

# MEINL BYZANCE SERIES CYMBALS & TURBO CRASHER

**From £35** Three new additions to Meinl's Turkish-made Byzance cymbal range, plus a new percussive add-on

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**M**einl is the German company synonymous with cutting-edge techno cymbals, but from 2000 Meinl has also had its own facility in Turkey knocking out more traditionally manufactured cymbals, sending them back over to Germany to be marketed. These are the Byzances, hand-hammered in classic cast B20 bell bronze.

## Build

Known more for metal and heroic bass pedalling than tippy jazz, Derek Roddy also has an instrumental band, Serpents Rise, that features a more wide-ranging percussive style. Hence his signature Byzance Serpents series. These 14" hi-hats follow on from the already-released 13" version and combine a heavy Brilliant cymbal with a slightly thinner unlathed Extra Dry one. The idea is that either cymbal can be mounted on top or bottom.

Although most hi-hats are 14" there is no law that says they have to be. Small hi-hats have long been popular and larger diameter pairs are not new. So this Byzance Extra Dry Medium Thin 16" pair makes an interesting alternative. They are part of the Extra Dry Series, medium thin in weight, heavily hand-hammered with one side un-lathed, mottled dark-brown, while the inner surfaces are lathed and shiny.

Meinl's third new release is a 10" splash from the Byzance Vintage series which has a sandblasted chalky finish with classic narrow blade lathing top and bottom. Lastly, the Turbo Crasher consists of dual bands of corrugated steel, 10" (25cm) across, attached to a standard mounting bracket.

## Hands On

Roddy's Serpents hi-hats are a two-in-one package. With the unlathed cymbal on top you get a loud and clear response with a thickly dark tonality. It's a pretty heavy pairing, so you get plenty of sharpness when pedalling and the shoop/bark is big and dusky.

Now if you invert them so the heavier Brilliant cymbal is on top the sound is

## SERPENTS HATS

Derek Roddy's 14" hats combine a heavy Brilliant cymbal with a thinner, unlathed Extra Dry one



**Also try...**



## 1 MURAT DIRIL CYMBALS

**We say:** "...offer another hugely attractive alternative in what is becoming a crowded market of genuine hand-made cymbals from Turkey."



## 2 ISTANBUL TURK SERIES

**We say:** "Fabulous instruments that (considering they are largely made by hand) are exceptionally well priced."



## TURBO CRASHER

Twin corrugated bands of steel are fastened slightly apart and give you an abrupt metallic 'tish'

treblier. In fact the half-open smashed sound will loosen your ear wax - a piercing, almost shrill blast. Yet through it all there is a smooth tone, clean and bright, almost sweet. This is a versatile double set-up that will favour many styles, not just rock and metal but anywhere that you appreciate a decent amount of ready volume with flexibility.

Turning to the big 16" Extra Dry pair I recall that oversized hi-hats are hardly new - 18" hats were briefly played by some post-bop 1950s jazzers. And in 2007 I interviewed Herman Matthews when he was Tom Jones's drummer and he had 18" hats that sounded great on the gig. It's worth recalling his comments: "They're darker so

they get out of the way of the vocalist and they feel good when you're driving a band. They sound like what I hear on records through compression. And you can play a great shuffle."

Old skool groovers like Steve Jordan and Charlie Drayton also play mega-hats, so they are obviously favoured by the bluesy-r'n'b-soulful crowd. I must say I enjoyed the sound of these when closed. With them being medium thin they really are dark and earthy, dry with an attractive, warm quality. But still with just about enough stick definition and a mighty half-open wash. The problem comes when you try to pedal them - they are achingly slow and ponderous and the 'chip' sound is much muted. In fact if you don't set the bottom tilter angle just right you don't hear any chip at all. And as for the 'shoop', it's more like soup - turgid, slow and washy. I think a heavier bottom cymbal is needed to overcome this.

Echoing its soft yellow-gold colour, the 10" splash produces a sunny, warm, dry and deep tone. It has the required swift attack

with a soft decay and warm harmonious overtones. It's not too loud or piercing, but rather is musical and blending. A gorgeous touch of colour for your more subtle moments.

The Turbo Crasher gives a short and rather innocuous clatter. The twin corrugated bands of steel are fastened slightly apart, free to rattle as you swipe them, giving you an abrupt metallic 'tish'. It's not particularly loud or cutting, but could, for example, provide a useful alternative feel to constant hi-hat. **R**

**VERDICT:** I loved the Serpents hats and the 10" Classic Splash, and I enjoyed the unusual 16" Extra Dry hats, but the pedalled response lets them down. I found the Turbo-Crasher fun if somewhat lame.

**BUILD QUALITY** ★★★★★  
**PLAYABILITY** ★★★★★  
**VALUE FOR MONEY** ★★★★★  
**RHYTHM RATING** ★★★★★



## 16" HI-HATS

Hats are part of the Extra Dry series, medium thin and heavily hand-hammered with one side unlathed

## Essential spec



### PRICES

Turbo Crasher, £35;  
 14" Byzance Brilliant Serpents hi-hat, £393;  
 16" Byzance Extra Dry Medium Thin hi-hat, £562;  
 10" Byzance Vintage Splash, £132

### CAST OR PRESSED

Cast

### ALLOY USED

B20 bronze

### FINISH

Mixture: brilliant, unlathed, sandblasted

### HAND OR MACHINE HAMMERED

Hand-hammered

### COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE

Turkey

### DIAMETERS AVAILABLE

10" Vintage splash;  
 14" Serpents hi-hats  
 16" Extra Dry hi-hats

### MODELS AVAILABLE

Hi-hats and splash

### SUITABLE FOR

Splash: pop, fusion, jazz, funk, r'n'b, studio, world, electro;  
 Serpents hats: rock, metal, indie, fusion, funk, r'n'b, reggae, studio  
 16" Extra Dry hats: soul, funk, jazz, r'n'b

### CONTACT

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