

# TAMA SOUNDWORKS SNARE DRUMS



**£155** A brand new stand-alone snare range from Tama promises high quality merchandise with a fantastically low retail price

WORDS: TOM BRADLEY

As one of the biggest names in drums for over 30 years, Tama has not only catered for the professional market with its high-end drums but also boasts a great track record in producing entry and mid-level gear for the less experienced player. Take for instance the success of the Tama Rockstar or Imperialstar kits. In recent times, the lines have begun to blur somewhat in terms of price versus quality. The assumption that the more you spend the better quality you get, though still true, isn't quite as black and white as it once was. Enter Tama's brand new Soundworks snare collection. Judging by price alone, one might assume that they fall into the entry-level category but a quick

was originally specially designed for its SLP snares. The 10"x5½" instead comes with a regular triple-flanged hoop and the 14"x6½" steel has a 'Steel Mighty' hoop. The small 10" steel snare also features a built-in tom mount and is supplied with Tama's MC69 ball-joint clamp for easy attachment almost anywhere on the kit. Interestingly, despite the difference in specification, each drum retails at the identical price of £155.

## Hands On

Over the course of a couple of weeks, these snares accompanied me to most of my gigs and a couple of studio sessions. I'm pleased to report that first impressions were excellent in all departments. Before

## THE THING ALL THREE DRUMS HAVE IN COMMON IS THEY ALL POSSESS THAT MODERN 'SNAP' THAT WE SO CRAVE FROM OUR SNARE DRUMS

once-over of these drums shows there is something a little more to them.

## Build

There are a total of six models available within the brand new Soundworks range. This line-up comprises two maple shells (12"x5½" and 14"x6½"), two kapur shells (13"x7" and 14"x6") and two steel shells (10"x5½" and 14"x6½"). For review purposes we have taken receipt of the 14"x6½" maple, 13"x7" kapur (both 6-ply) and 10"x5½" steel. Each drum comes complete with all-chrome hardware - including Tama's own MSL60S vintage-style dual lugs and standard MCS70A throw-off, as well as 20-strand snare wires (except the 10" which has 16 strands), Evans G1 coated heads and the Tama Soundworks badge. The majority of the snares are supplied with Tama's new Sound Arc hoops - a 2.3mm inward curved steel hoop that

learning the price of these snares I was completely convinced that their retail price would be coming in considerably higher than it later transpired. So much so that I thought it wise to purchase one of them for my own collection!

Aesthetically, they might not be much to write home about but nevertheless they are attractive drums. If you're into natural wood finishes then the wooden shells shouldn't disappoint. The maple exhibits its characteristic orangey-yellow colour and the lesser-used kapur wood has a much darker, brown shade. The wood grains are subtle but there on closer inspection. The steel drum is without a typical polished metal finish but instead exhibits a fairly dull matte grey; almost giving the impression of a painted finish rather than a metallic one. Fairly plain but not a bad looking drum.

Moving on to the sound; the great news

## Also try...



### 1 TAMA SLP SNARES

**We say:** "A fantastic batch of drums that provide something for all tastes."



### 2 DIXON ARTISAN NICKEL STEEL SNARE

**We say:** "Nicely-styled, well built and great sounding, this drum is a real revelation."



## SHELLS

*Review snares have shells made from kapur, maple and steel*

is, these drums sound absolutely fantastic. The thing that all three review snares have in common (and I would wager the other three too) is that they all possess that modern 'snap' that we so crave from our snare drums. They are all surprisingly versatile in terms of tuning but are most content tuned up nice and high, creating that perfect mixture of tight snap with breathability in their sound. The maple has more of a brightness to it and is a little more open while the kapur is slightly dryer and a little lower pitched. The 13"x7" kapur was able to tune convincingly low in comparison to the 14"x6½" maple which didn't quite offer the

## SOUND ARC HOOPS

Tama's new Sound Arc hoop is a 2.3mm inward curved steel hoop



## LUGS

Snares feature Tama's own vintage-style dual lugs

same fatness that you might hope for. The 10"x5½" is incredibly quick as you might expect and packs an absolute wallop. Tuned up pretty much as tight as can be, it offers that incredibly short snap that lends its self perfectly to tight funk, rapid-fire drum'n'bass or, with the snare off, mini-timbale style reggae and Latin ideas. Due to the depth of the shell, ghost notes are still able to cut through really nicely and weren't as thin as expected considering the ludicrous amount of tension in the head. Surprisingly it doesn't

sound too bad tuned way down either, which adds a bonus versatility to this cheeky little side snare.

All three of these Tama snare drums have the ability to tune really tight without showing any signs of choking out. A trait that is more commonly found in higher-end drums as opposed to more budget offerings. The snare wires remain incredibly responsive throughout all tuning ranges but again, really come into their own in higher tuning ranges. **R**

## Essential spec



### PRICES

£155

### SHELL MATERIAL

Maple, kapur or steel

### CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Wood: ply; steel: rolled

### NUMBER OF PLYS

6-ply or 1.2mm steel

### BEARING EDGES

45°

### FINISHES AVAILABLE

Matte Vintage Maple (MVM); Brown Kapur (MRK); Steel

### HOOPS

12"x5½" maple, 14"x6½" maple, 13"x7" kapur & 14"x6" kapur: 2.3mm Sound Arc Hoop; 10"x5½" steel: triple-flanged hoop; 14"x6½" steel: 2.3mm Steel Mighty Hoop

### SHELL AVAILABILITY

12"x5½" maple, 14"x6½" maple, 13"x7" kapur, 14"x6" kapur, 10"x5½" steel, 14"x6½" steel

### SUPPLIED HEADS

Tama/Evans G1 coated

### NUMBER OF LUGS PER DRUM

12"x5½" maple & 10"x5½" steel: 6; 13"x7" kapur: 8; 14"x6½" maple, 14"x6" kapur & 14"x6½" steel: 10

### SNARE STRAINER

Tama MCS70A/MCS70B throw-off and butt plate

### CONTACT

Headstock Distribution  
headstock  
distribution.com  
tama.com

**VERDICT:** An outstanding amount of drum for the money. A great choice in sizes and each one sounds fantastic. Suitable for the aspiring and professional drummer alike.

### BUILD QUALITY



### PLAYABILITY



### VALUE FOR MONEY



### RHYTHM RATING

