

# MEINL BYZANCE RIDE CYMBALS



**From £393 to £443** *Three not-so-shiny new additions to the Byzance Dark and Jazz ranges*

WORDS: TOM BRADLEY

**M**einl is a company that needs little introduction when it comes to the cymbal world. With an artist roster boasting huge names such as Benny Greb, Anika Nilles, Matt Halpern and Thomas Lang, the German giants are undoubtedly one of the world's pioneering cymbal manufacturers. Founded in 1951, the company has developed and grown to now produce a wealth of cymbal types suitable for players of any style and budget. With many of its cymbal ranges benefitting from a host of new additions for 2015, the beautiful Byzance series is no exception to this treatment. With six separate lines under the Byzance name alone (collectively dubbed the 'six degrees of darkness'), Meinl has clearly gone all-out to offer us drummers a wealth of unique and interesting instruments. This month *Rhythm* takes a look at a few of these recent arrivals in the form of three intriguing jazz ride cymbals.

### Build

New to the Byzance Dark line is the 22" Big Apple Dark Ride, successor to the original Big Apple ride (released to the Byzance Jazz line in 2012) which was crafted in an attempt to capture the essence of the traditional New York City jazz sound. This cymbal, like the original, has a flatter profile and under-sized bell, typical of many rides designed for jazz styles. The new version however, has not undergone a lathing process, which leaves it with a very rustic, dark matte finish. This 'straight from the oven' look, which has been all the rage in recent years, should give a dramatically darker and drier tonality than that of a lathed and polished cymbal.

The other items in question here are the 22" Symmetry ride and 21" Nuance ride, new to the Byzance Jazz line and both signature models of renowned jazz drummer and

### Also try...



#### 1 SABIAN BIG AND UGLY RIDE CYMBALS

**We say:** "Sabian has produced a stunning and intriguing set of high-end, provocative, challenging, complex, dark and great-to-play cymbals."



#### 2 ZILDJIAN K CONSTANTINOPLE RIDES

**We say:** "Clearly these cymbals are outstanding, while being far more versatile than you might think."

Berklee Professor, Ralph Peterson. These cymbals benefit from a similar treatment to the Big Apple, although the difference here is they are only partially lathed. Starting 2" in from the rim of each cymbal, the coarse lathing pattern runs up just shy of where the domed bell shape begins. Coupled with the large hand-hammered marks across the bow and smaller ones on the bell, this generates a striking aesthetic that evokes a real sense of tradition in the cymbal-making process. Both cymbals are incredibly similar in appearance, barely distinguishable if not for the slight difference in diameter and the six rivets sported by the Nuance ride. Most noteworthy for these rides is the aforementioned semi-lathed appearance and the quite frankly enormous bells.

### Hands On

The first on the stand is the Big Apple Dark Ride, and what a beauty it is. This classy cymbal with its simple and earthy appearance just begs to be explored. Of course with a cymbal of this nature (and name for that matter), it just had to be christened with a jazz ride pattern. With a trusty Peter Erskine signature jazz stick in hand, the cymbal subtly bounced into life with a "tah, tah, tah-tah, tah". And let me tell

you, the stick response on this thing is absolutely unbelievable! Often with un-lathed rides, there can be a lack of initial stick response which is usually substituted for more wash. Somehow though (likely helped by the fact it is fairly thin), it produces a perfect blend of sweet, woody stick definition and wash which is absolutely perfect for any jazz style, particularly bebop. The cymbal is rather on the quiet side which allows it to handle a fairly good thrashing without being at all overbearing. This could possibly hinder it within other genres, but if you like your ride sound dark and dirty, this will complement a wide range of styles.

Ironically, the Ralph Peterson signature

**IT PRODUCES A PERFECT BLEND OF SWEET, WOODY STICK DEFINITION AND WASH WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY PERFECT FOR ANY JAZZ STYLE**

## Essential spec



### PRICES

21" Nuance Ride, £393;  
22" Symmetry Ride,  
£443; 22" Big Apple  
Dark Ride, £443

### CAST OR PRESSED

Cast

### ALLOY USED

B20

### FINISH

Symmetry Ride and  
Nuance Ride:  
Traditional/Dark  
(partially lathed); Big  
Apple Dark Ride: Dark  
(un-lathed)

### HAND OR MACHINE HAMMERED

Hand and machine  
hammered

### COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE

Turkey

### DIAMETERS AVAILABLE

Nuance Ride: 21" only;  
Symmetry Ride: 22"  
only; Big Apple Dark  
Ride: 22" only

### SUITABLE FOR

Nuance Ride: jazz, funk,  
reggae, studio, world,  
electro; Symmetry Ride:  
jazz, funk, reggae,  
studio, world, electro;  
Big Apple Dark Ride:  
pop, fusion, jazz, funk,  
r'n'b, reggae, studio,  
world, electro

### CONTACT

D'Addario  
0191 300 3000  
[www.meinlcymbals.com](http://www.meinlcymbals.com)

## NUANCE RIDE

Byzance Jazz line's 21"  
Nuance ride is partially  
lathed and sports six rivets

## BIG DARK APPLE RIDE

22" ride is unlathed,  
so has a rustic, dark  
matte finish

## 22" SYMMETRY RIDE

Symmetry and Nuance  
rides are signature  
models of jazz drummer  
Ralph Peterson



models, which are supposed to be the most versatile of the bunch, seem like they could be a bit of a one-trick pony. As you might imagine, these cymbals are very well

matched and are in fact, tonally very similar to each other. The larger Symmetry ride offers a slightly lower pitch, while the rivets in the Nuance ride add a shimmer to the natural decay. Both cymbals are very loud and quite sharp, producing an extremely metallic, almost ping-y attack. This gives them the ability to cut through a mix like a razor blade - which might of course come in rather useful, although can be unruly in more of a subtle jazz context. Crash one of these cymbals at your own peril! For me, they almost lean towards more of an FX cymbal. As a result, I would wager that purchasing one of these as a main ride would most likely leave you disappointed.

The colossal diameter of the bells are certainly a novelty though, and do work very nicely for Latin-style grooves and bell patterns. Once again though, they are extremely loud! **R**

**VERDICT:** Three incredible looking rides that are best suited to jazz styles. The Big Apple Dark is a true work of art while the Ralph Peterson Signatures are an acquired taste.

**BUILD QUALITY**



**PLAYABILITY**



**VALUE FOR MONEY**



**RHYTHM RATING**



Watch our Meinl Byzance video  
demo at <http://bit.ly/meinlrides>