

ESSENTIAL SPEC



PRICES

Sabian AAX 18" OMNI, £285; Sabian AAX 22" OMNI, £395; Sabian Vault 19" Holy China, £315; Sabian Vault 21" Holy China, £377

CAST OR PRESSED

Cast

ALLOY USED

B20

FINISH

OMNI: brilliant & natural or raw & natural; Holy China: polished or natural

HAND OR MACHINE HAMMERED

Machine

COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE

Canada

DIAMETERS AVAILABLE

OMNI: 18" & 22"; Holy China: 19" & 21"

SUITABLE FOR

Jojo Mayer, Chad Smith and everything else inbetween

CONTACT

Westside Distribution, Unit C, 139 Lancefield Street, Glasgow G3 8HZ
Tel: 0141 248 4812
Website: www.sabian.com
www.westside-distribution.com

SABIAN OMNIS & HOLY CHINAS

From £285 Sabian's biggest endorsees were involved in the creation process. Adam Jones tries not to feel starstruck

Jojo Mayer and Chad Smith need little by way of introduction to *Rhythm* readers. Sabian has harnessed the duo's brilliance and originality to develop four innovative new cymbals.

Build

Jojo Mayer's two AAX OMNI models are officially unclassified, but are a modern reworking of the multi-purpose crash/ride. The starting point for the OMNI was Sabian's existing El Sabor Picante hand crash, which

his millionth cymbal - claims that he'd rather go through another divorce than create another OMNI!

Where the OMNIs are built to be intricate and versatile, the Holy Chinas have more straightforward aspirations. Chad Smith simply wanted the loudest, baddest china that Sabian could make. Taking design elements from the X-Treme and O-Zone models, the Holy Chinas seem to have answered Chad's prayers. Fittingly, Holy Chinas have Sabian's exalted Vault status.

The note is fairly high-pitched and contains elements of trashiness, but the overriding characteristic is one of smoothness

features a thin edge that opens easily. Jojo asked Sabian to attempt to incorporate a similar technique into a new model for stick (as opposed to hand) playing.

Regular crash/rides tend to be a compromise between two different types of cymbal. Are they a light ride that opens to crash, but has an indistinct stick sound as a result? Or are they a heavy crash that can be ridden, and takes an age to decay?

The OMNI's design attempts to isolate the areas of the cymbal used for each discipline, so a medium-thick, unlathed central portion gives way to a thin, lathed edge. Just two diameters are available - 18" and 22". Sabian experimented with alternative diameters during the R&D process, but chose to put only this pair into production. Making each OMNI is technically demanding; according to Sabian marketing manager Luis Cardoso, lather Allie Cogle - who has recently lathed

Available in 19" and 21" diameters and cast from B20 bronze, both models have raw bells, high profiles and wide lips. Between the bell and lip, each cymbal is dotted with holes (around 13mm in diameter) - there are 51 in the 19" and 64 in the 21". Unlike O-Zone cymbals, where large holes create complexity and tonal distortion, the smaller holes here increase the attack and volume to Chad Smith levels. The brilliant finish of the review cymbals pictured is optional.

Hands On

When mounting the OMNIs, the thinness of the edges contrasts with the overall weight of each cymbal - the 18" model actually flexes if grabbed with one hand. When crashed, the smaller OMNI doesn't just open instantly, but leaps straight to its fullest point. The note is fairly high-pitched and contains elements of trashiness, but the overriding characteristic is

one of smoothness. This impression is strengthened by a notably clean decay. Playing the inner unlathed portion of the cymbal with the tip of a stick finds the sound immediately drier and more precise - ride-like, in fact. The pitch remains high, but the clarity of the stick sound is striking. Moving on to the bell reveals another level of separation, with wash at a bare minimum.

The larger OMNI has, unsurprisingly, a bigger presence when played as a ride. The note is deeper and a little more expansive, but remains tight and focused, and projects well. This riding prowess is matched by the cymbal's crashing capabilities. Like the 18", the 22" opens willingly, delivering a luxurious crash that fades harmoniously. Crashing and

B20 BRONZE

was used in the construction of the OMNIs and the Holy Chinas



OMNI CYMBALS

are designed to achieve the perfect fusion of crash and ride





THE DRILLED HOLES
in the Holy Chinas further add
to the levels of volume and attack

BRILLIANT FINISHES
are optional on all four of
these cymbals

riding at the same time is easily done, with the two competing actions seemingly unaffected by one another.

With their blinding finish and numerous perforations, the Holy Chinas have an aura of menace about them. The looks don't deceive, and while notewise the cymbals are authentically trashy and china-like, the degree of volume and aggression contained within them is almost off the scale. Ear-shredding levels of attack mean that they don't so much slice through the mix as blast a hole in it. A tap of a stick results in a shiver of electric intensity; a full-blooded hit practically illuminates the room. The 19" model is quicker and sharper-sounding, while the 21" is the equivalent of a cymbal wipeout.

Verdict

The models that make up this quartet are as colourful and contrasting as the drummers who inspired them, while also showcasing Sabian's creative and technical expertise.

Jojo Mayer's OMNI's are a revelation - I've played them on big stages, in pubs and at the back of marquees and they seem to mould themselves to any environment. Enticingly, an HHX version is rumoured to be in the pipeline, as well. Chad Smith's Holy Chinas, meanwhile, have fulfilled his original brief and excel in '11 and over' situations. Playing one will leave you at risk of uttering a Holy 'pardon?' for days afterwards. **R**

Rating ★★★★★

TRY IT WITH...



GIBRALTAR TURNING
Point stands - innovative
hardware that's heavy duty
without being heavy.



EARPLUGS
hearing protection is a necessity
when in the proximity of a Holy
China cymbal!