Bradley "P" Electric Bass Guitar Formerly Owned by Bikini Kill and Nation of Ulysses

Date
1975-1980

Primary Maker
EMP Women's History Project

Medium
wood; metal; plastic

Description
This circa 1970s Bradley electric bass was played by Steve Gamboa of Nation of Ulysses from 1988 – 1992. Nation of Ulysses were a Washington, D.C.-based Post-Hardcore group of sharply dressed, Punk revolutionaries. They toured with Riot Grrrl band Bikini Kill on a West-to-East coast tour in the summer of 1991, just as the feminist Punk movement Riot Grrrl was gaining steam. Steve Gamboa played this Bradley "P" bass throughout this tour. When Bikini Kill was in D.C. the following year, they borrowed Gamboa's bass for their show with Fugazi and L7 at the Sanctuary Theatre on April 4, 1992. A photograph from the show, by Punk photographer Pat Graham, was used on Bikini Kill's self-titled EP, released later that year. Since the early 1980s, the indie scenes in Olympia, Washington and Washington, D.C. have maintained strong sister-city connections, fostered in part by the early friendship of Calvin Johnson and Ian MacKaye. The two iconoclasts' record labels, Olympia's K Records and D.C.'s Dischord Records, had similar independent outlooks, and bands like McKaye's Fugazi (from Dischord) and Johnson's Beat Happening (from K) toured together. This intercity link grew stronger as Riot Grrrl flourished, with band members of Bratmobile inhabiting both burgs for a time. According to a MoPOP oral history with Allison Wolfe, vocalist of Bratmobile: "The spring of '91, I think, we met the Nation of Ulysses, a boy-band in Washington D.C., because Molly Neuman, the drummer in Bratmobile, is from Washington D.C., so we would sometimes spend spring breaks out there together. At the same time, Bikini Kill was very active and they were friends with Nation of Ulysses. So they had planned a US tour from the West Coast to the East Coast with Nation of Ulysses. So they toured across the country ending up in D.C. that summer."