

TRAPS DRUMS A400

£299 Could this sub-£300 kit be the Holy Grail of portable drums?

WORDS: DAVE HOLMES

Traps A400 is a compact, lightweight and highly-portable five-piece kit, available in two basic formats: either with a set of starter-type cymbals or, as in the case of this review set, without. This set comprises a 12" snare, 20" bass drum, 10", 12" and 14" toms, drum rack, hi-hat stand, snare basket and a pair of sticks.

Build

All three toms are fitted with a single UT PS (Chinese-made Pinstripe equivalent) mounted on an ABS frame. This acts like the top of a drum rim which has a shaped bearing edge and fixing points for the tuning bolts, triple-flanged hoop and mounting

THOUGH LACKING IN PROJECTION, THE KIT DOES SOUND GOOD - THINK 1970S HEAVILY-DAMPED DRUMS

bracket. Having two heads, the bass drum is slightly more conventional, with a pair of steel hoops, but it has a shallow 5cm-deep 'shell'. For dampening, a small piece of circular felt is glued to the inside of the front head, while the batter (similar to a Remo Powerstroke 3) has a perimeter-type dampening strip built into the head itself.

Having a slightly shallower depth of 4.5cm, the snare features some ingenious design aspects to accommodate the throw-off and adjuster. This has a large plastic lever which operates a cam by raising, lowering and tightening the snare. The batter is attached by a standard steel hoop, however the snare head (lower side) is held in position by a hoop constructed from ABS.

Constructed from standard 1½" chromed steel tubing, the rack comes complete with all the necessary tom-mounting brackets, clamps etc. It features two boom-type cymbal mounts which slot into the top of the posts of the 'H' shaped rack. Attaching the snare to the rack is the uppermost section of a snare basket which, like the toms, is fully adjustable. The

bass drum is locked into position by two clamps which are fixed to the 'shell' of the bass drum for attachment to the rack.

Hands-on

Even if you are not used to drum racks, setting up the kit is easy, perhaps with the only slightly awkward task getting the bass drum to sit to the right height before finally tightening its two clamps. Once in place, the rack becomes extremely rigid and, with the aid of large rubber feet, the whole assembly sits firmly on the stage floor.

Considering the snare is nearly entirely plastic, it sounds remarkably good - piccolo-like, of course, but its depth makes it more

sensitive too. The snare wires picking up each ghosted note and filling in gaps between a slightly ragged buzz roll. While the pedal response from the bass drum is immediate, sat behind the kit it appears to lack substance.

A drummer friend is coerced into playing the kit while I go out front, where the bass drum sounds much better. Though lacking in projection (particularly with the toms) the whole kit does sound good - think 1970s heavily damped drums and you would not be far out. **R**

VERDICT: Throughout the review I have had to keep reminding myself that I have a complete kit here for under £300 - five drums and a rack (which could also be used for an add-on to a standard acoustic set-up too). It's excellent value for money.

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

Also try...



1 YAMAHA MANU KATCHE HIPGIG JUNIOR

We say: "The smallest and cheapest Hipgig. With 'floating' 16" bass drum, warm Philippines mahogany shells and complete hardware set."



2 PEARL RHYTHM TRAVELER

We say: "Capable, compact kit includes mesh heads as well as standard plastic for silent practice and live gigs too."





TOMS

Toms are fitted with a Chinese-made Pinstripe equivalent mounted on an ABS frame

SNARE

A large plastic lever raises, lowers and tightens the snare

BASS DRUM

Bass drum has two steel hoops and a shallow 5cm-deep 'shell'

HARDWARE

Boom-type cymbal mounts slot into the rack's posts

Essential spec



PRICE

A400NC, £299;
A400 with cymbals, £359

SHELL

Injection-moulded ABS

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

ABS with drum head stretched over the ABS frame

BEARING EDGES

45°

FINISHES AVAILABLE

As review model

HOOPS

Triple-flanged steel, ABS (snare head)

KIT CONFIGURATIONS

With or without cymbals

SUPPLIED HEADS

Toms: Remo UT PS;
snare: Remo UT BA White Coated batter, UT snare head; bass drum: Ebony Remo UT bass head front, Clear UT bass head batter

LUGS PER DRUM

Snare: 16, toms: 6,
bass drum: 16

HARDWARE

Drum rack complete with mounting brackets and clamps, snare basket, hi-hat, bass drum pedal

CONTACT

Traps Drums
01202 597190
www.trapsdrums.co.uk