





# Finest craftsmanship

## 666strings Extended Range Guitars

One or the other reader might remember that we have presented two instruments by Stefan Schäfer, home to Lengede near Braunschweig, on these pages in the past. Back then it was about quite particular guitars, in fact Randy Rhoads derivatives, which convinced us with their exorbitant processing quality as well as their fantastic playability.

By Alexander Heimbrecht

**H**owever, a Rhoads style guitar in an 1980s crackle look is not everybodys cup of tea and a real Vintage-Aficionado might have suffered a heart attack if given those two graces from our last feature to review. But with the now present guitars he'd presumably only get away with a black eye as well, because a dedicated eight string extended range instrument with a violin look and a seven string natural wood weapon have about as much in common with a 57 Strat as a street car with a NASCAR Racer. Strings here, wheels there - that's about all the commonalities there are. In spite of

everything, the guitars reviewed today are a good bit closer to the mainstream and a it's a pleasure to present them today.

### Craftsmanship

Stefans instruments are beyond all doubt. Both guitars are addressing an audience for which a good guitar does not have to be committed to old traditions, but that values outstanding quality in terms of optics, haptics and tone! By the way, the pleasant optics already start with the fancy „guitar garage“ by own production, which is available



in four more or less costly crafted models. The customer can choose from a plain and simple, but rock solid standard flightcase to an artsy, valuable guitar housing! A look at the manufacturers website provides help with the decision for one of the offered variants.

Let's start with the seven stringed beauty made of Maple and Wenge which reminds me of a hybrid between a 1970s Alembic and Bernie Ricos creations from the 1980s. Extraordinary hardware (a Kahler vibrato), active pickups and finest woods characterize this guitar. I have to admit that two of the chosen components surprised me a lot with their functionality: The Kahler vibrato stays in tune outstandingly and the EMGs in this guitar do not sound as sterile as usually associated. Concerning the tremolo i can only say that basically it is not easy to keep a seven string in tune if you want to use the vibrato extensively. I dreadfully remember my Ibanez Universe with an Edge tremolo which gave up after just a few dive bombs. As good as that guitar sounded to me (at least back, because it was the nineties and Steve Vai was my idol), the tuning stability really upset me until the point when annoyedly i sold that guitar because all attempts at solving the issue had failed. This is certainly not the case here, the vibrato works perfectly!

And concerning those active pickups i feel a little reminiscent of the 1980s, more specifically Steve Lukathers Valley Arts guitars, which (with the exception of the „Robot“, which was made of mahogany) were all made completely of Maple and equipped with EMGs. Because of this, the 666string plugged into a classic amp (Marshall) with a classic setting (so not a modern midscoop sound) is able to deliver the old Toto classics from the late 80s convincingly. Its creator probably didn't think too much about this, but as i said before, the guitars from the Lower Saxony based manufacturer can do so much more than just evil, brutal or worse. If you're really trying hard to find a flaw here you might mention that in consequence of the construction and equipment, clean sounds do not sparkle from the speakers as lively as with the aforementioned 1957s Strat, at least when plugged directly into the amp. With a little 80s chorus and delay you get a totally different picture, because the EMGs are perfect for a „heavily processed“ clean sound: That's what Huff and Lukather knew before, and they opted for actives for quite a long time. So what do we make of this? The seven stringed 666string is an outstanding all round guitar which delivers convincing results from Jazz (yes!) in the style of seven string pioneer George van Eps to modern genres which utilize the H string.

#### Paganinis delight

The affectionate reader might be able to tell from the order of the reviews: My personal highlight is coming up. It starts with the body shape and its perfect crafting by Stefan Schäfer. It surely is not the first guitar with classical optics that has crossed my path. Even Frank Hartung has manufactured such an instrument for a customer before and he's no longer the only one to take on such a task. But i have never seen an electric guitar - archtops excluded - that utilize the optical borrowings from the manufacturing of classical instruments this well crafted and costly staged. It begins with the attention to detail in the contouring and ends with the insanely beautiful finish which lends the guitar an air of 18th century.

Needless to say, this „Legato“ named guitar is probably not for performing a rendition of Vivaldis „Four seasons“ but rather modern sounds in the style of Djent- or Jazz Metal forerunners Meshuggah. The concept of this „guitar violin“ shows a few commonalities with the Meshuggah guitarists' Ibanez signature instruments, although the craftsmanship in this extended range guitar right here is on a whole different level. The choice in pickups succeeded perfectly with the DiMarzio D-Activators just as the fixed bridge by ETS is a perfect alternative to the Hipshot fixed bridge that is often used in this genre of guitar manufacturing. The long 27“ scale is mandatory and the advisedly chosen bolt on neck provides a bit more definition than what would be the case with a set neck construction. And once you've got used to the big dimensions of the fingerboard, which is no easy task, you don't want to stop playing. A modern and robust amp like the Diezel Herbert is an ideal partner for the „Legato“. No matter if evil riffstorms or sweet lead sounds from the neck pickup, the combination of franconian amp and lower saxonian guitar is direct hit and is potentially highly addictive.

### Summary

Excellent sounding guitars, wonderfully staged and playing them is a joy – these are the ingredients for a bright future in instrument manufacturing. As a matter of fact, with these credentials Stefan Schäfer could easily dare stepping out of his niche, although his heart belongs to music of the fierce kind. It also helps that the manufacturer is slowly detaching from too martial namings and is now mimicking latin students („Colligere“ model) respectively music lovers („Legato“ model), which might give a hint to where this musical journey might be headed.

### DETAILS & INFOS

Manufacturer: 666strings	Country of origin: Germany
Model: Colligere	
Neck joint: Neck through	Finish: silk matt
Body: Wenge/Maple	Tuners: Kluson
Neck: Maple and Wenge	Fretboard: flamed Maple Radius: 16“
Scale: 27“	Frets: 24
Inlays: Dots	Pickups: EMG Bridge 81-7, Neck 60-7
Bridge: Kahler	Hardware: black
Weight: 4,0 kg	Price: 3.999 Euros incl. tailor made case (case-it)

Model: Legato	Finish: silk matt
Neck joint: bolt on	Tuners: Kluson
Body: Mahagony	Fretboard: Ebony Radius: 20“
Neck: Canadian HR Maple	Frets: 24
Scale: 27“	
Pickups: Dimarzio D-Activator	
Bridge: ETS	Hardware: black
Price: 3.999 Euros incl. case (case-it)	

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