

Each component oozes quality and brings its individual influence to the overall sound of the drum.



The brass-shelled drum is coated with black chrome and sports 10 lugs.

Ahead Snare Drum

From **£325** | Ahead's first foray into drum-making is most impressive. **Adam Jones** takes a look...

Better known as a manufacturer of hi-tech, non-wood drum sticks, Ahead are set to change direction with the recent introduction of the company's two models of snare drum. The products have been greeted with praise from pundits and punters alike. And, it would seem, with good reason.

Back to basics

These solidly designed drums are the brainchild of Bob Kasha, who runs Ahead's US distributor Big Bang. Before moving into distribution, Bob owned a drum store in the States where he forged a reputation as a custom drum builder. The two models are separated by diameter only, being 14"x6" and 13"x6". We have the 14"x6" example for review.

Each drum is constructed from a thin, unbeaded brass shell finished with an exterior coating of black chrome encircled by 10 chrome tube lugs which taper in at the middle a little. The tuning rods are equipped with TightScrew nylon inserts to prevent detuning and a pair of S-Hoops can be found on both drums. Triple-flanged and 2.3mm thick, the top of each hoop is folded at a shallow angle

towards the head, giving a top width of some 10mm. The design means that cross sticking is achieved with ease, while rim shots take on a whole new dimension. Muffling rings can be slid under the lip of the hoop and once there, are safe from being lifted off by a stray stick. S-Hoops have a similar, though less influential effect to that of die-cast hoops, striking a clever balance between pressed and die-cast alternatives.

Ahead of the game

A 24-strand Fat Cat snare is stretched across the resonant head. The snare wires are divided into three sections – a central band of 12 strands and two further six-wire groups either side. The two six-wire bands are adjustable in the normal way, via the knurled nut on the snare release. The central portion of wires can be tensioned or slackened independently through a screw that is housed within the top of the same knurled nut, opening up possibilities for altering the response, and the smallest tweak results in a subtle shift in sound. In a recording situation, this sort of flexibility provides myriad sound choices.

There is a choice of snare throw-offs. The piston-type Dunnett model supplied with the review snare works beautifully and is the cheaper option of the two. The alternative Trick throw-off adds £50 to the price, so must be very special indeed.

Soundwise, it's pretty damn loud. Most drums are when hit hard, but this is louder than any snare drum I have ever heard. Backbeats are blasted out, while rimshots scythe through with a timbale-like brightness and brushwork sounds as though it's being reproduced via an onboard amplifier. The actual sound that the drum produces is as impressive as its volume. The thin, resonant, brass shell gives vent to utterly delicious snare tones. Imagine a stinging attack sitting above fat, meaty body with a finishing touch of papery crispiness and you're getting close. You would expect these three qualities to be vying for supremacy, but they mesh in perfect harmony. It is as though John Bonham, Bill Bruford and Stewart Copeland have all collaborated on a joint signature snare. Outstanding. **R**

ESSENTIALS



PRICES

14"x6" **£325-£375**
13"x6" **£325-£375**
Available with Dunnett or Trick snare release

CONTACT

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RHYTHM VERDICT

The Ahead snares might seem as though they have arrived from out of the blue, but this project has been a long time in the making. Bob Kasha who knows a thing or two about making drums and his knowledge and input has paid off handsomely in these drums. Every facet looks, feels and sounds right. The individual components ooze quality and influence the overall sound. This is a desirable snare regardless of cost, but for the price, it's nothing short of amazing.

+ Wonderful sounding and fabulous looking snare drum.

- They are flying off the shelves so you'd better get in there quick!

RATING

