

Bass Dynamics Brings Brazilian Basses to U.S.



James Carrothers is a long time bass player which currently plays with the jazz/R&B band Mama's Shirt, who released their first CD last year. Recently, though, he has found himself unexpectedly in the MI business.

but are not practical to play." He's equally sold on the company itself. "It's two guys by the beach building basses – it doesn't get much easier than that. They build everything in house by hand so there's know worry about what your getting."

Carrothers never planned this.

"I got involved in the MI business on a whim," Carrothers says. "In 2005 I went to

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"Similar to the Hair Club for Men, I'm the owner and a user," Carrothers deadpans about the basses he's distributing. Then he makes a passionate case for the instruments, which plays at all his gigs, church services, and recording sessions. "The key is they are easy to play. A lot of custom basses look good,

Rio de Janeiro and saw that a bass company headed its operations there. I contacted D'Alegria after seeing the basses online on their Web site. The light bulb came on and I pitched the idea about representing them in the U.S. I had never been on the business side of music, but decided to use the MBA I have and see what I could do."



D'Alegria was founded in January 2003 in Rio de Janeiro by partners Daniel Alegria and Rodrigo Werneck, and Carrothers ordered two basses sight unseen. He waited four months for their arrival. "When they arrived I waited about a week before opening the boxes for fear of being disappointed. I plugged them in and they have been the easiest basses I've ever played."

The next step was forming Bass Dynamics, with the purpose of selling D'Alegria basses in North America. Based in Charlotte, N.C., it is currently the typical family organization with Carrothers getting help from not only wife Valerie, but also twin 13-year-old daughters, Jasmine and Janey.

In 2006 he trekked to the NAMM show as a visitor with his two basses in toe. By

chance he shared a flight with Ricky McKinney of the Blind Boys of Alabama, and soon a D'Alegria bass was in the hands of the band's bass player, Trae Pierce. Pierce became their first endorsee. "In addition to meeting the Blind Boys, I lucked out and met Shawn Whitley with Epifani Custom Sound," explains Carrothers. That led to a meeting with Nick Ephifani, and before long, Carrothers was playing the basses in their booth that year. "That was a big boost, and Shawn gave me some pointers for doing my business."

Though new to the industry, Carrothers has a clear understanding that many have come before him and faltered. But his uncompromising belief in the product fuels him. Carrothers states, "At the 2007 NAMM show, pretty much every bass player that came by said that the basses were the best at the show in terms of looks and playability. I describe them as the way basses used to be made. By the time a player gets to the level of wanting a custom bass, our value in terms of price and accessibility is another edge."

Part of the appeal is the green aspect of the instruments. "With the Amazon Rain forest as a backdrop, Brazilians have been at the forefront of the green revolution given the interdependence of the land and people. The diversity of plant species is the highest on earth with some experts estimating that one square kilometer may contain over 75,000 types of trees and 150,000 species of higher plants. D'Alegria's hand crafted basses use selected indigenous certified

woods from Brazil that provide unique sound qualities, while being respectful of nature that provides woods." At this past NAMM show, he brought over a dozen four-, five-, and six-string basses in a variety of colors. The show went well for him, he said, and he looks forward to continuing building his company in the future (which is also including a new line of clothing called Brotherman Bass Gear, aimed toward the bass enthusiast).

Carrothers continues to establish dealer relationships, having already made arrangements with two top bass shops in the U.S., and is in conversations with getting some of the instruments in selected Sam Ash stores. "By the nature of the product, this is not a mass produced bass. There is a comfort level that can be supplied without losing quality and that is what we shoot for."



James Carrothers



D'Alegria founders Daniel Alegria and Rodrigo Werneck