



It is rare that you get a drum that is easily suited to a variety of different disciplines, but this is the one. Well worth checking out!

Remo TSS Snare Drum System

£146 | A multi-tasking drum that functions as a lightweight marching drum, add-on snare and practice pad. **Adam Jones** puts one through its paces.

ESSENTIALS



PRICES

Remo 10" TSS Snare Drum System **£146**

CONTACT

Arbiter Group Ltd
Atlantic House
Stirling Way
Borehamwood
WD 2BT
Telephone
020 8207 7890
Website
www.remo.com

Remo's new TSS drums are a logical evolution of the company's popular Sound Shape drums. Essentially flat, non-tuneable and affordable drums, Sound Shapes were designed with teaching and group work in mind. The next step for Remo was to incorporate more sophisticated and regular drum features into Sound Shapes, and thus the TSS (Tuneable Sound Shapes) range was born.

The Snare Drum System (SDS) on review is part of the mid-line extended range of TSS drums. Taking elements from existing Sound Shapes, snare drums and common practice pads, the SDS is a unique instrument.

Shape shifting

SDS drums are available in 8", 10" and 12" diameters and the model supplied is a 10" example. The drum is built around a

10" Sound Shape – a coated 10" Ambassador head which is glued into an inch-wide hoop of Acousticon, Remo's high-tech shell material. The head is then seated on an Acousticon shell, which is around an inch deep. At the bottom, the shell is butted against another band of Acousticon, the same size as that of the hoop above. On top of the Sound Shape batter head is an aluminium hoop which functions as a counterhoop. Twelve tuning rods then pass through the aluminium and Sound Shape hoops, securing the bottom Acousticon hoop in place. These are adjusted with an Allen key rather than drum key, making it possible to dial in the enormous tensions required for pipe band use.

In common with many pipe band drums, a set of snare wires is located directly beneath the batter head. The wires cannot be disengaged, so remain in permanent contact with the head. A pair of nylon sliders, which run on rails along the snare wires, provide practical and creative dampening.

As there is no bottom head, the cavity of the drum can be filled with a shaped piece of foam, which is used in conjunction with a thin but very effective pressure disc for practising. An Acousticon base attaches via Velcro pads to the underside of the drum and sports felt feet for table-top use.

World champion pipe band drummer and Remo endorsee Jim Kilpatrick played a key role in the design of the SDS and his influence on the drum is clear.

The superb complement of lugs means that near unlimited amounts of tension can be cranked across the head. In fact, it is among these biscuit tin-and-beyond tuning ranges that the drum finds its voice, dishing out super high pops. Rimshotting the aluminium hoop hardens the sound into what could be accurately described as rifle cracks.

Loud and proud

Jim Kilpatrick tested the SDS alongside his regular marching drum and found little to separate the two in terms of sound carry (in other words, it's loud). Slackening the head off a little brings about a surprisingly thick sound, and while it can't deliver the sort of throaty bark that, say, a 6" deep maple snare is capable of, it provides many sonic possibilities worth experimenting with.

A universal bracket means that the drum can be mounted around the kit off a standard tom arm, or clamped to a pedal as an unconventional second kick.

With each tuning, I found that the nylon sliders needed to be positioned with care across the snare wires to eliminate unwanted buzzing. Pushed towards the middle of the drum, the effect is dry and tight, while towards the edges a looser and warmer sound is realised.

Inserting the foam pad without the pressure disc allows some of the characteristics of the drum to remain audible, adding another possibility for a heavily altered snare sound. With the pressure disc added to the equation, though, the drum becomes muted to a perfectly acceptable level. **B**

RHYTHM VERDICT

The Remo TSS SDS may seem like an eccentric contraption, but it actually performs capably in each of its designated categories. As a lightweight marching drum it is ideal for children, who would find the weight of a full-size marching drum a burden. As a practice pad, it provides good bounce and is barely louder than a rubber pad. And as an accent drum for kit drummers it has huge potential, being limited only by the imagination of the user. In essence, it's a quality drum for anyone looking to invest in either or all of its disciplines.



Flexible, proven concept that sounds great.



Lack of snare wires tensioning adjustment or throw-off could become a cause of frustration.

RATING

