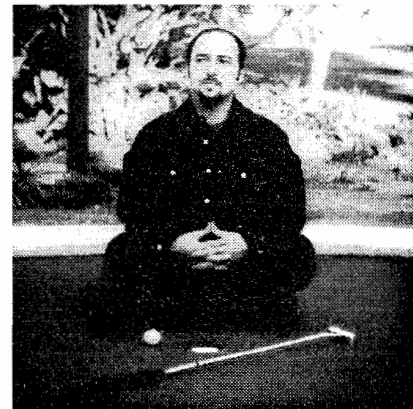
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THIS IS ONE *BUSY* BEAVER!

History

Beaver Felton, a resident of central Florida for over two decades, is arguably, Orlando's most celebrated bassist, having been featured in almost every major music trade magazine for both his playing and teaching talents for the last 13 years. To know him is to know an extremely talented, thorough, modest, and extraordinarily driven musician. Beaver began his music career in Savannah, GA on drums at the age of 12, moving to guitar and ultimately bass at 13. He admittedly didn't take music too seriously until he

was 16, when he started getting into to Yes and other innovative groups. At that point he started serious wood-shedding until 1977 when, at 21, he first hit the road with a top 40 band. His first gig landed him in Tampa, Florida, where he immediately started developing a strong reputation which later spread throughout the Southeast. Playing Orlando shortly thereafter, he met such contacts as Paul Drennan, whom he later played with in several groups and Ron Feldman (vocal coach for Janie Lane, of Warrant), a close and helpful friend ever since. Beaver soon found himself in demand among

many major club bands. According to the bassist, the only major record deal he was involved with was 1979 - 1980 with a band called Mantra, produced by Larry Blackman of Cameo fame. Felton continued to tour many different club circuits all over the Southeast and Midwest with a number of groups, including then top Tampa Bay group, Hoochie from 80-83. For the following two years, he played with Chimera, an Orlando-

based five-piece group. According to Beaver, "Both Hoochie and Chimera had all the elements needed to make it but as is common in the music business, that wasn't enough and neither band got signed." Then in '85 he gained international recognition by composing a five-minute "tour-de-force" bass solo and submitting it to Guitar Player Magazine's Spotlight Column, written by Mike Varney of Shrapnel Records. This column also gave Yngwie Malmsteen, Billy Sheehan, and Tony MacAlpine their starts. When asked what gave him the edge necessary to be featured in the prestigious article, Beaver replied "I'm an average person with an average amount of talent, *but* with a serious dose of determination and drive, at least during certain periods of my life." This is also evidenced by the fact that he went from a self-proclaimed "87 lb. weakling" in 1971 to US National Weightlifting Champion (Wide World of Sports, triple Gold Medals, etc.) four years later. "For me, nothing was easy. I had to really work hard to achieve the things that I have. As a musician, and former athlete, I'm very self-critical, and this kind of prompts you to strive harder."

Private Lessons and Instructional Videos

Before Beaver hit the road he had given his first bass lesson to none other than Steve Fossen, of mega-group Heart. Steve saw Beaver playing in a local music store, admired his playing, and invited him to the sound check at the Civic Center. Backstage, he taught Steve some of the techniques he was using and afterwards, was invited to jam with the band during sound check. "Looking back, I must



have come off like an arrogant little 21 year old, making suggestions to the drummer!" Beaver had a good reputation on the road, so it just came natural that players would seek Beaver to give them lessons. He built a small following of students in various towns. As a teacher, he claims to have no set curriculum but tries to guide each player individually based upon what he feels the student needs and wants. After the mandatory fundamentals of theory and technical skills, my teaching is personalized to the student.

In 1985 Beaver conceived the **Superchops 4 Bass** instructional tape series. Shortly afterwards, he was involved in a car accident in Augusta, Georgia, paralyzing him from the waist down. "That was clearly a life changing experience. It slowed me down, but it didn't stop me. After the accident I moved back to Savannah for a 're-grouping' period. I was at a major crossroads in my life. I had to rethink what I was trying to do, and what I could still do. Since I couldn't go out on the road anymore, I then had time to record the Superchops 4 Bass audio lessons. I had just been featured in *Guitar Player Magazine*, so I had two things that I didn't have before, and that was, international exposure, and recognition / credibility. From there, all of my major endorsements started coming in starting with Peavey who noticed that in the photo in the article I was holding one of their basses. The article in *Guitar Player Magazine* was really the first domino, since then I've had dozens of endorsements (currently including: Carvin Basses & Amps, GHS Strings, Hipshot Products, ART, and Kahler Tremolo Systems) and leverage to pursue other things. I've been very fortunate, no doubt about it." Overall, Beaver's produced 19 Superchops 4 Bass audio cassettes, 3 Metal Method audio cassettes, 1 Hot Licks video, 8

