

# BARGAIN BOUTIQUE

## Ibanez SR400QM Bass

BY ED FRIEDLAND

**S**INCE 1987, THE IBANEZ Sound-gear bass has found its way onstage in virtually every genre of music. Available in a range that includes everything from entry-level to professional models, the SR is one of the most ubiquitous axes since the Fender P-Bass. Loved for its slim, fast-playing necks, well-balanced ergonomics and cutting tone, the SR is a modern archetype.

The SR400QM sits somewhere in the middle of the series. It's not a beginner's bass, but neither is it a pro-level instrument, like the SR900 or Prestige Series basses. Built in Indonesia, the SR400QM is a solid, mid-level ax with stunning visual appeal, flexible electronics and a street price of just \$399.

### FEATURES

**THE 400QM'S MOST** noticeable feature is its beautiful quilted maple top and matching headstock overlay. Accentuated by the cherry sunburst stain, the quilt gives the bass a three-dimensional look and a boutique vibe. The basswood body is sleek and sculpted, and the upper and lower horns have a nice taper that reminds me of a shark's tooth. The body is joined to a three-piece bolt-on, hard-rock maple neck that has a 1 1/2-inch nut and is capped with a rosewood fingerboard that sports 24 medium frets. The neck/body joint is tailored for easy access to the top frets and, thanks to a super-tight fit, is extremely stable.

Two high-output Ibanez DXH humbuckers fuel the tone along with a three-band Style Sweeper EQ circuit. Paired with a concentric bass/treble knob, the Style Sweeper control shifts the tone from slap to fingerstyle by altering two frequency parameters at once. Turning the knob all the way to finger position cuts 5dB at 100Hz and 5dB at 10kHz. This accentuates the mid range, giving you better fingerstyle definition. When the knob is turned all the way to the slap position, the mid contour is a 10dB boost at 100Hz and 10kHz. By boosting the lows and highs, the style-sweep effectively creates a midscoop that works well for slap.

The zinc Accu-Cast bridge has a quick-release design to make changing strings simple, and it features all of the standard adjustments to dial in your action and intonation. The

closed-gear tuners work just fine, and their grey/chrome hue is a good match for the bridge's Cosmo-Black finish. The cable input jack is side-routed and recessed on the top of the bass—a custom touch that also prevents the dreaded “groovus-interruptus” that occurs when you step on your cord and yank it out of the jack.

### PERFORMANCE

**CAN A NECK MAKE** you play faster? Probably not, but the neck on the SR400QM might make you think it can. There is certainly no denying the SR's inviting feel. The electronics are versatile and simple to use, though more experienced players might prefer to forego the preset slap/finger EQ contours in favor of their own settings; while the Style Sweeper does what it was designed to do, it's a bit heavy handed in application. The concentric bass/treble knob saves control panel space, but take care not to bang it. Cranking the treble control produced audible hiss, something not uncommon for a bass in this price range. However, the SR has enough natural brightness to make only subtle treble boosting necessary.

A bass with a “slap” knob sends a pretty clear signal of its intent, and the SR400QM certainly likes to be spanked. The 24-fret neck takes up valuable slap/pop real estate, so I had to adjust to the most economical right-hand technique I could muster. While the position of the neck pickup made playing space tight, its length posed more of a problem: I found my pinkie getting hung up on the treble side of the pickup. Shortening the pickup cases would make this ax a little more slap friendly.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

**TAKING THE PRICE OF** the SR400QM into account, I'm inclined not to make a big stink over some of the minor shortcomings. The bass looks classy, feels great and easily provides a variety of useful tones. It is positioned well as a step-up instrument for an intermediate player or as an ax for someone that wants boutique chic looks for a bargain-basement price. ✨

PRO	CON
GREAT FEEL, GOOD SOUND, HIGH-CLASS LOOKS	HEAVY-HANDED PRESET EQ, PICKUP LENGTH CROWDS SLAP SPACE



**LIST PRICE \$533.00**

**MANUFACTURER:** Hoshino U.S.A Inc., [ibanez.com](http://ibanez.com)

**BODY:** Basswood with quilted maple top

**NECK:** Three-piece maple bolt-on

**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood

**FRETS:** 24 medium

**SCALE:** 34 inches

**PICKUPS:** Two IBZ DXH

**ELECTRONICS:** Concentric bass/treble, Style Sweeper finger/slap control

**NUT WIDTH:** 1 1/2 inches

The matching headstock gives the SR400QM a classy vibe.

The Style Sweeper EQ control lets players quickly dial in slap or finger tones.

Staring into the quilted top may produce hallucinations.

