

ESSENTIAL SPEC



PRICES

Yamaha Gigmaker five-piece kit with stands, £530

SHELL MATERIAL

Poplar and basswood

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply

NUMBER OF PLYS

Bass drum 7-ply; all other drums 6-ply

BEARING EDGES

45° with back-cut

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Black Glitter (as pictured), Blue Ice Glitter, Burgundy Glitter, Grape Glitter, Silver Glitter

HOOPS/RIMS

1.5mm steel hoops; wooden hoops on bass drums

SHELL AVAILABILITY

22"x16", 12"x9", 13"x9½", 16"x16" & 14"x5½" snare; 20"x16", 10"x8", 12"x9", 14"x14" & 14"x5½" snare

SUPPLIED HEADS

Bass drum: clear Yamaha batter and ebony front head; snare: coated Yamaha batter and clear snare side; toms: clear Yamaha batter and resonant heads

LUGS PER DRUM

Bass drum & snare: 16, both toms & floor tom: 12

TOM MOUNTS

Yamaha ball-and-socket tom holder, mounted in bass drum

SNARE STRAINER

Yamaha plastic and metal drop lever

CONTACT

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YAMAHA GIGMAKER KIT

£530 New finishes and an environmental conscience make this an attractive beginners' package, reckons Adam Jones

Yamaha's current entry-level range, the aspirationally-titled Gigmaker Series, was re-launched at this year's NAMM. The revamped kits are Chinese-made and feature a new set of snazzy wrap finishes.

Build

Gigmaker kits are available in two variations - the rock-sized review set (22"x16", 12"x9", 13"x9½" and 16"x16") and a fusion-sized alternative (20"x16", 10"x8", 12"x9" and 14"x14"). Both options come with a 14"x5½" matching wooden snare and a set of Yamaha 600 series stands and pedal (the stool and boom stand pictured with the review kit are not included).

The striking Black Glitter finish of the

drums coped in a full-on musical setting. After nearly 40 minutes of frantic playing the only hardware component that had moved was one of the telescopic inner tubes of the bass drum spurs, which required re-tightening with a drum key.

Hands On

The bass drum itself is fitted with thin, single-ply heads that offer little in the way of control. Getting a deep note from the drum was straightforward, but without damping its sound was uninhibited. Calming its response was achieved in the time-honoured manner of stowing a pillow inside, ensuring that it was in contact with both heads. Even so, the front head was still prone to boominess and a little external damping was also required. Cutting a

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review kit - one of five different shades exclusive to the Gigmaker - stands out immediately. Yamaha has a way with details and the combination of the quality of the wrap with the neat, low-mass lugs suggests something more advanced than an entry-level kit. This effect is further reinforced by the inclusion of a full size ball-and-socket tom holder and the double-braced stands. Wooden bass drum hoops also get the thumbs up.

The shells are a mixture of poplar and basswood and are made with the usual care. Bearing edges are cut at 45°, with the snare drum having a sharper back-cut than the other drums.

In manufacturing the Gigmaker, Yamaha has managed to reduce formaldehyde content substantially. Formaldehyde is used in adhesives and is carcinogenic and also linked to allergies. The level of formaldehyde in this kit falls well below even the most stringent current standards.

I tested the kit at a gig with a punk band, which, although relatively brief in duration, was high-intensity and so a good test of how

port would make such adjustments quicker and easier - and investing in a pair of higher-spec heads would remove the need altogether - but the result arrived at was pretty decent. There was plenty of bottom-end on tap and the drum punched through with a fat, wet slap.

Whilst experimenting with combinations of damping some interesting sound variations came up. Completely undamped, the drum produced a timpani-sized 'bong', complete with a long decay, which could be exploited in some outré dance/hip hop/funk/jazz settings.

If the bass drum is shod with thin heads then the snare drum is the opposite, as its coated white batter head seemed impervious to stick marks. *Après-gig*, while all the other drums bore clear evidence of being pounded at breakneck speed, the snare looked barely played. At regular tunings the snare was crisp if a little polite, with the thickness of the head influencing the sound, especially at lower dynamics. However, cranking up the tension transformed the drum, sharpening the sound to a biting crack that sliced through anything within earshot. Higher tunings seemed to dial



BASS DRUM
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bottom-end on tap

out most of the head's sound too. Stick response was impressive, with the wires answering promptings from above almost to the edges.

The toms needed little in the way of intervention (just a little fine-tuning) to get the best out of them. They reacted instantly to the sticks, but there was also a good degree of depth in their notes. Power was available too, with a tribal tom riff played in one song being reproduced with throbbing results. The clean decay that was evident in all of the drums helped keep things distinct as well. Even the floor tom, with its basic allocation of 12 lugs, turned in an engaging performance.



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Verdict

Yamaha's Gigmaker kit encapsulates a lot of what makes Yamaha drums great but still manages to come in at a budget price. Considering the standard of the hardware alone this is no small achievement. Yamaha's quality control is applied universally across all of its ranges and the drums look and feel like 'proper' drums. To the get the best out

of the kit will require an investment in better heads, however, particularly the bass drum - but Yamaha would rather put more resources into perfecting the drums at this pricepoint than the other way around. An added bonus comes in the form of the kit's environmental credentials. **R**

Rating ★★★★★