

## GEAR REVIEW

# MAPEX STORM ROCK FUSION KIT

**From £659.99** Mapex releases a brand-new budget kit with a complete set of hardware, a free extra tom and the option of a bargain cymbal set

WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS

**T**he all-new Storm replaces Mapex's Horizon HX series. There is a choice of 20" Fusion or 22" Rock five-piece shell packs, with a complete set of new Storm hardware and the option of a cut-price Paiste cymbal set. A second floor tom is presently included for free until roughly the end of June, depending on stock reserves.

### Build

Tornado is Mapex's basic starter kit, while Mars fills the up-market budget slot with its birch shells. The new Storm slips in-between, a superior starter kit with hardware included. The striking vision you see on these pages is the Rock Fusion set: 22"x18", 10"x7", 12"x8", 16"x14" and 14"x5" snare, plus a 'free' 14"x12" floor tom, a full set of hardware and optional Paiste cymbal set, pictured over the page.

There are four Storm finishes, but the

kits the shells are quite thick (7.2mm), with multiple (eight) plies. This is simply because the wood is not as tough as top grade lumber.

Having said that, the inner finish is good and here's the clincher: the shells are precisely round. All the more impressive since the poplar is comparatively soft, and looking closely at the bearing edges you can see the porous, fibrous nature of the wood. This is not a big problem as Mapex makes its own shells and has laid up the plies so that the crucial peak of the edge lies on a horizontal ply, which has a smooth, hard edge.

Lugs are the familiar Mapex-family small shield shape, dapper with isolating black gaskets. As is normal with cheaper kits there are just 16 lugs on the 22" bass drum and 12 on the toms. This is fine except 12 is the absolute minimum practical number once you get to the 16" tom. The snare has a different

## THE STAND-OUT HARDWARE FEATURE IS THE ATTRACTIVE CONCAVE SWEEP OF THE DOUBLE-BRACED LEGS, PREVIOUSLY SEEN ON THE MARS AND ARMORY SERIES

stand-out one is sported by the review kit, a wrap covering called Camphor. In the past this might have been cheesy (Premier's infamous 1960s 'Mahogany' Duroplastic comes to mind), but this is really convincing. Only on close inspection do you grasp that it's not a top-end burl veneer. There are three other finishes - Ebony Blue Grain, Textured Iron Grey and Textured Deep Black, the latter two with Black Plate hardware rather than chrome.

Shells are poplar, an inexpensive hardwood which has long been used in drum building, though more often as a filler as it is unremarkable looking. As is usual with budget

design of lug, eight of a squared double-ended shape which curiously don't really match.

The snare throw-off is a perfunctory generic device with a side lever operation that does not click into place too convincingly. The steel hoops, pressed steel bass drum claws and snare strainer are thinly chromed and not polished too well, but this is likely another consequence of budget drum kits being offered so cheaply.

The chrome on some other fittings and the stands/hardware, where there is a larger expanse of metal, is better. For example, the sturdy bass drum tom mount gleams. >



### GET ONE FREE

Until stocks run out the Storm is offered with a free extra floor tom. In this case it is the 14"x12"

## FULLY LOADED

Newly designed Storm Series hardware pack includes double-braced stands featuring the graceful Mapex concave leg design for easier positioning

### Essential spec



#### PRICES

Rock Fusion set: 22"x18", 10"x7", 12"x8", 16"x14", 14"x5" snare, plus free 14"x12" tom, with hardware pack (as pictured): £659.99; Same setup with additional Paiste 101 cymbal set: £767.99

#### SHELL MATERIAL

Poplar wood

#### NUMBER OF PLYS AND SHELL THICKNESS

7.2mm, 8-ply

#### BEARING EDGES

Mapex SONIClear

#### FINISHES AVAILABLE

Ebony Blue Grain, Camphor Wood Grain (Chrome Hardware) as pictured; Textured Iron Grey, Textured Deep Black (Black Plate Hardware)

#### HOOPS

Triple-flanged, 1.6 mm steel

#### SHELL AVAILABILITY

Rock: 22"x18", 10"x7", 12"x8", 16"x14", 14"x5" snare; Fusion: 20"x16", 10"x7", 12"x8", 14"x12", 14"x5" snare

#### LUGS

Bass drum, 16; toms, 12; snare, eight double-ended

#### HARDWARE PACK

B400 boom stand, C400 straight cymbal stand, H400 hi-hat, P400 bass pedal, S400 snare stand

#### SMALL TOM MOUNT

TH686 double tom holder

#### CYMBAL OFFER

Paiste 101 Special 13" hats, 16" crash, 20" ride

#### CONTACT

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# GEAR REVIEW

## They say...

**Martin Potts**

Artist Manager for Mapex and Paiste at British distributors Korg UK Ltd



**Martin, what is the idea behind the new Storm series?**

"The concept was to provide a complete drumset with a no-nonsense approach to tuning, simplifying the process of getting a great sound. Adding newly designed Storm Series double-braced hardware and a colour-matched snare make it the perfect kit for customers looking to upgrade, but also new players starting out."

**The 400 Series hardware is also new?**

"The Storm hardware pack includes newly-designed double-braced stands featuring the Mapex concave leg design for easier positioning, and three-tier cymbal stands for maximum adjustment. We paid particular attention to the design and feel of the bass drum pedal as it's a fundamental part of the pleasure of playing the kit."

