

C&C DRUM COMPANY PLAYER DATE KIT

£1,755 approx First off-the-shelf drumset from the acclaimed custom builder is a tasty mahogany kit

WORDS: ADAM JONES

Since its quiet inception over two decades ago, C&C Drum Company has remained determinedly low-key, operating on little more than a word-of-mouth basis. Based in Gladstone, Missouri and run by Bill Cardwell and his son Jacob, C&C (formerly C&C Custom Drums) has a worldwide reputation for building beautiful-looking and classic-sounding drums. The four-piece Player Date on review is from C&C's first ever range of production (off-the-shelf) kits.

Build

If the Player Date bears any resemblance to Ludwig's Club Date kit reviewed a few issues ago, let's just say that Bill Cardwell had been developing his concept for some time before Ludwig - entirely coincidentally - had a similar idea. The prototype of what would become the Player Date was built at the request of C&C endorsee Joey Waronker, who was seeking a kit that emulated a 1960s kit of Japanese

around the centre of each drum shell with progressively longer tension rods radiating out from them with each increase in diameter and depth. On the larger drums they look a little exposed but in reality are deceptively strong.

Hands On

The shells are straight-sided and are 6-ply/7mm thick across all of the drums, with the outer and inner plies running horizontally. On the snare and toms the bearing edges are described by C&C as full-contact. They are cut from the inner ply downwards in a smooth curve across to the outer ply. C&C experimented with full-contact bearing edges on Player Date bass drums but decided on a more regular centrally-cut edge. This is still rounded over rather than being cut sharp, providing a large contact area. The bass drum's vintage depth encourages a focused, almost abrupt response, walloping out a full, thick note. It's still deep and punchy but nowhere near as dark as a modern

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origin. Much like C&C's company history, once Joey had taken delivery of his kit, word got out and everyone who encountered it wanted one. After being deluged with orders, C&C decided to put it into production, marketing it as an intermediate range encapsulating the qualities of C&C drums. Currently two shellpacks are available - Be-bop (20"x14", 12"x8", 14"x14" & 14"x5½" snare) and the reviewed Big Beat (22"x14", 13"x8", 16"x14" and 14"x6½" snare). Of the three finishes offered, two are lacquers (Amber and Honey); the third being the more expensive Silver Sparkle wrap seen here.

As with the kit that inspired them, Player Date drums are made from mahogany (albeit hand-built rather than mass produced). C&C double-ended Radio King Reissue lugs run

'subwoofer-territory' kick. These qualities give it an unmistakable presence - especially when miking - that is achieved without resorting to sheer force. Tuning the kick higher tightens up the sound without choking off its tone while slackening off the head brings a fruity, fat warmth to the proceedings that requires only the tiniest amount of dampening to shape.

The full-contact bearing edges on the toms mean they generate virtually no overtones, so they can be played wide open and still sound in control. They are phenomenally warm - think Motown warm - wonderfully resonant and full of woody character. Fills bounce across the mix in the same way that toms on old recordings - compromised by primitive studio technology and smothered with layers



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of compression - seem to leap forth whenever they are hit. I tried tuning the toms at various pitches and each time they responded well; it was difficult, if not impossible, to extract a dull sound from them. Clarity, shell timbre and yet more warmth are the dominant features of the snare. Here the bearing edges make the snare wires super-sensitive, giving the drum a really crisp tone. The simple 'beer tap' style throw-off is straightforward to operate and definitely subscribes to the 'less is more' school of design. At the time of writing the only way of getting hold of a Player Date kit is direct from C&C's European distributor in Germany. Check *Rhythm* for updates as C&C is in the process of setting up UK dealerships. **R**



SHELLS

Beautiful mahogany shells with full contact bearing edges and minimal hardware means the drums really sing

TENSION RODS

The extra long tension rods on the bass drum and floor tom can make head changes eventful

FINISHES

Opting for one of the two plain lacquer finishes will save you over £200 on the more expensive wrapped version

LUGS

Kit has C&C double-ended Radio King Reissue lugs

BASS DRUM DEPTH

Bass drum's vintage depth encourages a focussed, almost abrupt response, walloping out a full, thick note

VERDICT: There is an unpretentious and honest feel to this kit that is appealing. The drums are based on uncomplicated designs, are well made from quality materials and sound utterly fantastic. The simplest of recipes can also be the tastiest.

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

Essential spec



PRICES

C&C Drum Company Player Date Big Beat kit in Silver Sparkle, £1,755 approx (+£45 shipping)

SHELL MATERIAL

Mahogany

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply

NUMBER OF PLYS

6-ply, 7mm

BEARING EDGES

Snare and toms: full contact bearing edge; bass drum: rounded 45° bearing edge

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Honey lacquer, Amber lacquer, Silver Sparkle (as pictured)

HOOPS/RIMS

2.3mm chrome-plated steel hoops on snare and toms; inlaid wooden hoops on bass drums

SHELL AVAILABILITY

Two shellpacks: 22"x14", 13"x8", 16"x14" & 14"x6½" snare; 20"x14", 12"x8", 14"x14" & 14"x5½"; 18" & 24" bass drums and 18" floor toms available by special order

SUPPLIED HEADS

Snare and toms: Remo/C&C Drums coated Ambassador batters and clear Ambassador resonants; bass drum: Remo/C&C Drums coated Powerstroke 3 batter and ported glossy white Ambassador front head

LUGS PER DRUM

Bass drum, floor tom & snare: 8; 13" tom: 6

TOM MOUNTS

Stand mounted

SNARE STRAINER

Based on 1955 George Way 'beer tap' design

SNARE WIRES

Canopus, 20 strands

CONTACT

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