

# TAMA SLP WOODEN SNARE DRUMS

**From £259** *The evaluation of Tama's Sound Lab Project drums concludes with some tasty wooden snares*

WORDS: DAVE HOLMES

**B**ack in May's *Rhythm*, we checked out the four metal-shelled snares from Tama's eight-drum Sound Lab Project. Each of the metal SLPs were suitably impressive and though respectably priced, would grace centre-stage alongside snares with a much heftier price tag. Now, though, it's time for a close-up inspection of the four wood-shelled models.

With such a wide and varied selection of snares available today, choosing just the right one for the job can be a daunting task - even for a seasoned pro. In search of what Tama describes as the "right snare drum", they have spent a great deal of time researching and experimenting with various types of shell, shell thickness and drum hardware. From these 'Lab' experiments Tama has

a Starcast die-cast hoop. I particularly like the tamo ash outer ply, which is reminiscent of a pattern left in the sand by an ebbing tide - it is a beautifully grained wood.

Certainly the odd-one-out of the bunch is the G-Bubinga which is the only drum to have the gun-turret style Starclassic lugs. With its bubinga burl outer and black nickel metal work, the G-Bubinga is absolute eye candy only to be enhanced by the deep nickel plating. The plating and the snare throw-off is the only common element, shared between the Power Maple. The Midnight burl finish of the Power Maple is also quite beautiful, but this is almost too dark to get the full benefit of that wonderful grain with any clarity.

All the wood models here feature Tama's liner-drive snare throw-off and butt-end which

diameter. This drum is at home with tight funk or any song which requires precision strikes - like 'Superstition' by Stevie Wonder.

There is certainly nothing dry about the G-Bubinga, this is as open as a barn door with luses of sweet overtone which will help project this to the back of any venue. Having played around with the tensioning, raising it and then dropping it slightly from its previously table-tight factory pitch, I have settled with a pitch where the drum now produces a tantalisingly powerful and rich snare sound.

After a few whacks upon the Power Maple, I quickly realise this isn't going to sit back in some dark corner. Combining its fundamental power with a well-placed rim-shot across the Sound Arc hoop is akin to firing a double-barrelled shotgun early on a Sunday morning - it will wake everyone! Playing blisteringly fast is not its bag (think '80s massive snare sounds), perhaps due to the dampness caused by strainer wires, but it is rather forceful and does rock.

Lastly, up in the basket sits the light, subtle-grained Classic Maple which at first appears far more laid-back than its Power Maple mate. The Classic is a truly 'classic' sounding wooden snare which seems to respond to all levels of tuning - it's capable of rocking it up or simply taking a laid-back approach and playing some tasty jazz. **R**



**1**  
HIGHWOOD  
HERITAGE SNARE

**We say:** "...will stand comparison with anything on the market."



**2**  
WORLDMAX  
TRADITIONAL  
BLACK WOOD  
HOOP SNARE

**We say:** "Their performance compares well with drums costing twice the amount."

**THE CLASSIC IS A TRULY 'CLASSIC' SOUNDING WOODEN SNARE, CAPABLE OF ROCKING IT UP OR PLAYING SOME TASTY, LAID-BACK JAZZ**

produced eight sonically different drums and, as a guide, categorised them into suggested genres and playing styles.

## Build

With its natural maple finish and subtle grain, the Classic Maple is perhaps the most understated of all the drums out of the four. This and the Power Maple both feature Tama's triple-flanged 2.3mm steel Sound Arc hoops, specially designed for the SLP series. The hoops have a slight inward-facing top flange which, being wide and rounded, should help avoid any nasty stick shredding.

Though the G-Maple has the smallest diameter here, this is more than compensated for by its plump shell and wholesome 7" depth. Like the other two maple models, this also features the retro-styled brass tube lugs, but is fitted with

is adjustable at both ends of the strainer - not just the lever end, as on the metal snares. This adjustment has a ratchet system which avoids the snare strainer slackening off mid-performance. Each drum has the benefit of Tama's Patented 'Hold Tight' washers - this is a combination of a steel cupped washer housing a rubber ring which butts-up and grips against the drum rim avoiding potential de-tensioning.

## Hands On

The first of the four to be played is the 13" G-Maple which, out of the box, sounds surprisingly good. Aiming for the sweet-spot centre produces a dry woody crack, then by hitting slightly off-centre, provides only the slightest overtone which is immediately snapped shut, thanks largely to the natural gating effect of the die-cast hoop and smaller

**VERDICT:** The build quality of these snares is superb and the sound produced highly commendable. Tama has done a fine job of narrowing down the choice of snare drums and in amongst these eight SLP snares, I am convinced there will be at least one of these drums which would be just the right snare drum for you.

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



### CLASSIC MAPLE

Snare features Tama's triple-flanged 2.3mm steel Sound Arc hoops

### POWER MAPLE

Snare has Midnight Burl finish and black nickel metal-work

### G-MAPLE

Drum has the smallest diameter here but a wholesome 7" depth

### G-BUBINGA

Snare features Tama's gun turret-style Starclassic lugs

### Essential spec



#### PRICE

13"x7" G-Maple, £289; 14"x5½" Classic Maple, £259; 14"x6½" Power Maple, £279; 14"x6" G-Bubinga, £299

#### SHELL MATERIAL

G-Maple: maple with tamo ash outer; Classic Maple and Power Maple: maple; G-Bubinga: bubinga with quilted bubinga outer

#### CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Plywood - G-Maple, 13-ply; Classic Maple, 8-ply; Power Maple, 9-ply; G-Bubinga, 12-ply

#### SHELL THICKNESS

G-Maple: 10mm; Classic Maple: 7mm; Power Maple: 7.5mm; G-Bubinga: 10mm

#### BEARING EDGE

45°

#### FINISHES AVAILABLE

G-Maple: Satin Tamo Ash with chrome hardware; Classic Maple: Antique Maple with chrome hardware; Power Maple: Midnight Maple burl with black nickel hardware; G-Bubinga: Natural Quilted Bubinga with black nickel hardware

#### HOOPS/RIMS

G-Maple: Starcast die-cast hoops; Classic Maple: Sound Arc; Power Maple: Sound Arc; G-Bubinga: Steel Mighty Hoop

#### SUPPLIED HEADS

Batter: Evans Genera G1 white coated; Snare Head: Evans Hazy 300

#### LUGS

G-Maple: brass tube, 16; Classic Maple: brass tube, 20; Power Maple: brass tube, 20; G-Bubinga: Star Classic lugs, 20

#### SNARE STRAINER

Liner-Drive MLS50A throw-off, MLS50B butt-end

#### CONTACT

Headstock Distribution  
0121 508 6666  
www.tama.com