CD / book series for Hal Leonard, and 6 more Superchops 4 Bass videos. He's already outlined 4 more instructional videos, but because of his limited time, he feels the videos may have to wait "until the cloning process has been perfected. Of course, cloning myself would constitute a criminal act!". Some of the people who have used or been influenced by the Superchops 4 Bass tapes are **Will Lee** (David Letterman Band), **Paul Cullen** (a former student) with Bad Company, and **Victor Wooten**. Will Lee credited Beaver during an interview last year in "Jazz Times Magazine" as having taught him some new tricks. According to Will, "Beaver would do these things that sounded like they would take years to learn and then he'd slow it down and show it to you, then in a couple of minutes you would be able to do the technique too."

Beaver also lectures once a month at Full Sail Recording Arts School, and he has also been writing instructional columns in magazines across the country since 1987.

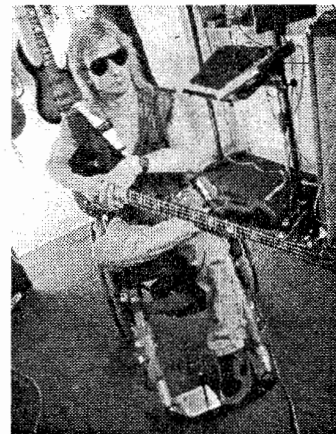
Beaver The Entrepreneur

In addition to all the above, he also started a recording studio with guitar whiz Angelo Jannotti, which lasted for several years ending in 95. That's when he started formulating his plans for **Bass Central**, one of only a handful of bass specialty shops in the country. Beaver kicked this company off by talking with **Dave La Rue** (super-bassist with The Steve Morse Band), and **Bill Covert**. The three of them decided that with what each of them could "bring to the table", the business would be worth pursuing. As Beaver proudly points out, "Bass Central is the only place in the country where you can find high end bass equipment, receive private bass lessons from myself and Dave La Rue, get custom work by Bill Covert, and

find Carvin gear (Carvin has chosen Bass Central as it's only authorized dealer east of California)." Bass Central has an extensive site on the Internet, designed and managed by Don Fletcher of Infographic, Inc., and consequently does a significant amount of mail-order business, world-wide (South America, Australia, Europe, Japan, The Middle East, etc.). Beaver travels to both NAMM Music Conventions every year in Nashville, and L.A., and attends guitar shows to promote Bass Central. When I asked him where he finds the time to do all of this stuff, he simply remarked, "I work 24/7. As a matter of fact, do you realize that it's 2 AM? Unfortunately, Bass Central has taken up a lot more time and effort than I had originally anticipated. I wear 95% of the hats. At any given moment, I'm on two phone lines long distance, receiving a fax, answering email, and dealing with the UPS guy at the door simultaneously. I would compare managing this business to launching the space shuttle!". Bass Central is doing really well, but at the cost of me having to spend enormous amounts of time in order to do so. It's really ironic that bass playing gave me my start and is my first love, but I don't have a lot of time to do so much less further my playing abilities. That aspect really sucks!"

Madhatter, Beaver's current band

Madhatter is a fun, weekend band. We play out from Orlando to the East Coast, staying within commuting distance. The band is in writing mode right now and will record in Parc Studios sometime next month. The band also recently had a chance to play a role in a "B" horror movie called "Victoria's Shadow", about a female vampire. The band plays a background part in a bar scene in the movie. Somehow, Beaver was



selected to have a small speaking role in the movie. He plays a musician who knew one of the story's characters. According to Beaver, "It was an easy role since I play exactly what I am, a musician. However, the script needed work and I asked the producer if I could take liberties with my it. He said 'Do whatever you want' so I re-wrote my lines although I don't think this marks the start of a budding film career!"

Beaver's Advice To Aspiring Musicians

"Get out of the business!" he says with a laugh. "No, seriously, shoot for the stars, don't waste time, be proactive. Start writing and recording now. Pursue all business leads. Make the right contacts and use them. Success usually doesn't fall in your lap, you have to make your own opportunities. The Orlando scene has evolved so much in the last 20 years. I can see it being the next Seattle, easily. Florida has finally become a place where you can make it from, as proven by a handful of successful local groups like 7M3. The music community has got to start/continue coming together to help each other. Speaking of which, Buzz has my total support for doing just that."

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