

GEAR REVIEW

REMO POWERSTROKE P3 FELT TONE HEADS

From £68.40 Remo takes its market-leading Powerstroke P3 bass drum heads and incorporates a classic felt damping strip



WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS

Up to the 1970s, bass drum damping was commonly effected via felt strips slipped underneath the drum hoops and held in place by the tension of the head. Yes, they compromised the bearing edges, but the real problem was the faff, trying to stretch the felt tight while tensioning the head. So what's Remo's solution?

Build

Working with drum designer/builder Ronn Dunnett, Remo starts with the Powerstroke P3, which has a flap of transparent Mylar all around its internal perimeter. This is slimmed down to a half-inch wide all round and extended in one spot by a vertical 2"-wide band, under which is laid the felt strip. The strip is stuck to the Mylar band, but is left 'free-floating' against the head in classic style. Top and bottom it slips into the perimeter flap, but ends just short of the collar, and hence short of the bearing edge.

Felt Tones are available in standard sizes and in Fiberskyn Diplomat, Hazy (transparent smooth white) and Coated Ambassador weights.

Hands On

The plastic foam perimeter rings of Remo's Powerstroke Pro and Evans' Emad series produce a modern controlled sound, where Aquarian's SuperKicks, with their felt rings, are warmer and thuddier. Aquarian also offers Vintage heads with felt strips. However, the strips are fixed. The clever thing about Remo's Felt Tones is that the felt strip floats. Although note that with the original loose felt strips you could position them anywhere you wanted.

The Felt Tone strip is positioned to one side and subdues a touch of the perimeter highs plus a hint of the body. Mounting a 20" Fiberskyn Diplomat as a batter and a Hazy



HAZY WHITE

The Hazy finish is an old-fashioned almost transparent smooth white, typical of early Mylar heads into the 1960s

FIBERSKYN DIPLOMAT

The felt strip is held in place off to one side but floats in its pocket and is not stuck to the head

white front on a 1964 Ludwig, the result is tremendous. This is a thin batter head and best not slammed too hard, but the drum sounds so open and lively, really warm and blustery, an almost orchestral bass drum tone with a healthy rumble. There's an extra dimension to the drum, more a classic bluesy, jazzy, rock'n'roll vibe, leaving mids and highs so the bass drum isn't brutally damped.

Having the front strip means you don't need

to cut a hole, or place anything further against the head. The force of the beater stroke causes the front and back strips to flap fractionally away from the heads and then settle back, gently foreshortening the decay. Turning the drum around so the Hazy becomes the batter, the tone is a little more blousy and loose than the darker and warmer Fiberskyn. **R**

VERDICT: With its new Felt Tone series Remo cleverly adapts the classic free-floating felt-strip bass drum damping trick to the 21st Century.

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

Essential spec



PRICE

Powerstroke P3 Hazy Felt Tone: 20", £68.40; 22", £71.70; Powerstroke P3 Fiberskyn Felt Tone Diplomat: 20", £76.20; 22", £82.90

HEAD MATERIAL

Mylar polyester plastic

FINISHES AND WEIGHTS AVAILABLE

Fiberskyn Diplomat: 7-mil Mylar with 2-mil fibre laminate; Hazy or Coated (not pictured): 10-mil Mylar, Ambassador weight

SIZES AVAILABLE

18", 20", 22", 24", 26"

HOOPS

Remo aluminium 'U' hoops with resin adhesive

SUITABLE FOR

Jazz, blues, rock'n'roll, country, soul, acoustic, folk, world

CONTACT

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THERE'S AN EXTRA DIMENSION, MORE A CLASSIC BLUESY, JAZZY, ROCK'N'ROLL VIBE, LEAVING MIDS AND HIGHS SO THE BASS DRUM ISN'T BRUTALLY DAMPED