

**The new Fast crashes** are incisive and have plenty of body and character.



# A Zildjian Fast Splashes & Crashes

## ESSENTIALS



### PRICES

A Zildjian Fast  
Splashes **£106-£144**  
Crashes **£192-£264**

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**From £106** | The classic A Zildjian sound is further enhanced by this new collection. They're so fast **Geoff Nicholls** has to run to keep up...

We all know that today's cymbals ultimately derive from the Zildjian family who started their business way back in 17th century Armenia. The modern era of the cymbal though starts in 1929 when Avedis Zildjian III began making cymbals in the USA. This new American branch of the Zildjian dynasty followed the centuries old methods of cymbal production, but the new Avedis Zildjian cymbals evolved into something a little more bright, full and loud. This happened under the influence of the great jazz drummers who became household names during the '30s and '40s. Zildjian's literature proudly features grainy pics of Jo Jones, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Max Roach and the

rest dropping by the Zildjian factory to have their say and pick out the best cymbals. Under this almost Darwinian process of selection the Avedis A cymbal evolved into the prototype for modern music.

Right up until the end of the '50s if you wanted a proper cymbal your only real choice was an American Avedis or, if you could find one, a Turkish K (Kerope) Zildjian. We tend to think of the old Ks as darker, moodier and more variable, while the As are brighter, more modern and reliable. The As were perfect for the big swing bands – they're the sound of Buddy Rich – and they were equally the business when rock 'n' roll started and drummers got progressively heavier.

Which brings us to today's offering. Zildjian now make dozens of different types of cymbal, but the A sound is still the foundation. The A is an all-rounder which can enhance any type of music from punk to symphonic and it's still the biggest seller. Which doesn't mean As are bland, more that they are harmonious, musical and definitive. They are not likely to shock or disappoint.

### Fast crashes

There are five new crashes covering each inch from 14" to 18". The A Zildjian range already includes a fair number of thin crashes and splashes. Generally speaking, the thinner a cymbal the lower its pitch, but the speedier its

KEY FEATURES



The new profile small bell helps shape the characteristic fast and smooth sound of the new crashes and splashes.

Each cymbal is delicately lathed, hammered top and bottom and polished to a gleaming golden sheen.

The 'Fast' of the title refers to the fact that not only do the cymbals have a lightning response they also have a fast decay.

crash has a proportionally bigger bell than all the others. In fact, in profile it looks more like my old medium As. The result is that it does seem to have more of a 'ding' than the rest, with ever so slightly more complex undertones, although it blends in with the others perfectly well.

**Making a splash**

When these characteristics of light weight and small bell are transferred to the splashes, the result is the quickest response and decay of all the A Zildjian splashes. Since the smaller a cymbal gets the greater proportion its bell takes up, all splashes tend towards a high pitched dinner gong 'ding' when you tap them. This is certainly noticeable on the 8" and 10" splashes. There is a razor-sharp, hissing attack followed by a bell-like afterglow. But once again, the fact the new bell is a bit smaller helps diminish this effect and it's nowhere near as off-putting as it is with some splashes I could name. If you bash the 8" or 10" and then trap it with your other hand then you just get the sharp impact, and believe me, sharp is the right word.

The 12" by contrast is almost a mini crash cymbal and has correspondingly less of the bell sound and more of the silvery splash. It seems to me to sit

initial response. The difference is that while the new Fast crashes are indeed lightweight, fast and fairly deep in timbre, they nevertheless retain their brightness. So yes, they're incisive, but they also have body and character.

Zildjian suggests this is in part due to the newly designed, smallish bell. I've got a couple of '70s A Zildjian Medium crashes and I sometimes find them heavy going because they have large bells making them a little too full for me. The bigger the bell on a cymbal the more ride-like it becomes and crashing it can feel a bit oafish. So it was with great pleasure I found these new Fast crashes responded instantly and have that lovely silvery smoothness – Zildjian describes it as 'buttery' – which really does make your mouth water. You know you can slip a Fast crash or splash in at will without getting the evil eye from your singer.

The smaller bell and lighter weight also mean the cymbals are not so loud, but are quicker to build up and to decay. They spark into life with the merest of glancing blows, provide just enough wash and then die gracefully. They don't hang around muddying up the sound. Somehow Zildjian have achieved this without sacrificing too much body, so that the overall tone is extremely pleasant. There's an orchestral purity which is tasteful without being insipid. Starting with the 14" and 15" these are

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lightning strikes which will serve to make precise interjections in any style of music, adding colour and variety. As you get to the 16" and 17" the pitch is getting ever deeper, but the leading edge is just as sharp. A beguiling mix. For some reason the 18"

neatly between the splashes and the crashes – which is a very handy niche to fill. **R**



**RHYTHM VERDICT**

The A Zildjian has come a long way over the past eight decades and these latest additions are sophisticated, sensitive and musical. You only have to glance them and they explode into life. But don't be put off by the lightweight tag – Matt Sorum plays them so they are by no means fragile wallflowers. I took three out on a gig last night and found the sound to be recognisably A Zildjian but with a clarity and brevity that buzzes with energy. They are extremely easy to get along with and make a valuable addition to the estimable A Zildjian family.

**+** These are the fastest, brightest and smoothest of the A Zildjian crashes and splashes, setting a new standard.

**-** The light weight inevitably brings a slight loss of body and power.

**RATING** ★★★★★