

## GEAR REVIEW

# YAMAHA RYDEEN SERIES KIT

**From £550** Yamaha's newly rejuvenated kit is up there with the best new budget-starter sets

WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS

**R**ydeen is apparently the name of the Japanese God of Thunder. It was also the name of Yamaha's starter kit before the Gigmaker replaced it 10 years ago. Now Rydeen is back, ousting Gigmaker. The kit is offered in a choice of 20" or 22" five-piece shell packs with a cracking set of stands and pedals. An optional deal on a Paiste 101 cymbal set is also in the offering.

### Build

Gone is the Philippines mahogany of old, replaced by more sustainable white wood poplar. Shells are 6-ply and 7.2mm thick. The butt join is vertical (not Yamaha's Air-Seal angled seam), but they are well finished with a horizontally-laid inner ply and accurately cut 45° bearing edges.

Our review kit is 22"x16" (actually 17" by my measurement), 10"x7", 12"x8", 16"x15", with matching wood 14"x5½" snare. There's an alternative configuration with 20"x16" bass and 14"x13" floor tom. Pictured is the Black Glitter finish and there are two other glitter wraps – Silver and Burgundy, plus three solid colours: Mellow Yellow, Hot Red and Fine Blue. These wraps are smart rather than spectacular, but the colour choice is good.

Lugs are a familiar Yamaha small button low-mass design, 16 on the bass drum, 12 on each tom and 16 on the nicely matching snare drum. They are spring-less to prevent rattling/humming.

Bass drum hoops are steel, inlaid with matching coloured wrap. This is a classic budget feature, but there are arguments in favour. We know here at *Rhythm* that with review kits, if anything is going to crack during the sometimes clumsy transit back and forth, it's a wood bass drum hoop, especially those of cheaper kits. Since the wood on budget kits is softer than on top-end kits, the much stronger metal hoops make sense.

### Also try...



#### 1 NATAL ARCADIA

**We say:** "With premium features from Natal's high-end lines, adapted for the working drummer, the Arcadia series sets a stunning new standard for entry-to-mid-range drum kits."



#### 2 PEARL MIDTOWN

**We say:** "Poplar shells again and this time on a scaled-down kit. Ideal for a younger player, beginner, or for rehearsals and for smaller gigs."



### BLACK GLITTER

The Black Glitter covering of the review kit is chosen from one of three glitters and three monochrome wraps

### Hands On

Where the drums are good (three stars) the accompanying 600 series hardware is excellent (four stars). Of professional quality in design and finish, it will survive all but the heaviest of prolonged use.

There are two boom cymbal stands which rise generously to 6ft fully extended, with their three section housings (not two, which is often seen with budget hardware). The snare

drum stand likewise extends high enough so that you could play it standing up if the need arose. The basket is secured as usual by a big nylon black wheel, but Yamaha has made this much easier to grip with finger-friendly 'starfish' arms.

The basket angle adjustment is continuous, not geared, which is also preferable, and the three support arms are super-strong. Everywhere you find Yamaha's familiar

THE LUGS AND SYSTEM HARDWARE GIVES THE RYDEEN THAT CLASSY YAMAHA AESTHETIC, EVEN THOUGH THIS IS A MODEST KIT



## PROFESSIONAL TOM MOUNT

The heavily chromed twin bass drum mount has Yamaha System standard 22.2mm pipe tubing and omni-ball clamps allowing accurate tom positioning

## HARDWARE PACK

The 600 series hardware is of a high standard including triple-tier boom cymbal stands and sturdy bass and hi-hat pedals

## UPGRADED FITTINGS

Yamaha has upgraded various parts for the new Rydeen, including bass drum spurs, floor tom leg brackets and snare throw-off

three-stepped, ergonomically contoured wing nut for comfortable grip and secure positioning. Along with the lugs and system hardware it gives you that classy Yamaha aesthetic, even though this is a modest kit.

The vibe is continued in the stylish hi-hat and bass pedal. These have single chain drives and operate with a sure ease. They don't have full base-plates, so are lighter, simple to fold up and transport, yet are still strong and stable enough for most drummers.

Nowhere is the Yamaha-family image more apparent than in the twin-post Professional Series tom holder. The resin ball clamp and hexagonal rod design is adaptable and fast to position. Both the toms and bass drum are drilled (no ISO mounts), and tom sustain is thereby a touch foreshortened, but there's no

lack of power. The big 16" tom and 22" bass drum have thunderous power. As we've seen before, the usual budget sparsity of lugs - just six per head on the floor tom - only serves to increase the loose resonance of the drum. And those metal bass drum hoops increase the hard edge of the kick sound, adding a bit of extra slap to the beat.

One obvious saving is in the unlabelled heads. Ironically, their very thinness gives them a vibrant punch, but as soon as you lay into them they start to pit. They will soon lose their spring, requiring replacement professional-quality heads. That's a given with budget kits, but the drums deserve it.

The matching snare has a simple, functional strainer with a solid cast butt-plate and 16 small lugs. It's rather lightweight and with the

supplied coated head the sound is perhaps lacking in character, although cheerily woody with ample volume and good sensitivity at the edges. Generally, the kit has great presence and will kick up an almighty racket if you want it to. Parents beware! **R**

**VERDICT:** Cleverly balancing cost-cutting generic elements with crucial Yamaha family parts results in a top-quality budget package. The hardware is excellent and with upgraded heads the drums will sing.

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

## Essential spec



### PRICES

Two shell-set configurations:  
22"x16", 10"x7", 12"x8", 16"x15", 14"x5½" (as reviewed);  
20"x16", 10"x7", 12"x8", 14"x13", 14"x5½";  
Both (including HW680W hardware pack), £550;  
With additional Paiste 101 cymbal set, £699

### SHELL MATERIAL

Poplar wood

### NUMBER OF PLYS

6 plies, 7.2 mm

### FINISHES AVAILABLE

Solid and glitter finishes, each with three colour options: Mellow Yellow, Hot Red, Fine Blue, Burgundy Glitter, Black Glitter (as pictured) and Silver Glitter

### HOOPS

Toms and snare: triple-flanged 1.5mm steel; bass drum: steel with matching colour inlay

### TOM MOUNTS

Yamaha Professional 22.2mm tube omni-ball and clamp mounts

### SUPPLIED HEADS

Unbranded, clear toms; Coated snare batter; bass drum: clear batter with ring mute, ebony front head with logo and ring mute

### LUGS PER DRUM

Small, low mass, spring-less; toms: 12; bass drum: 16; snare 16

### HARDWARE

HW680W hardware pack with HS650WA hi-hat stand, SS650WA snare stand, 2x CS665A cymbal boom stands, FP7210A bass pedal

### SNARE STRAINER

Generic side-lever with Yamaha name stamp and cast butt-plate

### CONTACT

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