



**TRIED
AND
TESTED**

The 16" diameter makes this Brady drum a one-off.



ESSENTIALS

PRICES:
16"x6 1/2" Jarrah Ply in Exotic Satin finish £720
16"x6 1/2" Jarrah Ply in Exotic Gloss finish £820

CONTACT:
Birmingham Drum Centre
Tel: 08702 404484
www.birminghamdrumcentre.co.uk
Drumwright (Reading)
Tel: 0118 944 1418
www.drumwright.co.uk
Electro Music (Doncaster)
Tel: 01302 369 999
www.electromusic.co.uk
Foote's (London)
Tel: 020 7734 1822
www.footesmusic.com
Newcastle Drum Centre
Tel: 0191 221 0301
www.newcastledrum.co.uk
Professional Percussion (London)
Tel: 020 7485 4434
www.propercussion.co.uk

Brady Jarrah Ply Custom Snare Drum

Now here's a novel thing – a 16" snare drum: Australia's finest gives it large. **Geoff Nicholls** wonders if he's got a stand that's big enough...

Back in the early 20th century, 15" diameter snare drums were quite common before 14" became standard. But 16"? I've never seen one before. I guess this Brady is a first. Aside from the unusual diameter, the other features are typical of the quality associated with Brady. There are 2.3mm triple-flanged super-hoops and stainless steel tension rods with leather washers. There are eight 1920s-style solid brass tube lugs. You might have expected 10, but I imagine the drill spacing is set up for a typical eight-lug 16" floor tom. The strainer is the familiar Nickel Drumworks piston mechanism in a clear finish, while the snare wires are specially tempered, sourced from Germany.

What makes the Brady special, though, is a combination of the timbers employed and the way the shells are formed. Brady makes its own shells from Australian Jarrah, which is significantly harder than rock maple. It needs to be: uniquely, the shell is not cross-laminated. All the plies are laid up in the same horizontal direction. Cross-lamination gives rigidity but in so doing stifles the wood's natural resonance. For

this drum, Brady used nine plies of 0.6mm Jarrah, veneered with an intricately figured single outer ply of satin finish Wandoo Burl.

With all the plies/grains running in the same direction and no reinforcing rings, I wondered about the shell's stability. Brady's reply: "Your concerns about the horizontal ply construction are surely warranted. However, we use (extremely hard) epoxy resins instead of timber glue. The 24-hour hardening process literally melts the individual plies back into one solid piece of timber. The shell is actually more stable than a conventional shell and is guaranteed never to go out-of-round."

Sound

Because of the extra diameter, the fundamental pitch is deeper and the sound is broader than other snares. A 16" head will never tension as hard as a 14", so there will always be some slap to the sound. What this means is backbeats are dark, wet and funky. There's something very earthy, loose and New Orleans-y about the beat – like some big old tenor marching drum. If you tune low, you can also get that

dirty and flabby de-tuned sample sound – the snare drum equivalent of a bass player with a low fifth string. Tuned medium and upwards, you get a clear, fat stroke and surprisingly good articulation near the edges, although it's never going to be as sharp as a 14".

The extra diameter also gives rim shots a glorious clonking resonance, while cross-stick sounds have a distinctive airiness – partly because the stick doesn't cover as much of the head as it normally would – that is, the butt end is nearer the centre. **B**

VERDICT: This is obviously a specialist drum with a limited market. I can't see it igniting a trend. But this is not to detract from its superb craftsmanship. Although there are 10 plies, the drum is surprisingly light. However, it's too wide to mount on ordinary snare stands and the only one Brady knows of is Pearl's S2000. Brady suggests the drum is destined for studios and classical/orchestral use, as well as it being "a great phat snare sound for general rock/pop use". If you can afford it, you'll get a beautiful drum with a sound like nothing you've heard before.

PLUS: A unique drum and craftsmanship of the highest order.

MINUS: Limited applications, expensive and requires a special snare stand.

RATING: ★★★★★

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