**What else?**

"100 percent poplar shells give plenty of tone with a particularly satisfying punch from the kick. The SONIClear bearing edge, from the higher level Mapex ranges, makes the drums easier to tune and achieve a great sound, particularly useful if you're just starting out. To further increase playability we're also offering the option of adding a set of Paiste 101 cymbals at a special bundle price."

## LUGS

Lugs are the familiar Mapex family small-shield shape with isolating black gaskets



## DOUBLE TOM MOUNT

The big secure small tom mount also has a handy central slot for mounting a splash cymbal arm or similar

➤ The two small toms are mounted via 'L' arm rods which have a hexagonal cross-section preventing rotational slippage. They are locked into the bass drum mount with a smart black plastic gripper so that, without having to overtighten, everything feels secure. Plus there's a large memory lock on the mount so your toms can't sink.

The bass drum spurs are again basic but do the job. Duncan Williams of Mapex's UK distributor Korg explains, "The spurs rolled over from the previous Horizon series as there was no functional need to update their tried-and-tested design. Many Storm fittings

have been directly dropped down from the Mars series. This includes the lugs, tom holder, floor tom brackets and legs. Sharing the parts in this way allowed us to keep the use of pressed steel fittings on the Storm series to a minimum, pretty much limited to the claws and the hoops, despite keeping the range within an upper entry-level price-point."

As a potential starter kit, the Storm package includes a complete 400 series hardware set, originally released in 2016, and replacing the previous 500 series. There's a snare stand, straight and boom cymbal stands, hi-hat and bass pedals. The stand-out

## Also try...



## 1 TAMA RHYTHM MATE

**We say:** "Tama's classy and good-looking entry-level Rhythm Mate has Accu-Tune bass drum hoops and clever double-braced hardware."

feature is the attractive concave sweep of the double-braced legs, previously seen on the Mars and Armory series. The stand bases are imposingly heavy duty, while the top sections are less so. For example, the snare basket has thin arms, though adequate for all but the most brutal player. The boom cymbal stand has three height-adjustable sections.

Mapex has given considerable thought to its bass drum pedal which has a shortened, hinged heel plate, so you almost get a longboard but with a heel pivot too. There's a solid single chain, circular cam drive with a full stabilising base-plate and good adjustability. Ditto the hi-hat pedal.

## Hands On

The Storm shells have Mapex's SONIClear bearing edges which are rounded to the outside. This affords greater contact with the head - vintage-style, which is a growing trend.

THE SHELL WOOD AND THE METAL FITTINGS ARE ALL BASIC AND LIGHT SO THAT THE SNARE DRUM WEIGHS NEXT TO NOTHING, FEELING INSUBSTANTIAL



## PAISTE CYMBALS

Although starter-level brass, the Paiste Special Edition 101 cymbal pack – an optional extra – is good value, with better than expected sounds

## CLASSY CAMPHOR COVER

Even from close up you could be forgiven for thinking this is a high-end burl veneer on a top professional set

The poplar is so fibrous it's impossible to cut really sharp and hard bearing edges anyway, but they are level and as noted above the shells are impressively round. The increased head contact afforded by the edges means the attack is softened a little and the tone warmed, which is no bad thing. Fitted with clear Remo UX (Chinese budget) heads the floor toms and bass drum have volume to spare and with the SONIClear edges tune pretty easily.

Mounting the small toms involves old-style fixed brackets (not ISO brackets) and a double bass-drum mount. Personally, I'm fine with this – it controls and tempers the sound a bit, reining in the big bass drum. At the same time it integrates the toms and bass drum more closely, giving a more blended character. And the proof is in the pudding. The 10" and 12" top toms fairly blammed with a really good fat tone and fresh attack.

Turning now to the 14"x5" snare, it is hard



## 2 ODERY FLUENCE

**We say:** "A superb kit from Brazil with an adaptable sound at a mouth-wateringly low price. The accompanying hardware is also high quality."

to make a great snare drum for a budget kit. It's nearly always the weak link. The shell wood and the metal fittings here are all basic and light so that the whole drum weighs next to nothing, feeling insubstantial. The snare sound is crisp enough, but in a rather characterless way, parchment-y dry and crunchy. For some reason the hoops pull low down over the batter head so that the rim-shot clearance is lower than usual. The result is a cross-stick sound that is thin and rather feeble. However, the shallow, low-profile rim-shots ring out well enough.

Finally, what about those cymbals? There's the option to include a bargain set of brass Paiste 101 Specials, 13", 16" and 20". Paiste has the knack of turning out budget cymbals that don't make your toes curl. And as brass goes these 101s are surprisingly civilised.

The hats have good stick definition and clicky response. Opened up they are clean,

not that powerful, but pleasant. The 16" crash is abrupt, severely lacking in sustain, but again the tone is smooth. You could use this as an effects cymbal along with a professional set of cymbals. Not so with the ride, which also has a clear stick response, but the actual ride tone is, well, brassy. The large bell is powerful with a better sound. For such a cheap set this is pretty cool. **R**

**VERDICT:** Despite inevitable cost-cutting in some parts, Mapex's new Storm is an exciting prospect for first- or second-time buyers with its impressive sound, solid hardware, free tom and cymbal offer.

<b>BUILD QUALITY</b>	★★★★★
<b>PLAYABILITY</b>	★★★★★
<b>VALUE FOR MONEY</b>	★★★★★
<b>RHYTHM RATING</b>	★★★★★