



BRONZE METAL TRIFECTA

TRX LTD Series Cymbals

By Eric Kamm

It's scary how effective advertising can be. Just like Coke and Pepsi to the word cola, the second anyone mentions the word cymbal, two or three companies pop into most drummers' heads. It seems counterintuitive that the legions of drummers trying to develop their "personal sound" all flock to the same few companies, but that's how it works. Obviously, the way you hit the cymbals is as important as the material when it comes to establishing your unique imprint, but a little metallic diversity never hurt anybody. Fortunately, over

last year, several manufacturers have stepped up with some of the most unique-sounding cymbals on the market. And those of the non-Coke/Pepsi variety have delivered some of the most unique cymbals yet. Here resides the new TRX LTD series.

Love At First Sight

As I unwrapped a pair of 14" hi-hats and a couple of 18" and 20" crash/rides from the LTD line, my eyes grew wide. If I were judging this book by its cover, I didn't even need to crack the binding to be impressed by what the LTD

series had to say. Each cymbal boasts a sharp progression of three distinct finishes. The bell has a rustic, unshaven, "au naturel" finish, while the majority of the cymbal face has what TRX refers to as a "traditional lathed and hand-hammered finish." Finally, the outer edge, which appears slightly thinner than the rest of the body, glistens with a highly polished brilliance. Every cymbal is hand crafted and consists of TRX's "exclusive B-20 Plus bronze formula." Before ever laying stick to cymbal, I just stood back and enjoyed the view of these beautiful pies suspended over my drums.

14" Hi-Hats

As I'm getting older and lazier, I'm trying to do as much as I can with as little as possible. In drumming parlance, this means I'm less interested in what Neil Peart says on his kit, and more interested in what Charlie Watts doesn't say. Consequently I began evaluating the 14" LTD hi-hats with just a 20" kick drum and a 5.5" free-floating

maple snare. This allowed me to focus on one new cymbal at a time over a simple groove, without being distracted by a bigger setup. As I began warming up, the first thing I noticed was how bright the hats were. I was using thicker nylon-tip sticks, and when they struck the surface of the tightly closed hi-hat they produced a sharp click that was enveloped in a warm tone. As I opened up the hats about a quarter-inch, a bright, sharp overtone was produced within the clanging that wasn't overpowering. If I laid into the partially opened hats a little more, there was clear definition with each individual stroke that cut through the ocean of bronze overtone. The response I liked best was when I hit the open hats while choking down with my foot, where a beautiful arc of sound was produced from the attack and decay. You know how Bonham's hi-hit sounds in "Over The Hills And Far Away" when Jimmy Page's heavier riff comes in? Well, that's how these sounded at a lower volume. This minimalist 3-piece setup inspired me to work on some sec-

ond-line grooves, and I was soon craving some ride bell. This proved an opportune time to unsheathe the 20" crash/ride.

20" Crash/Ride

There was even more distinction between the three textures of metal on the bigger surface of this beautifully shaped piece of B-20 Plus bronze. In addition to my thicker nylon-tip sticks, I decided to take out a wood acorn-tip and a barrel-tip stick to mix things up a bit. Regardless of which stick I used, there was a satisfying overtone to the crash/ride, where the intensity of the background resonance would fluctuate depending upon how hard I laid into it. The naturally finished bell produced a clearly defined ping that didn't affect the warm overtone unless you really hit it hard.

18" Crash/Ride

A couple of days later I added the final ingredient, the 18" crash/ride, which, naturally, looked exactly like a smaller version of the 20".

When I hit the 18", vibrations developed where there was an initial attack, immediately followed by a wave of sound that surfaced quickly and then drifted away. The beautiful overtones would decay slowly at a perfect rate. Not surprisingly, I found that the 20" crash/ride felt more like a ride, and the 18" felt more like a crash. When I would start to ride on the 18", its overtone would decay faster than the 20", making it ideal for shorter musical statements.

Gig Test

While the LTD cymbals obviously weren't designed for heavier types of music, I decided to take them to a gig in Simi Valley, California with my band, Setoff, just to see how they might hold up in a progressive punk environment. The bar where we played was moderately sized and surrounded by green plaster walls. While the overtone qualities that I loved about the cymbals were lost beneath the roaring amps, other characteristics surfaced. The hi-hat retained its classy character, and still man-

aged to cut through the noise, open or closed.

The crash quality of the 20" crash/ride became more obvious, and crucial, at a higher decibel, where it sounded like a studio crash with a nice punch and quick decay. The bell of the ride resonated the entire cymbal when I laid into it, and added tone to each stroke. The cymbals held their ground at this loud gig, but I definitely felt they would be more appropriate for a lower volume setting.

VERDICT

Experienced drummers looking for a responsive cymbal in a lower to mid-volume setting will greatly appreciate TRX's new LTD series. While I didn't like the cymbals as much in a heavier setting, TRX obviously did not design the LTD series with metalheads and punks in mind. If you're in the market for high-end cymbals, it's definitely worth checking out TRX's latest offering, which could withstand the Pepsi challenge any day.

DETAILS

MODEL LTD Crash/Rides

SIZES	PRICE
18"	\$350
20"	\$450
21"	\$475

MODEL LTD Hi-Hats

SIZES	PRICE
14"	\$500

FEATURES The LTD series employs a three-zone finishing process; a "Crash/Ride Combo Pack" is available for \$1,300 that includes the 18" and 20" crash/rides, 14" hi-hats, and a free cymbal bag.

CONTACT

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