

# NEW GEAR

EXCLUSIVE



### THE DOUN DOUNS

are fibreglass instruments, making them both durable and lighter than traditional wooden models

### ESSENTIAL SPEC



### PRICES

Contemporânea free-standing nesting surdos

12"	£75
14"	£85
16"	£105
18"	£120

Set of 12"/14"/16" free-standing surdos (with feet and hardcase)

£297

Bucara festival djembes

9"	£39
12"	£69
14"	£105

Bucara festival doun douns

12"	£129
15"	£159

### SHELL MATERIAL

Contemporânea surdos: aluminium; Bucara Festival djembes and doun douns: fibreglass

### HEADS

Contemporânea surdos:

natural goat-skin; Bucara festival djembes and doun douns: natural animal skin

### CONTACT

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# SOAR VALLEY MUSIC BRAZILIAN PERCUSSION



From £39 New Brazilian-influenced products from Soar Valley brand Bucara and musical collaborator Contemporânea are hot stuff, writes Charlie Price

Let's face it: drums are a bulky instrument to transport, and weighty too. Carting a drum kit around is bad enough, but what if you're a percussionist with a transit van chock full of gear? If you conduct drum workshops or samba groups then it's going to mean a substantial amount of backache. So, if you're unwilling to part with your Mini Cooper or don't want a hernia after the multiple trips to the white van, the chaps at Soar Valley might just have the solution.

Soar Valley's David Ledsam travelled to Brazil and met with respected percussion manufacturers Contemporânea, with a neat idea in mind. After being inspired by playing the traditional Brazilian tan tan and rebolo single-headed drums with beaters, David had the idea of producing a set of scaled-down single-headed surdo drums that could be stored inside each other in a Russian doll style. In addition, they wouldn't only sound great and be easy to play but would tick the portability box, too. Contemporânea dug the idea so much that prototypes were fashioned

that very same day and the nesting surdo set was hatched. Also distributed alongside this line, Soar Valley introduces its Bucara Festival range of percussion instruments.

### Build

The Contemporânea surdos are available in four different diameters: 12", 14", 16" and 18", either separately or in a set of three in 12", 14" and 16" sizes (with hard Le Blond cases and clip-on removable feet). They all stand 40cm tall and are constructed from aluminium, which keeps their weight down nicely. In striking colours inspired by the Brazilian national flag they'll certainly get you noticed, and make a refreshing change from the traditional bare aluminium finish found on a lot of samba instruments. The vivid colours and reduced dimensions will be an instant hit with younger players, and some teachers have already devised a colour-based teaching methodology to make learning the rhythms even more fun.

Next up from Soar Valley Music comes the Bucara Festival range, a Soar Valley house

brand. It includes three sizes of djembe and two doun douns (or 'djun djuns') which all feature fibreglass shells resplendent in an ethnic print finish. Highly durable instruments, they possess a reassuringly solid feel while being considerably lighter than traditional wooden shells. A cool touch on the djembes is the matching print on the counterhoop, which contrasts really well with the drumhead, while the bottom of the drum is protected with a rubber lip.

### Hands On

The Bucara Festival djembes have smooth and highly responsive goat-skin heads that complement the man-made shells well, while the doun douns sport shaggier natural animal-skin heads that lend the drums a naturally muffled tone, which is better suited to the nature of these drums. The whole range come pre-tuned in the traditional manner via nylon-ropes, with the djembes sporting a handy knotted nylon-rope carrying handle and the doun douns a longer nylon-rope shoulder strap.



**'NAPA' HEADS**

are two-ply and bring out the surdos' bass tones beautifully

**CONTÉMPORANEA'S SURDOS**

are available individually or as a set of three, complete with Le Blond cases

**The deep bass tones blend exceptionally well with the different sized djembes and would be a logical choice for drum circles or percussion ensembles**

The Festival djembes sound impressive, with a surprisingly broad dynamic range and bags of volume, which is in no small part down to their great choice of head. The range's doun douns can be played by hand or with soft beaters, giving you an interesting playing alternative. Soar Valley Music sent us a selection of their 'Liverpool' beaters, which certainly look like they could take some punishment! As the two heads are pitched differently you get a somewhat conversational quality to rhythms. The deep bass tones blend exceptionally well with the different sized djembes and would be a logical choice for drum circles or percussion ensembles.

A particularly interesting aspect of the Contempóranea surdos is the choice of heads. The synthetic Contempóranea 'Napa' heads are two-ply and bring out the bass tones beautifully when played with the large-headed soft beaters. With the two layers only attached at the collar, the drums exhibit a dampened tone that is lush but obviously not as loud as conventional surdos. The black leatherette batter side has a bouncy but controllable response, and is easily tuned via the supplied wrench. The two smaller drums sport six simple but effective tension rods while the two larger drums feature eight apiece.

**Verdict**

After 22 years in the business, Soar Valley Music continues to distribute some of the most respected and truly authentic names in the business. Making the long trek to Brazil with the nesting surdos idea in mind was certainly an inspired idea and, along with the highly affordable Bucara range, has produced something that many groups, schools and colleges will definitely benefit from. **R**

**Rating** ★★★★★

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