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MODERN DRUMMER[®]

Sonor And Remo Piccolo Snares



Sonor HLD593 Signature Bronze Piccolo

Sonor recently unleashed what could be termed "the world's most esoteric snare drum" with their new *Signature Series Bronze* piccolo snare. The *Signature Bronze* is a 4 x 14 drum, with a one-piece cast bronze shell. All fittings (hoops, lugs, rods, etc.) are copper-plated to give the drum a golden appearance. This all makes for one weighty drum; the *Signature Bronze* is probably the heaviest snare I've ever lifted!

The drum has 20 lugs (ten per side), with the standard Sonor slotted rods. Heavy-gauge flanged hoops are used for more effective tuning and a solid sound. To dampen the drum, Sonor includes a matching copper-plated clip-on external muffler.

A stick-shift lever cross-throw strainer is mounted to the shell. The butt end contains the fine-tension knob to adjust the snare wires. Cording is used to hold the 24-strand snares (which, by the way, have chromed ends, clashing with the drum's golden look. Call the Fashion Police!) The strainer works extra-smooth, and is virtually silent, with no snare "rap" when switching on or off.

The drum I received to test came with a coated *Ambassador* batter and a transparent *Ambassador* snare-side head. Even without a thinner *Diplomat* bottom head, the piccolo managed to present an extremely sensitive, crisp sound. Any delicate passages played were perfectly audible. During heavier playing, the drum didn't choke up at all, and had good volume. Rimshots were solid-sounding and rang right out. Latin-style rim clicks were round and not boxy-sounding. In every situation I tried it in, the drum's sound was clear, undistorted, and distinguishable.

I'll keep this short and simple by saying that the *Signature Bronze* piccolo is of the utmost professional quality, engineering-wise and cosmetically, with top-of-the line sound characteristics. Unfortunately, though, it carries an equally professional

(read: high) price tag, which, without a doubt, is out of the spending range of many players. The drum retails at \$1,300.00. (If you really want to go all out, Sonor is also producing a copper-finish *Signature* snare stand, with a hinged tripod leg base and lever-operated basket, at \$430.00 retail.)



Sonor D420 Piccolo

Don't despair from what you've just read, because Sonor hasn't forgotten the "poorer people," and also offers a 3 1/2 x 14 chrome-finish piccolo snare, made of ferro-manganese steel. The *D420* piccolo also has 20 lugs with slotted rods, and the same strainer as the *Signature* (but chrome-plated). Practically all other design specs are the same as the *Signature Bronze*, except of course for the plating and shell material.

Being a half-inch shallower than the *Signature*, the *D420* sounded a bit higher than the 4 x 14, as one would expect. The steel-shell drum still retained its sensitivity, and maybe even has a touch more volume. It was more "open"-sounding than the bronze-shelled *Signature*, and perhaps livelier. But it still had the capability of a delicate response when needed. Sonor is renowned for its high standards; the *D420* is certainly no exception. Retail price is \$490.00.



Remo MasterTouch Piccolo

Remo's new *MasterTouch* line includes the company's first 3 1/2 x 14 piccolo snare. Like all other Remo drums, it has an *Acousticon* phenolic shell, and *Quadura* covering. The drum has ten double-ended lugs, a single venthole, and no internal muffling. A newly-designed strainer throws off from the center via a large thumb lever. Both

sides of the strainer have fine-tension knobs. When released, the throw-off lever drops the entire assembly to an almost 90 degree angle, to fully drop the snares. The strainer is extremely simple, but worked quite smoothly and didn't bind up. Twenty-strand wire snares are used, and are held with plastic strips. The drum I tested came with a coated *Ambassador* batter and an *Ambassador* snare-side head.

The *MasterTouch* piccolo had good volume, with an alert, snappy response. It wasn't too thin-sounding and was capable of a reasonably wide dynamic range. In fact, I was content to use this piccolo as my primary snare drum. With the snares off, it gave a tight, timbale-like sound. *Diplomat* heads would probably enable the drum to be tuned up to a higher pitch and "pop" more.

A mirror-gold *Quadura* covering was on the drum I played; other Remo colors may be available by special request. Suggested retail list price is \$224.00.

—Bob Saydowski, Jr.