

NEW GEAR

EXCLUSIVE



HI-HAT STANDS HAVE memory locks while none of the cymbal stands do

SETS SHARE MANY physical features but get bulkier as you go up the chain

ESSENTIAL SPEC

SONOR

PRICES

HS174 100 Series hardware set (HH-174 hi hat, SS-177 snare drum stand, CS-171 cymbal stand, MBS 173 mini boom cymbal stand, SP-273 bass drum pedal), £215
HS275 200 Series hardware set (HH-274 hi hat, SS-277 snare drum stand, 2 x MBS 273 mini boom cymbal stands, SP-273 bass drum pedal), £365
HS475 400 Series hardware set (HH-474 hi hat, SS-477 snare drum stand, 2 x MBS 473 mini boom cymbal stands, SP-473 bass drum pedal), £425

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SONOR HARDWARE SETS

From £215 Geoff Nicholls tries out three new sets of hardware from the German company

Sonor has updated its hardware, and here we have the first three levels, all fabricated in China. There's the entry level 100 series and the 200 series which was developed to accompany Sonor's budget/intermediate Force ranges, which are also made in China. The 400 series is intended to accompany higher-end drums. Sonor's premium 600 series, still made in Germany, is not reviewed today. All three series are available in sets or as single items.

Build

Comparing the three sets side-by-side it's obvious they are all from the same source as they share many physical features. As you'd expect, they get heavier and bulkier as you go up the chain. The most obvious difference is that the 100 series has single-braced tripod bases while the 200 and 400 are double-braced with the 400 also having the thickest tubing. Also, the 200 and 400 stands have Sonor's three-section housing clamp.

All the cymbal stands have the same

tripod base reach, but the 100 stands are significantly lighter and single-strutted. All three series also make use of the same roughly 34cm (13½") mini boom arm (with 13cm tilter section) except that in the 200 and 400 series it is knurled for better grip. The 100 series straight cymbal stand and hi-hat both have limited height, although the former does have three sections. These would be fine for a younger, growing-up player, or a small group jazz or light rock drummer (ie: someone who's generally seeking lightweight stands for ease of carriage). But a heavy player will likely find the height and stability too limited.

Both 200 and 400 series mini-boom cymbal stands are much beefier. The 400 series is the only boom stand with a third section and extends to a towering 135cm (53") at the pivot with the boom arm. Compare this with the maximum total height of the single straight 100 cymbal stand (around 117cm/46").

The 100 and 200 series snare drum stands are essentially similar, with the 200 having a double-braced base and aforementioned

three-section clamp. The 400 is more of the same but with thicker tubing. The 100 and 200 sets came with the same HS-273 drum pedal, while the HS-473 is the same basic unit with a couple of refinements.

Hands On

The heavier the hardware the more professional and roadworthy your kit. But there's an element of overkill about a lot of modern stands. At what point do you really need double-braced tripods? When it comes to hi-hats and snare stands single-braced tripods are often all you need for stable drumming. The single-braced 100 series snare and hi-hat will suffice for most drummers who want to keep the overall weight of their traps case to a minimum. Where single-braced tripods fall down (literally) is with over-reaching cymbal boom stands. When your 22" monster crash is teetering precariously on the edge of the boom arm, you're likely to need the reassurance of a double-braced tripod spread to the max plus the weightiest of section



MINI-BOOM ARM is roughly 34cm (13½") with 13cm tilter section

EVERYTHING IN THESE three hardware series is well made, sturdy and reliable

tubing. Then only the 400 will do. You can always mix and match...

The two supplied bass drum pedals have identical basic construction, sharing the same single chain cam, expansion spring and distinctive Sonor Giant Step footboard. They also share the same adjustment of spring tension and drum key-operated beater angle/stroke. The HS-473 is bolstered by its full base plate and double-sided plastic/felt beater. Both pedals have the same thumbscrew hoop clamp which necessitates reaching under the footboard. It's just off-centre to the right, but still quite awkward to get at. You might have expected the 473 to have a more convenient side-action clamp.

Coming to the hi-hats, there is much more of a marked transition from the small and light HH-174 to the enormously heavier and more sophisticated HH-474. The latter has recently benefitted substantially by nicking components from the upmarket 600 series. Thus it is the only hi-hat here which is multi-adjustable. It has both chunky plastic/nylon step-adjust tilter and spring tension adjuster. The footboard swivels through 120

degrees for ease of positioning and the centre pull rod is hexagonal for surer grip.

Incidentally, the three hi-hats all have memory locks while none of the cymbal stands do. This does not matter in terms of stability - the section joints lock extremely tightly - but if you use memory locks for their original purpose of memorising settings then you're out of luck.

Verdict

Sonor has a reputation for attention to detail and inventive hardware designs, particularly with its drum fittings and tom mounts. So while everything in these three hardware series is well-made, sturdy and reliable - most certainly worthy of your consideration - still I was left feeling a teensy bit dissatisfied. The SP-473 bass drum pedal is rather basic next to the more versatile HH-474 hi-hat and the partial use of memory locks was puzzling. As a revamped collection it's all workman-like and dependable, just not the most consistently inspiring. **R**

Rating ★★☆☆☆

The single-braced 100 series snare and hi-hat will suffice for most drummers who want to keep the overall weight of their traps case to a minimum

TRY IT WITH...



THE 100 and 200 series are ideal for Sonor's budget Force 507, 1007 and 2007 series kits.



THE 400 SERIES, though aimed at pro kits, would complement Sonor's Force 3007 intermediate kit perfectly.