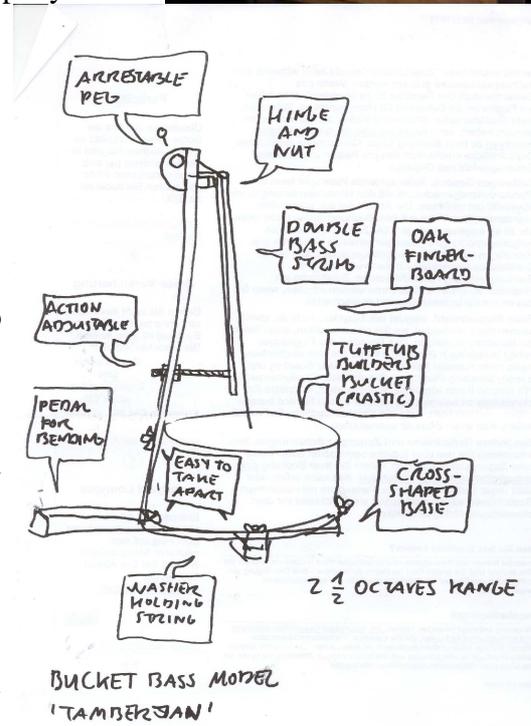


BUCKET BASS

A bucket bass is an instrument common in folk music. It is a (cheap) alternative to a bass fiddle or bass guitar, but it is also an instrument in its own right. As an instrument, its nearest "relative" is probably the south asian ektara. The basic idea is to attach a string on a stick and a resonator, altering the pitch by a mix of fingering and of altering the tension by bending the neck. We (that's Jan and Peetamber in London) are now playing & manufacturing an improved model.

We first got the idea from an Israeli traveller in Berlin, who pointed out that this type of bass is really cool for travelling. Be stuck anywhere in the world, skip a bucket, a rope and a stick, go busking and get the next cup of coffee and bus fare together. Said and done, Jan started travelling the UK in 2005 playing his squeezebox and building bucket bass after bucket bass for people to accompany him.

He then got stuck in London and ended up playing the bucket himself - and improving the design, over time. He added a peg, a finger board, and a pedal. The result is a very cheap, loud, and versatile string bass instrument with a range of more than two octaves. In 2008, Jan teamed up with Peetamber who is a carpenter by profession. The result is the bucket bass model that we are advertising on these pages - design by Jan, and build by Peetamber. Hence the name "Tamberyan" model. You may feel free to contact us if you want one.



Similar instruments are common as "wash tub bass" in the USA, where it is popular in folk and blues, and particularly in jug bands and bluegrass bands. It can be heard in many early rock'n'roll tracks, there are recordings from artists such as Chuck Berry, the Beatles, and many more using this instrument - mainly in lieu of double bass or electric bass guitar. However, the "classic" layout of the wash tub bass does have neither fingerboard nor pedal and is thus quite a bit awkward to play.

In the French speaking world, the bucket bass is called "contrebassine" and has gained some popularity over the last couple of years in a variety of styles. Again, most improvised models lack finger board and pedal.

In the UK, skiffle bands tends to play what is called a skiffle bass, or a tea chest bass. Based on the same idea, these improvised instruments use a tea chest instead of a tub as a resonator. This was

made popular by Lonnie Donnegan and the subsequent "skiffle" boom. However, today's tea chests tend to be too light to make a good resonator, and the problem of how to fix the neck to the box has never really been solved, thus making a tea chest base an almost impossible instrument - if you have a tea chest, make it into a cajon instead!

The instrument is light, very robust, easy to take apart and assemble and, in comparison to bass fiddles and bass guitars, very affordable. We believe that along with the Ukulele and the Cajon, it will become the 21st centuries folk musicians tool of choice.

Features of the "Tamberyan" model bucket bass:

- tuff tub cement mixing bucket resonator
- fine sanded oak wood finger board spanning more than two octaves,
- the action (that is how high the string runs over the finger board) is adjustable in hight and angle, which comes in very handy when strings or resonator are changed;
- head with tapered peg to allow for precise tuning of the string;
- mechanism to fix the peg to hinder it from sliding when bending technique is used;
- detachable base with pedal to stand on, enabling the player to use bending technique in a comfortable position;
- can easily be taken apart into neck (with fingerboard and head), resonator, and base; ideal for transport by car, since the bucket can be filled with other materials (bedding... ha!)



The instrument can be fitted with a piezo pick-up, or even a humbucker style pick-up to avoid feedbacks. It sounds best when used with a D-string for double bass, but can equally be used with other appropriate steel or nylon strings - the first version used a tent string.

Since the pitch of the notes played is determined by the fingering on the board, and the tension applied to the neck, it is necessarily supplied with only one string. However, this one string can produce a range of sounds surpassing instruments with a stiff neck. The bending technique can produce effects reminiscent of the sitar, only lower - note that both sitar and bucket bass are basically played on one string only.

The sound is surprisingly precise and is very loud - louder than an acoustic double bass. It is particularly strong in the lower frequencies and thus ideal to produce distorted sounds when amplified. We found it to be the perfect tool for many a jam session when there is need for a bass, but no "perfect" bass sound required, or when the specific sound or abilities of the bucket bass are desired. Due to its simplicity, it is also a perfect toy and first string instrument for kids or beginners.

We'd be happy to make one just the way you like it, custom made size, shape, or decoration...

Questions, suggestions and orders: Peetamber, tel. 044-(0)-20-8888-5919 (London)

<http://www.bucketbass.com/>