

TRX DRK Cymbals

The Initials Say It All

by Chap Ostrander

KEY NOTES

- Distinctive look and extra-dark sound
- Voices work very well together
- Subtle sonic qualities, but with lots of cut

Okay, let's get past the cutesy initials: TRX (as in "Turks") DRK (as in "dark") cymbals are one of four lines produced by yet another emerging cymbalmaker from Turkey. According to TRX, the cymbals are made using old-world techniques, but with an eye to the future. Master cymbalsmiths tailor the four cymbal lines to meet the needs of drummers across the full musical spectrum. The DRK line, as its name implies, is created to offer "an extra-dark sound."

TRX calls the alloy used to make the DRK cymbals "B20 Plus." When I asked why, I was told that the alloy starts off as B20 (20% tin and 80% copper), but during the melting process, TRX cymbalsmiths spice up the "recipe" by adding a bit more tin and a dash of silver.

All DRK cymbals are thin and light, with a low profile. This gives them a dark tonality and a relatively short sustain. The bells are unlathed and unhammered. The outer edge of each cymbal has a small band of lathing, with hammering that extends from the bell to the edge. The lathing is said to be for visual effect and to open up the sound. It's pretty minimal; you might not even notice it at a quick glance.

In keeping with Turkish tradition, the cymbals are hand-hammered, one at a time. They also have a natural finish that is heightened by what TRX terms "a proprietary aging process." Let's take a closer look.

Rides

We were sent 20" and 21" rides. (A 22" is also available.) The 20" had a dark, deep voice, with a bell that was cutting and clear. The 21" ride was darker still, offering a warm overall character and undertones that stayed under control. It would be a great ride for jazz, or for any situation where subtlety was required.

A characteristic shared by both rides was that the sound got more complex when I played the ride pattern out near the lathed band—especially at lower volumes. In addition, stick response on both models was great, even with their thin nature.

Splashes

The 10" and 12" DRK splashes were a treat. They definitely hark back to the days of genuinely thin splashes (which are hard to come by these days). I compared them to various splashes of my own, and the main difference was that the TRX splashes had a little more depth to their tonality, underpinning their initial high, bright, splashy explosion.

Crashes

Our review crashes were 15", 16", 17", and 18" in diameter. I took them on several gigs, and their performance was marvelous. Even though they all exhibited the deep, dark voice that's characteristic of the DRK series, the sound and spread of each crash still cut through distinctly. They also spoke strong and clear when I used mallets.

Due to the cymbals' thin nature, they responded immediately when struck. Their voices got correspondingly lower as the size went up, with the 18" having an especially strong and clear voice. I generally don't care much for 18" crashes, because it seems to take a lot of impact to get them moving. However, I was able to put the DRK 18" right into action. Its voice was full and long-lasting, even at moderate impact.



Chinas

Our China selection included 14", 18", and 24" sizes. These cymbals embody everything you'd want in a China, including the trashy, furnace-hot sound. The voices of the smaller Chinas were easy to discern, helping them to mix in with other cymbals.

The 24" China, by contrast, was just huge in its sound—especially when played loud with sticks or mallets. It tended to dominate everything around it, which would limit its usefulness as a crash or effect cymbal. However, I'd love to hear it with a couple of rivets, used as an alternate ride.

Hi-Hats

Our review hi-hats included 13", 14", and 15" models. The sound of each pair was clean and balanced, with deep voices and great presence. Predictably, the pitches got lower as the sizes got larger.

I took the hats out with one of the rides, and the "family resemblance" created a great blend, sonically and visually. The interaction between the hats and the ride afforded me a clean, cutting sound, or a great wash, depending on what I wanted.

The DRK hi-hat cymbals would make excellent auxiliary hats, especially on a cable remote pedal unit, where they could be played open and closed. Their extra-dark tonality would provide a distinctive contrast to higher-pitched primary hats. I

especially wish that we had been sent the 10" and 12" sizes, just so I could have tried them in this application. Their smaller sizes, combined with their darkness, would likely make them very interesting additions to any setup.

Wrap-Up

The TRX cymbals got noticed wherever I took them. They were striking in a visual sense, and they were more than satisfying to play. The DRK series was designed to exist outside the range of most of today's cymbals, and that goal seems to have been achieved admirably. Their look and sound definitely set them apart.

THE NUMBERS

20" ride	\$450	18" crash	.....\$350
21" ride	.....\$475	19" crash	.....\$375
22" ride	.....\$500	20" crash	.....\$450
10" hi-hats	.....\$350	8" splash	.....\$150
12" hi-hats	.....\$400	10" splash	.....\$175
13" hi-hats	.....\$450	12" splash	.....\$200
14" hi-hats	.....\$500	14" China	.....\$300
15" hi-hats	.....\$550	16" China	.....\$350
14" crash	.....\$250	18" China	.....\$400
15" crash\$275	20" China\$450
16" crash\$300	22" China\$500
17" crash\$325	24" China\$550

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