

# LUDWIG RAW BRASS PHONIC & STANDARD MAPLE SNARE DRUMS



**From £400** Two new contrasting snares from Ludwig – the expensive Raw Brass Phonic and the more modest Standard Maple with Eco-Tech veneer finish

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**L**udwig's Supraphonic is probably the most famous and long-running snare drum of all time. Now in recent years, Ludwig has justifiably taken to extending the formula by offering variations on the basic aluminium Supraphonic with the Bronze Phonic and Copperphonic. And following the release of 2016's Raw Patina Copperphonic, Ludwig adds this funky-looking Raw Brass Phonic.

Alongside this we have the 2018 edition of what Ludwig calls its Standard Maple snare drum, which was first seen in 2017.

## Build

Ludwig fans will be aware that the earliest (1960s) Supraphonics had brass shells before the aluminium version became massively popular. A brass shelled Supra with a black nickel exterior is a Black Beauty, which is Ludwig's other legendary all-time winner. So we can view this Raw Brass version as basically a Black Beauty minus the black finish. The raw brass shell itself is 1.2mm gauge and seamless – the crucial asset of Ludwig's expensive American-sourced metal shells. Ludwig USA's Uli Salazar tells *Rhythm* that the 'raw' finish is, "natural oil and lubricant remnants from the shell formation. We don't treat the shells to age them. They simply come out that way and we spray a very light sealer coat on them". So, as with the Raw Patina Copperphonic (see *Rhythm*, March 2017) every drum is visually unique.

The variegated brass is offset by the gleaming chrome of the 2.3mm triple-flanged

## Also try...



### 1 LUDWIG RAW PATINA COPPERPHONIC SNARE DRUM

**We say:** "Eye-watering price, but you're paying for that Ludwig sound, which is a mystery, but certainly not a myth."



### 2 YAMAHA RECORDING CUSTOM SNARE DRUMS

**We say:** "To accompany the re-vamped Recording Custom Series Yamaha presents seven metal shelled snare drums in steel, aluminium and brass."

## TOP BRASS

The Raw Brass Phonic has a 1.2mm seamless brass shell with a unique look stemming from natural oils and lubricants



steel hoops and 10 Imperial lugs. It's certainly an arresting image.

While the Raw Brass extends a classic formula, the Standard Maple shows Ludwig moving with the times, offering a 5-ply, 5mm American maple shell (Ludwig's Classic Maple snares are 7-ply) with a synthetic Eco-Tech outer veneer. The latter is an increasingly popular alternative to scarce exotic wood veneers, much like Sonor's SQ2 and other companies' Alpi finishes. Ludwig used it first on the 2014 Signet series. It's described as a 'durable outer veneer', although you would not

mistake it for a real veneer. And indeed the review drum finish is called Brandy, so Ludwig is not trying to pull a fast one! The point is, as Uli Salazar explains: "They are digitally created to save on the use of exotic trees. They offer extraordinary durability compared to a true veneer, and are great value as well." We have the 14"x8" model, there's a 6½" too, and both have 10 Classic 'bowtie' lugs. Centrally mounted, these Classic lugs necessitate over-long tension rods, which always looks a bit unwieldy.

Both drums have the relatively new P88AC (Atlas Cast) strainer, the long-awaited and most

**A LETHAL COMBINATION OF  
SUPER-CLEAN BRIGHT AND SHINY  
CHROME WITH MUSICALLY COMPLEX  
AND DARK FUNKY BRASS**

## ECO-RESPONSIBLE VENEER

The Standard Maple drum has an extra-durable outer finish, which is digitally created to spare the use of exotic wood veneers

## SEAMLESS BRASS SHELL

Is this the reason Ludwig's American-made shells deliver exceptional sound and resonance?

## CLASSIC AND IMPERIAL LUGS

Both drums have 10 centrally mounted vintage lugs: Imperials on the brass and Classics on the maple

## TAKING THE STRAIN

Both drums have the updated P88 cast strainer, which is a solid replacement for the long-serving P85

welcome smooth-action replacement for the ancient P85. The Raw Brass has a cast P35 butt plate as well, while the Standard Maple has a P32, a type Ludwig has been using for way over a half-century. It's basic and you'll need a screwdriver to tighten it, but it does the job.

## Hands On

With its 1.2mm gauge metal and 2.3mm triple-flanged hoops, the Raw Brass Phonic is heavy – rather heavier than a regular aluminium Supraphonic. It feels substantial, and you are immediately reassured by the sound, which is tonally rich. In fact, it sounds the way it looks – a lethal combination of super-clean bright and shiny chrome with musically complex and dusky funky brass.

Brass has a dark timbre, more colourfully complex than aluminium. I put this drum next to an old Supraphonic and it is deeper pitched while remaining sharp and crisp.

By today's standards the Imperial lugs are chunky but they don't seem to affect resonance unduly other than maybe contributing to the focused compactness of the sound. Ludwig also makes snares with tube lugs, which no doubt are less constricting, but the Imperials have never been an issue.

The Standard Maple has a thin 5mm, 5-ply shell. We have been sent the 14"x8" model to review, and here's something interesting about it. Playing this next to the brass Supra, sitting above the drums as normal, it strikes me that the maple drum actually seems brighter than the brass. The brass is sharp, metallic, clangy – but the maple has an inherent perkiness that appears initially to produce a higher register ping, even though the shell is 8" deep.

Applying batter head damping, those high perimeter frequencies are subdued and now

you start to appreciate the extra body of the maple drum.

I get a friend to play both drums while I walk away and I really hear the difference. The depth, volume and rounded woodiness of the deep 8" drum becomes increasingly dominant. But the brass drum has a presence and a rich musicality, which is why brass snares are so loved by many drummers. **R**

**VERDICT:** Once again Ludwig scores with two contrasting but equally tempting snares. The Raw Brass is expensive but highly musical, the Standard Maple is a modern eco-friendly workhorse.

**BUILD QUALITY**



**PLAYABILITY**



**VALUE FOR MONEY**



**RHYTHM RATING**



## Essential spec



### PRICES

Raw Brass: 14"x5", £934; 14"x6½", £1,004; 14"x8", £1,148; Standard Maple: 14"x6½", £400; 14"x8", £430

### SHELL MATERIAL

Brass and North American maple

### CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Brass: Seamless centre-beaded shell; Maple: 5-ply maple, outer Eco-Tech veneer

### SHELL THICKNESS

Brass: 1.2mm; Maple: 5mm

### BEARING EDGES

Brass: standard single-flanged edge; Maple: 45 degrees

### FINISHES AVAILABLE

Standard Maple: Brandy (as pictured) or Charcoal; Raw Brass: Natural with light sealer

### HOOPS

2.3mm triple-flanged chromed steel

### SHELL AVAILABILITY

Brass: 14"x5", 14"x6½", 14"x8"; Maple: 14"x6½", 14"x8"

### SUPPLIED HEADS

Ludwig (Remo) Weather Master Medium Coated batter; Ludwig Weather Master Clear snare side

### LUGS

Brass: 10 Imperial; Maple: 10 Classic 'bowtie' – all with black rubber gaskets

### SNARE STRAINER

Raw Brass: P88AC, P35AC butt plate; Maple: P88AC, P32 butt plate

### CONTACT

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