

Z - Max
Guitars

Owners Manual

Congratulations on purchasing your new Z-Max Guitar!!

Whether your Z-Max was made to order or one of our pre-made models, it is a one of a kind, handmade instrument. With such diversity in our product it is impossible to cover every aspect and detail within these few short pages. However, we will try to cover the basic care and maintenance of features common to many Z-Max instruments. If you have specific questions that are not covered here, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are always happy to provide any assistance or information about one of our creations. In most cases you will speak directly with the person who built your guitar or bass and therefore can get the answers needed for your specific instrument.

Transporting, Storing and Maintaining:

As a rule, if you're comfortable, your instrument is comfortable. To be more specific, your Z-Max will be happiest when kept between 70-74 degrees with the humidity between 40-45%.

When not in use, we recommend that you always keep your instrument in a high-quality case or gig bag. This will reduce the possibility of damage due to mishaps and sudden changes in climate or atmosphere.

When placing your instrument in its case, be sure that all the latches are securely fastened. Carry the case with the lid towards your body. In the event that the case falls open, the lid will fall against your body and help prevent the instrument from falling out and suffering damage.

Never put your instrument in the trunk of your car. Extreme temperatures, even on moderate days, are often found in such a closed environment. Additionally, the trunk of a car vibrates and

bounces much more than the area between the two axles, and can potentially shake loose the small parts on your instrument. Likewise, never place anything on top of your instrument.

If you transport your instrument via common carriers such as airline, train, or bus, your instrument may be subjected to rough handling and severe environmental changes. For these reasons, a cargo approved hard-shell or flight case would be required.

Finish Care:

Your Z-Max instrument is most likely finished with several coats of a high-quality nitrocellulose lacquer. This finish is hand-buffed to a high-gloss, mirror-like surface. Unlike other less expensive finishes, nitrocellulose does not detract from the tone of the instrument and ages beautifully. This finish, much like skin, requires regular care and maintenance. For this reason, only quality lacquer/nitro safe polishes and other finish care products should be used: High quality products such as the Planet Waves line. Using other types of polishes will at best, clog the pores of the finish, and at worst, melt the finish.

Exposure to certain synthetic materials, leather straps, and cushions such as those found on some instrument stands could adversely effect the finish. To insure your finish maintains its beauty, please follow these steps:

- Never cover or wipe your instrument with synthetic materials.
- Always remove the strap from the instrument when not in use.
- Cover or replace guitar stand cushions with cotton cloth.

Perspiration can also damage the guitar finish as well as the hardware finish. Always clean your instrument and hardware with a soft, non-synthetic cloth before storing it.

A rapid change in temperature or humidity can result in small cracks in the finish known as "finish checking". In most cases it happens

when a chilled instrument is exposed to warm air. It occurs most frequently in the winter when a guitar case is opened in a warm room or studio after being outside. This is a result of the wood expanding faster than the lacquer. While this condition does not affect the tone, it certainly does affect the appearance. To eliminate the possibility of this happening to your instrument we recommend you warm it slowly by opening the case slowly and fanning it to induce warm air to circulate over the top. If a bright bluish fog appears on the top, close the case immediately and let it warm up for a few minutes. Then lift the instrument a little bit from the case and allow the rest of it to warm to room temperature.

Set up, Strings and Truss Rod:

Your Z-Max instrument was set up, before delivery, in our shop. This included action, intonation, truss rod, nut and saddle dressing and bridge set up. These adjustments were all based on the string gauge it shipped with and standard tuning (unless otherwise noted). Change in string gauge, or tuning as well as differential in weather will affect your set up.

To deal with changes in the weather it is recommended that you have your instrument checked over and set up seasonally. Preferably by Z-Max, but if this is not possible then a qualified, reputable local tech or luthier.

When changing string sizes or tunings, the amount of pressure exerted on the instrument changes, therefore changing your setup. Whenever changing gauge or tuning, it is again advised that Z-Max or a local, qualified, reputable tech or luthier be consulted and engaged for the purposes of making the necessary adjustments.

If your instrument came with a Z-Max, handmade neck it is likely fit with a 2-way adjustable truss rod. All other necks are likely fit with a standard compression type truss rod. In either case, extreme care should be used making any adjustments. Never force the adjustment nut. Never more than $\frac{1}{4}$ turn at a time. Always wait at least 15 minutes between adjustments, this allows the neck a chance to settle in and adjust to its new position. Never use the truss rod to make any “major” neck adjustments, especially in the case of a 2-way double action rod. (2-way rods are free floating and are not anchored; too much pressure can cause serious damage to the rod, neck and fingerboard). Any adjustments should be made by a professional (preferably Z-Max) with the use of a neck jig. The truss rod should be used only to hold the position of the neck achieved by the neck jig.

Fingerboards and Unfinished Wood:

Rosewood fingerboards and any other unfinished wood that your instrument is equipped with, should be cleaned and lightly conditioned only as needed.

Oils, sweat and dirt from fingers as well as particles from string and fret wear can clog and dirty unprotected wood. This can affect tone as well as appearance and have a negative impact on the life of the instrument. The frequency of recommended cleaning is impossible to determine. The amount of time spent playing and other factors vary from player to player. Again we recommend using only quality products for the care of your instrument. Many products sold as instrument polishes and fingerboard conditioners are really just byproducts, or leftovers, from the manufacturing of other products. Avoid products containing silicone or petroleum based ingredients and use only enough to do the job and only when needed. Over cleaning and over moisturizing can be just as damaging as none at

all.

If you need help finding a polish, cleaner, conditioner or other care product that is suitable for your instrument, please contact Z-Max directly and we will be happy to provide you with a list of quality products and advise you on their use and application.

Hardware:

Although Z-Max uses only the highest quality components made in house or from some of the world's most respected manufacturers, proper care and maintenance is essential. The metallic components of your instrument should be kept dry, clean and free of debris. Build up of residues and other contaminants can adversely effect tone, intonation, tuning stability and mechanical operation of gears and adjustment screws. Moisture and sweat can cause tarnish and even pitting in extreme cases.

After playing your instrument, take a moment and wipe down the bridge, tailpiece (if equipped) and strings with a dry, soft, non abrasive cloth. Periodic cleaning with a quality metal polish will help ensure a lifetime of shine and tone. (When it is practical to do so, remove the components from the guitar before polishing. If this is not possible or practical, take care not spill or smear potential harmful liquids on the finish.)

Unless otherwise noted, all Z-Max instruments are entitled to a complete manufacturer overhaul and reset any time within the first year. Because our instruments are handmade from scratch and generally delivered in a relatively short time frame and to locations around the world, it is possible that some settling or shifting may occur. As the wood settles in and adjusts to its new purpose and environment, shrinks, swells, etc. some adjustment may be necessary to keep your instrument in peak condition. When your instrument

returns to us we will also address any minor superficial blemishes and rebuff and polish before sending it home.

Thank you for choosing a Z-Max instrument! We hope you enjoy playing it as much as we enjoyed building it.