

MEINL HCS CYMBAL PACK

£125 Meinl's new starter series offers more brass for less copper

WORDS: **DAVE HOLMES**

Essential spec



PRICE

HCS Basic Cymbal Set, £125

CAST OR PRESSED

Pressed

ALLOY USED

Brass (MS63)

FINISH

Polished

HAND OR MACHINE HAMMERED

Machine

COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE

Germany

DIAMETERS AVAILABLE

8"-20"

MODELS AVAILABLE

Hi-hats, crash/ride, ride, splashes, chinas, crash

SUITABLE FOR

Beginners or those drummers on a tight budget

CONTACT

Active Music Distribution
020 8693 5678
www.meinlcymbals.com

BASIC SET

Reviewed is the HCS Basic Set comprising 14" hi-hats and a 16" crash

SOUND GROOVES

Cymbals have wider sound grooves on the bow and finer ones on the bell

Meinl is the epitome of efficient German engineering, combining over 50 years of instrument expertise with advanced manufacturing processes. Meinl's ever-expanding range of cymbals has models to suit all genres. The set we have for review contains a selection from Meinl's entry-level HCS range, which they say "offers the best possible sounds at an affordable price".

Buying cymbals in a boxed set can have advantages over buying them individually; it saves money and the hassle of selection, and they will usually be tonally matched. Meinl offer three cymbal sets in their HCS series; two 'Basic' and one 'Complete' - the first Basic set has a pair of 14" hi-hats and a 16" crash (as reviewed), the second also has 14" hi-hats but comes with an 18" crash/ride and lastly the Complete Cymbal Set comprises 14" hi-hats, 16" crash and a 20" ride.

Build

HCS cymbals are created from a brass alloy, MS63 (MS = Mint State, 63 = percentage of copper). This brassy formula is used by many manufacturers for

their entry-level cymbals, as it's easy to work and is a relatively inexpensive material. Rather than casting, each cymbal is formed from sheet brass which is pressed into shape, lathed and hammered on the top surface only and then, finally, polished.

Printed in black upon each cymbal is the series designation 'HCS', together with the familiar Meinl logo. Laser-etched into the upper surface is yet another, much smaller logo, country of origin and serial number. Like most hi-hat pairs, the bottom cymbal is thicker and as a result, heavier than the top. The crash is reasonably thin with a shallow taper and, like the hi-hats, has wider sound grooves around the bow but much finer ones on the bell.

Hands On

Striking the 16" crash at the edge with the stick shoulder sees the cymbal peak instantly and tail off just as rapidly, leaving behind a sustained note which is actually quite pleasant. Rather than being ear and air-splitting, the sound produced is full-bodied and quite dark. Playing with nylon tips produces a useful

cut from the bow and the bell sounds surprisingly good with some well-aimed shoulder strikes, proving the cymbal to be equally useful perhaps as a crash/ride.

The hats produce some surprises too. All the usual tricks are feasible and readily available, with actions such as half-open, pedalling with the 'chick' sound, striking while closed and then opening rapidly - its all there. There is a slight underlying harmonic going on beneath each individual stick strike, but this is lost when adding drums. **R**

VERDICT: These cymbals may be cost-effective but they don't sound in the least bit cheap - they are surprisingly good and they would make a sensible purchase for any beginner.

BUILD QUALITY



PLAYABILITY



VALUE FOR MONEY



RHYTHM RATING

