

MEINL CLASSICS CUSTOM EXTREME METAL CYMBALS

From £142 Meinl expands their Classics Custom range with a whole new set of cymbals aimed at metallers

WORDS: DAVE HOLMES

Meinl's 'Extreme Metal' cymbal collection is the most recent addition to the mid-priced Classics Custom series. These models are designed specifically for those players into hardcore, death, thrash, djent, doom, gothic and the many other forms of metal. With this potentially aggressive style of drumming, a committed performance is all about endurance, attitude and volume.

Up for review is a lone 16" crash and a boxed set featuring Meinl endorsee Ben Harclerode of deathcore band Whitechapel. The set contains a 20" ride, 18" crash and a pair of 14" hi-hats. Strangely, Meinl has also included an additional 20" ride and an 18" crash, similar to the models found in the boxed set - this will allow a good test of manufacturing consistency.

EACH STROKE IS SLICED ACROSS THE CYMBAL EDGES, WHERE BOTH CRASHES EMIT AN IMMEDIATE 'CAR CRASH' EFFECT WITH LITTLE SUSTAIN

Build

All of the cymbals in Meinl's Classics Custom series are made from a B10 bronze (90 percent copper, 10 percent tin), this represents an additional 2 percent tin over their standard Classics line. Together with the heavier and thicker Classics Custom Extreme Metal cymbals, this should give a lift to the high-end frequencies producing more cut and bite to penetrate the wall of metal guitar.

Each of the cymbals are pressed (rather than cast), from sheet bronze, where the shaping, hammering and tone grooves are all applied under massive presses. They are then polished and applied with a tough lacquer to help maintain their lustre. Each 'hammering' indent is formed in a symmetrical pattern comprising two sets of circular shapes on each cymbal - with the larger being the deepest and the most intense. This intensity

does seem more pronounced on the hi-hats where the combination of the extra deep hammering and thickness upon each cymbal appears to visibly stretch the metal. Both hi-hats are around 1.5kg each - pretty hefty for a pair of 14" models - as usual the top is lighter but only by a few grams.

The bell of the 20" ride is probably the largest of any cymbals I have reviewed - from a cymbal which actually measures just over 20", a good 8" (21cm), or so, is occupied by the seemingly disproportionate bell. This is not unique and found on several other makes and models including Meinl's Soundcaster Mega Bell and Zildjian's Mega Bell rides.

Hands On

Up on the stands the cymbals look amazing with their incredibly bright, highly polished

surfaces - even managing to enhance my fairly dull matte-black kit. It's the pair of crashes which are the first to be targeted and receive a few large and well-aimed wallops from the shoulder of my 5Bs. Each stroke is sliced across the cymbal edges, where both crashes emit an immediate 'car-crash' effect with little detectable sustain as I carry on ploughing into the whole kit.

Cuffing the bow with stick tips on the 18" crash shows it can double as a crash/ride, proving especially useful towards the bell where any potential wash is easily controlled. The bell proves a useful tool for highlighting points in the song where it requires a lift. The 16" model is equally as powerful but, quite oddly (unless my ears are deceiving me), has a slightly lower pitch compared with its 18" companion. The hi-hat is pitch-perfect with its crispy, sharp tone and is incredibly articulate

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with each individual stroke clearly audible. The sound it produces is like taking a pair of ear plugs out at a gig - in the way that all of a sudden everything seems sharp and clear.

Light taps around the intriguing ride reveal an even and uncomplicated 'ping' but striking its huge bell hard (again using the shoulder of a 5B stick) produces a wicked piercing sound, taking no prisoners. Steady strokes on the bow produce a pleasing ride sound (still high pitched), with a large wash which can be used to a crashing effect when pushed a little harder. Checking-out the additional ride and crash for a moment shows it is virtually impossible to tell them apart from the boxed set models - this is the beauty of cymbals made from sheet metal and created almost entirely by computer controlled manufacturing processes. It gives any potential purchaser the confidence that each Meinl model is consistent. **R**

VERDICT: The cymbals are perfectly suited to the clientele these brass beauties are likely to encounter. They possess all the necessary frequencies to be able to hold their own up against some high levels of amplification.

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
PLAYABILITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING	★★★★★



PRICE

Ben Harclerode cymbal set, £574;
20" ride, £219;
16" crash, £142

CAST OR PRESSED

Pressed

ALLOY USED

B10

FINISH

Highly polished

HAND OR MACHINE HAMMERED

Machine

COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE

Germany

MODELS AVAILABLE

14" hi-hats; 16", 17", 18",
19" crashes; 20" ride; 16"
and 18" china; 10" splash

SUITABLE FOR

All types of metal, rock

CONTACT

Active Music Distribution
020 8693 5678
www.meinlcymbals.com

20" RIDE

Around 8" or so of the 20" ride's diameter is occupied by the seemingly disproportionate bell

POLISH

Cymbals are polished and applied with a tough laquer to help maintain their lustre

HI-HATS

Both hi-hats are around 1.5kg each – pretty hefty for a pair of 14" models