



# Cort GB-Short Scale Bass

Cort short? A MarkBass preamp, roasted maple neck and more proves that short-scale basses don't have to mean 'less'

BY CONNOR FLYS

**PICTURE A SHORT-SCALE** bass and it's generally one of two things - a thump-tastic retro instrument, possibly with a set neck and a fat-sounding humbucker, or a scaled-down, beginner bass aimed at younger players and invariably built down to a low, low price.

Of course, that's quite a reductive summary but you get the gist; it's uncommon to see a short-scale bass that falls particularly far outside those categories. But to see a manufacturer take a number of professional-level modern features from full-size bass guitars, and stuff them into an affordable short-scale that still sits decidedly above the entry level of the market? That's an opportunity.

This is the new GB-Short Scale from Korean OEM giant Cort, and it's not an exaggeration to say that it's unique to the current bass landscape. Big words, for sure, so allow me to show my working.

It's a shrunk version of Cort's established and well-liked GB series: a sleek offset model which is broadly in the Jazz Bass camp aesthetically. The scale length is the usual short-scale measurement of 30 inches.

So far, you might be conjuring up images of those starter-pack instruments most of us left behind as quickly as we could...

## Build quality

But, far from being cheaply lashed up from plywood and despair, here I'm presented with a poplar body finished in a pleasant high-gloss Forest Green - by far the subtlest of the available finishes, the others being the vibrant Yellow Crush and a blindingly-bright Fandango Purple, which in reality is more of a 'hot pink'. It's a refreshingly fun choice of colors.

And what's this - a roasted maple neck? Your eyes aren't deceiving you - this is a clue to the aspirations that Cort has for the GB-Short Scale's market position. It's reasonably-priced, sure, but there's no shortage of upmarket touches.

The construction quality lives up to it too, with smooth finishing, tight neck fit and excellent fretwork. Cort builds guitars for a number of big-name brands too. Remember; those long-running relationships wouldn't be there if the products weren't up to scratch.

## Playability

The tight build quality contributes to a lively acoustic ring. The weight isn't feather-light but is certainly comfortable - if anything, the neck tends to dive a little due to the small body and the normal-sized headstock.

Of course, it needs to accommodate four machine-heads, but I can't help thinking some

**"A well-chosen feature set that really elevates it above similarly priced short-scales"**

lighter tuners, or even a more compact 3+1 headstock design might balance things a little.

It's a fun bass to play, of course - short-scales often are. There's a slightly looser, more forgiving feel in the strings, tricky hand positions can become easier, and wider stretches open up. The smooth and comfortable neck is a further aide to this.

## Sounds

Short-scales can, however, paint themselves into a corner sonically. The looser tension results in more low-end 'thump', and designs such as the classic Gibson EB models only emphasise this with fat, warm-voiced humbucking pickups, pushed right up against the fretboard.

Those basses aren't renowned for versatility or definition as a result. The Cort's slick playability and funky modern aesthetics will be for nothing if it falls into the same trap.

Luckily, it's equipped with a preamp - and a proper three-band active EQ - from Italian bass amp mainstay MarkBass. There's even a three-way toggle switch to select series, parallel or split operation for the mid-mounted, soapbar-sized humbucker.

In practice, this means a lot of different sounds are possible, far beyond the usual reach of a short-scale. With everything set flat, it has the short-scale 'woof' one would expect, this can of course be manipulated with the on-board MarkBass preamp. Boost the bass if you're looking for that classic old-school tone, or back it off, shape the mid and treble to taste, and the GB-Short Scale does an accomplished job of more mainstream sounds.

A compressed Acoustic 360 emulation and some mid boost can make this little Cort ideal for disco and funk, while a gritty SansAmp tone, scooped mids and boosted highs will easily see it encroach on rock and metal sounds.

It doesn't have the string tension to excel at drop-tuned heaviness, but it'll certainly hold its own for most things short of that. It has plenty of output, and that EQ is a vital tool in unlocking sounds quite outside what might be expected of such a bass.

## Verdict

The GB-Short Scale is a surprising addition to

## GUITARWORLD VERDICT



**Cort has come up with a very interesting take on the short-scale bass, and one which has a lot more crossover appeal than most. Solidly built and with a very useful preamp, it's a bass that could be just the ticket for a variety of situations.**

## PROS

- + Fun aesthetics and a selection of vibrant colors.
- + Unexpectedly upmarket feature set.
- + Great value for money.
- + A surprisingly broad range of tones beyond the usual short-scale remit.

## CONS

- A bit of neck dive.
- The flip-side of that color choice - will you find one you like?

## SPECS

- MADE:** Indonesia  
**TYPE:** Short-scale, active four-string bass guitar  
**BODY:** Poplar  
**NECK:** Bolt-on roasted maple, C shape  
**FINGERBOARD:** Roasted maple  
**SCALE LENGTH:** 30"/762mm  
**NUT/WIDTH:** Plastic, 38mm  
**FRETS:** 22, medium jumbo, nickel silver  
**HARDWARE:** Open-gear tuners, vintage 4-saddle bridge  
**ELECTRICS:** Cort Powersound humbucker, MarkBass MB-1 preamp, controls for Volume, Bass, Middle, Treble, 3-way pickup switch for series/split/parallel operation  
**WEIGHT:** 7.4lb/3.3kg  
**LEFT-HANDED OPTIONS:** No  
**FINISHES:** Forest Green (as reviewed), Yellow Crush, Fandango Purple  
**CASES:** No

the market, perhaps, but one that makes a lot of sense and has plenty of utility.

It's cool-looking, with excellent build quality and a well-chosen feature set that really elevates it above other similarly-priced short-scales. Add to that a slick playing experience and an unexpectedly broad sonic palette, and the conclusion is that it's well worth a try.