

George Benson never really dreamed about enjoying his current success and fame. His lifelong ambition was to design his own personalized guitar, and last year that dream came true with the introduction of the Ibanez George Benson GB10 and GB20 guitar models.

Benson's inspiration to construct his own personal guitar model for many years remained dormant because, he revealed, "Everyone I talked to wanted to build their idea for me, not mine."

Once Ibanez stepped into the picture, Benson's contemplations came to fruition very quickly. He first met Ibanez designer and marketing director, Jeff Hasselberger, while taping a television show in Philadelphia. An exchange of creative ideas ensued after meeting on a regular basis, and George's mental picture began to take form on paper.

Ibanez helped George to develop the prototype while he was touring in Japan. Meetings were held on the road to discuss vital technical considerations in order to meet the specifications that George had outlined.

In designing his own guitar, Benson's principal goal was to create a guitar that would withstand the volume levels of today's concert situations and retain a clear and clean sound without feedback. He also wanted to construct a guitar that was smaller and more comfortable to play and attractive to young musicians. "Many young guitarists told me that they could not get into the jazz feeling and sensitivity with the playing restrictions of the traditional jazz guitar with all its bulk and feedback," stressed Benson.

Hasselberger and Ibanez, who shared George's reasoning, emphasized "George is one of the few musicians who can define the limits of his instrument and suggest

TOMORROW'S NAME IN GUITARS.



ways to expand those limits."

Finally, after developing a series of blue prints, two prototypes were constructed and tested, and 1977 the GB10 and GB20 received a resounding acceptance on the marketplace.

For the first year of their production, the Ibanez George Benson Models were available in limited quantities. The first 500 were built with a special insignia on the back of the peghead. The owners of the models were also given a special registration authenticating the guitar and verified personally by George Benson. The Benson models made their first appearance before the trade market at NAMM EXPO '77 at the Georgia World Congress Center.

The GB10, which is used by Benson in all live performances and studio recordings, is the guitarist's favorite. It is significantly smaller than the traditional jazz guitar and revolutionary in its design. The design incorporates an adjustable tailpiece with separate bridge adjustment for the bass and treble side. This gives the player more control over playing tension and balance between the treble and bass strings.

"It's revolutionary, in that it looks very much like a solid body, but it's hollow and has a real acoustic tone. It's quite light and I think many players will appreciate that," explains Benson.

In comparison, the GB20 is more in line with the traditional guitar although it's thinner body has a higher resonant frequency than traditional jazz guitars. Another important difference is the deep Venetian cut-away allowing access to all twenty-two frets without having to climb over the body. The GB20 shares many of the features of the GB10 such as an ebony fingerboard, pearl-abalone-pearl inlays, half and half nut and large peghead.

The GB10 and GB20 are now available exclusively from the HOSHINO U.S.A. based in Bensalem, Pennsylvania and the Chesbro Music Company in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

The response and the future for the Ibanez George Benson models are nothing short of phenomenal and best reflected by George's own predictions. "This is the dream guitar I've had in my head for a long time. I feel this model will become the Mercedes of the guitar."

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