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Music Man Stingray LH (1980) neck check report

Following a request for service and maintenance made by Mr. Vincent Niklaus for a recently acquired Music Man Stingray bass, I noted below the elements identified by my inspection.



- The truss rod, although it works, does not compensate for the relief of the neck, even without string tension. The relief measured at the 8th fret is about 1.7mm with light strings (.045 - .100) in standard tuning. The relief recommended by most manufacturers (and confirmed by my experience) is between 0 and 0.4mm at frets 7-9.
- The instrument has been refretted. As a result of the refretting, the thickness of the neck has been significantly reduced, especially between frets 1 to 12. The current thickness is about 18.8 mm just before the first fret. Information found after research indicates that the original thickness must have been between 19.8 and 20.3 mm. There is so little wood left that the truss rod block can be felt below the first fret just by running your finger over the fingerboard. This could indicate a reduced rigidity, which could explain at least partially the very pronounced relief of the neck.







- The neck is also curved from right to left (if you look at the instrument from above), something in my experience very unusual. As can be seen in the pictures above, there is a very regular and obvious curve in the neck.

It is possible that this neck had warped some years after its construction, and that the refretting (which the seller said was done in the 1980s) was in fact simply the result of an attempt to correct this warp, by sanding down the fingerboard.

- The strings are also off-centre in relation to the neck. In the photos of the last frets, we see that the space between the G string and the edge of the fingerboard is much smaller than the space between the E string and the other end of the fingerboard. It would seem that the neck is not centred with the bridge, and the curve of the neck accentuates this asymmetry.

In conclusion, this neck is not adjustable, nor correctable without irreversible interventions. My suggestions to preserve as much of the original instrument as possible are as follows:

- Making a relatively thin fingerboard that would be glued on top of the existing wood, which would not only restore a thickness more in line with the original, but more importantly it would compensate for the relief and add rigidity to the neck.
- In addition to the above-mentioned fingerboard, the curve of the neck could be corrected by removing wood in the appropriate places. This would change the original profile of the neck and result in the almost complete loss of the original lacquer.
- Make a copy of the neck as a replacement. The cost would be greater, but the instrument could be sold with both necks, thus (perhaps) minimising the loss of value to an amateur/collector.

I am of course available for further details, and any questions are welcome. I am also available to provide detailed quotes for the proposed works that I could carry out in my workshop.

Please accept my best regards.

Mattia Zanelli