

NEW GEAR

ZILDJIAN'S BEAUTIFUL BABY

provides the blueprint for this complete range of Armand cymbals

ESSENTIAL SPEC

Zildjian

PRICES

Splashes/crashes/rides
£143-£363
Hi-hats (13") £407,
(14") £424

**COUNTRY OF
MANUFACTURE**
USA

HAND/MACHINE
HAMMERED

Machine

FINISH

Natural

ALLOY

B20 Bronze

CAST OR PRESSED
Cast

**DIAMETERS
AVAILABLE**
10"-21"

SUITABLE FOR:

Pop, rock, funk, electric
jazz, blues

CONTACT

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ZILDJIAN ARMAND CYMBALS

From £143 Bearing the name of a legendary character in the company's history, Jordan McLachlan meets and greets Zildjian's Armand

If there's a better drum product name than Zildjian's Armand 'Beautiful Baby' ride, then I've yet to hear it.

At once the name is both a fond nod to the man who inspired its creation and stirs an image of carefree '60s abandon. And since its introduction in 2004, the ride has won itself a dedicated little niche of fans. Its 19" size and three rivets mean it's hardly the most mainstream offering in the current Zildjian catalogue, but it was good enough for Armand, and the recreation of the man's favourite ride has caught the imagination of many.

So much so that Zildjian has pushed the button and developed a complete range of Armand cymbals, taking their lead from the Beautiful Baby blueprint. A couple more rides, four crashes, two pairs of hats and a 10" splash now bear the great man's name, and while there's still only one Beautiful Baby, the rest of the family don't seem to shape up too badly at all.

Build

Given that a flavour of the '60s runs through each of the new Armand cymbals, it's fitting that they're unadorned by a flashy modern finish and accoutrements. Instead, this lot sport a traditional finish plus the understated Avedis-style logo and model description. It's the perfect way to turn out instruments like these - they already look slightly vintage-y, and the lack of mirror finish means they should develop a glorious 'hard life of rock'n'soul' patina after a few years of sweat-soaked gigs.

The range is also characterised by relatively light weights across the board. Each instrument is either thin or medium-thin, again perfectly reflecting the retro nature of the collection. There are certainly no XXL Meathead Death ride types to be found bearing the Armand moniker. And lathing and hammering is subtle too; small, even hammer marks are evident on all cymbals (except the splash) and the precise lathing is similar to that found elsewhere in

the Avedis line-up.

In terms of sizes, the Armand range is conservative, with 13" and 14" hats, 10" splash, 16" and 18" crashes and 20" and 21" rides now joining the original 19" Beautiful Baby ride. It's a good choice of dimensions, and one that allows you to put together a full Armand set-up without leaving any obvious gaps in your cymbal array. Unless, of course, you're from the Mike Portnoy school of 'one of every size from 6" to 22", with a couple of gongs for good measure please'.

Hands On

If you're more of a trad cat, however, these are going to be right up your street. And I don't just mean trad in the jazz sense. For anyone playing Moon-inspired rock, dirty funk, grown-up pop or, indeed, electric jazz, there's something here for you. That's down to a great blend of warm, vintage body tone and crisp articulation that each of the series delivers in one form or another. Clearly, each cymbal is designed to sound different from

Once you lay into the rides
they roar into a crash-ride
noise beautifully.
Very Who-like indeed.



THE RIDES SERVE UP

an evocative mix of
pronounced 'ping'
supported by a lovely
murmur of wash

THE LACK OF MIRROR FINISH

means the cymbals should
develop a glorious 'hard life
of rock'n'soul' patina after a
few years of gigging

the rest of the line, but that sweet, round,
classic tone is always present.

The thinness of the crashes means that
they explode quickly when struck with
conviction, springing into action and
subsiding without getting in the way of the
groove itself. I have to admit to a real
fondness for the medium thin 16" and 18",
which strike me as fab multi-purpose types.
The rides are perhaps the most obviously
classic-oriented elements of the Armand
series; there's something wonderfully
evocative about the way they serve up a mix
of pronounced 'ping' supported by a lovely
murmur of wash. And once you really lay into
them they roar into a crash-ride noise
beautifully. Very Who-like indeed, perfect for
Moonie fans.

Hats are stunningly good too, and capable
of dealing with slightly more aggressive
forearms than some of the others in the line.
The 13"s are focused and super-crisp, with a
rewardingly crisp chick tone when pedalled,
while the 14"s deliver a richer mid-range,

more crunch and volume and are better
suited to louder applications.

Verdict

With the Armand series, Zildjian is keeping
alive the ethos of the instruments Armand
Zildjian oversaw in the '60s. Sweet, warm,
full of personality and suitable for a wide
range of not-too-extreme situations, the
new series is a cracker. The one obvious
downside is that it further complicates
your purchase decision in a market sector
already crammed with fantastic
instruments. Ah well... **R**

Rating ★★★★★

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PAISTE TRADITIONAL
from £160



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Rush

Neil Peart Autograph Model
Japanese White Oak, PW747, Wood-tip



PETER CRISS
Kiss

Peter Criss Autograph Model, American
Hickory, TX3R and "Natural" TXR3J, Wood-tip



PETE LOCKETT
Independent

Hot Rods and various Hickory & Oak models



JASON BITTNER
Shadows Fall

Jason Bittner Autograph Model
American Hickory, TX5BX, Nylon-tip

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