

TAMA DUO BIRCH & DYNAMIC KAPUR SNARE DRUMS



From £249 Tama continues to expand its Sound Lab Project series

WORDS: TOM BRADLEY

This year Tama has committed to expanding its Sound Lab Project (S.L.P.) range, developing four full kits in addition to a new pair of wooden snares. This brings the already diverse snare range to a total of 14. The all-new Dynamic Kapur snare is the companion to a full kit of the same name, while the Duo Birch is a standalone snare, in more ways than one...

Build

As the name might suggest, the Duo Birch snare is designed to serve two functions. Its 14"x10" dimensions mean it can either be used as a shallow floor tom or a monstrosously deep snare. With the exception of Tama's Superstar Hyperdrive Duo kit, which includes a very similar drum, this is not something you see every day. Equipped with floor tom brackets and legs, the 7-ply (7mm) birch shell is completed with Starclassic lugs, 20-strand carbon steel snare wires, Sound Arc hoops and a Quick Touch strainer, all finished in chrome. Like the rest of the S.L.P. range, this drum is available in just one configuration and finish. The Transparent Mocha lacquer finish shows off the natural birch woodgrain beautifully, although there is a rather distracting diagonal joint which could be more subtle.

The more traditionally-sized 14"x6½" Dynamic Kapur snare is constructed from six plies (5mm) of Kapur wood and finished in the beautifully rich Black Kapur Burst finish. Like the Duo Birch, it also sports chrome Sound Arc hoops and 20-strand carbon steel snare wires. Rather than chunky single Starclassic lugs, the Dynamic Kapur features eight brass tube lugs (also finished in chrome) which lend a more classic aesthetic to the drum. This drum trumps the Duo Birch in the throw-off department as it has been treated to Tama's Linear-Drive model with matching butt-plate complete with secondary strainer. It's an upgrade that not only looks smarter, but it also makes it a more versatile instrument.

Also try...



1 MAPEX BLACK PANTHER VELVETONE

We say: "An elegantly-named snare with a distinct build and equally-elegant musical tones. Bright, deep projection. Happy tuned high or low."



2 TAMA SOUNDWORKS

We say: "An outstanding amount of drum for the money. A great choice in sizes and each one sounds fantastic. Suitable for the aspiring and professional drummer alike."

HOOPS

Both snares feature stick-saver style Sound Arc hoops

TUBE LUGS

The Dynamic Kapur features classic-style brass tube lugs, finished in chrome



Both drums are supplied with Tama/Evans coated G1 batters and Snare Side 300 heads, and branded with the brushed brass Tama S.L.P. badge.

Hands On

I choose to start testing by positioning the Duo Birch in place of my usual 14" floor tom. Considering the drum's meaty size, it makes sense to see how it fares when played in the lower registers. With both heads tuned down,

the Duo Birch manages a pretty good impression of a floor tom but lacks the familiar rumble, likely due to its shallower dimensions. The silver lining though is that the 10" depth makes it respond much faster - working nicely for speedy gospel-style chops. At this tension, turning the snares on does it no favours as the wires have a hard time reacting with the loose resonant head. With considerably more tension on the bottom, the Duo starts to feel more like a

WITH MORE TENSION ON THE BOTTOM, THE DUO STARTS TO FEEL MORE LIKE A SNARE DRUM AND, WITH THE BATTER HEAD STILL LOW, CREATES A SERIOUSLY WIDE AND FAT TONE

2-IN-1

The 14"x10" Duo Birch can be used as a floor tom or a side snare



THROW-OFF

The Dynamic Kapur uses Tama's Linear-Drive throw-off with an additional strainer

STARCLASSIC

The Duo Birch shares its 16 lugs with the high-end Starclassic range

snare drum and, with the batter head still low, creates a seriously wide and fat tone. The wires are astonishingly sensitive given the depth of the drum. As I take the drum up through the registers it becomes quicker and snappier until I've completely forgotten that I was using it as a floor tom less than five minutes ago.

Turn after turn, the pitch goes up-and-up with little sign of choking. Moving the drum over to the left of my hi-hats, it continues to function as a funky side-snare that's tuned considerably higher than my main snare. I even manage to get it up into borderline drum'n'bass territory, before the head reaches the point where it doesn't want to go any tighter.

Determined to find a middle ground where the drum will function as intended, I try several tension combinations between the

two heads. Eventually I find a sweet spot that gives me a super-punchy floor tom tone and a killer fat-back style backbeat; think Larnell Lewis on Snarky Puppy's 'What About Me?'. In short, this drum is way more versatile than you might initially give it credit for.

Despite the almost identical price-points of the two drums, the Dynamic Kapur creates the illusion of a higher-end snare. Not only is the rich Black Kapur Burst finish absolutely gorgeous, but the multi-setting throw-off and butt-plate strainer look and feel more luxurious. Looks aside, the drum also plays wonderfully at a mid-to-high tuning. The wires are sensitive, making ghost notes cut through effortlessly. Tuned low, however, it has quite a papery attack - the shell tone doesn't truly start to emerge until it's tuned fairly tight. At this point the drum offers a beautifully fat and warm tone which works great for rock and

even funk. Rim-shots draw even more musical tone from the shell and with them, a respectable volume.

With a slightly limited tuning range the Dynamic Kapur essentially has one setting, but that setting sounds absolutely incredible. For £249 this drum is well worth considering for your collection. **R**

VERDICT: Once again Tama has produced quality, musical drums at a surprisingly affordable price-point. In terms of sound alone, the S.L.P. range is hard to fault and comes highly recommended.

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

Essential spec



PRICE

Dynamic Kapur, £249;
Duo Birch, £255

SHELL MATERIAL

Dynamic Kapur: Kapur;
Duo Birch: Birch

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply

NUMBER OF PLYS

Dynamic Kapur: 6-ply (5mm);
Duo Birch: 7-ply (7mm)

BEARING EDGES

45°

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Dynamic Kapur: Black Kapur Burst;
Duo Birch: Transparent Mocha

HOOPS

Chrome Sound Arc hoops

SHELL AVAILABILITY

Dynamic Kapur: 14"x6½";
Duo Birch: 14"x10"

SUPPLIED HEADS

Tama/Evans coated G1 batter and Snare Side 300 heads

LUGS PER DRUM

Dynamic Kapur: 8 brass tube lugs;
Duo Birch: 16 Starclassic lugs

THROW-OFF

Dynamic Kapur: Tama Linear-Drive throw-off and butt-plate with additional strainer;
Duo Birch: Tama Quick Touch strainer

CONTACT

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