



MEINL SIGNATURE RIDE CYMBALS by Anthony Riscica

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The most recent additions to Meinl's ever-expanding cymbal catalog are artist-inspired rides that fit into a number of the company's preexisting product lines. Each of these unique cymbals was designed not only with a specific drummer in mind but also in conjunction with that artist, through a meticulous research and development process. We were recently given a bunch of the new cymbals to check out. Let's see if all that hard work paid off.

ADLER'S PURE METAL

First up is a monster of a cymbal designed with Lamb Of God drummer Chris Adler. This 24" Pure Metal ride is super-solid, with an oversize bell and a brilliant appearance. Its heavy weight helped give it unsurpassed stick articulation and volume, while its lathing and hammering patterns kept the overtones to a minimum. As its name suggests, this cymbal is meant for a metal/hard rock environment, and after about

five minutes of playing it I was searching through my CDs for a Slayer record to rock out with. I found the Pure Metal had the power necessary to make an impact in the heaviest of heavy situations.

RODDY'S SERPENT RIDE

Next we have the 21" Serpent ride from the Byzance Brilliant series. Versatile metal drummer Derek Roddy helped design this model, and it shows; the cymbal gave off a huge sound while being adaptable enough to make its mark in genres beyond heavy metal. While the sound of the oversize bell made my eardrums rattle when I was playing alone, it cut through nicely in a loud band rehearsal. The stick sound was defined but gave way to the ride's overtones after a few strokes. This is because the cymbal is deceptively thin for its size. While it's not a "thin" cymbal by any means, you can bend it a little with your hands, which is something I didn't expect.

BITTNER'S BELL BLAST

The 20" Bell Blast is another heavier ride, this time from the Mb10 series. Designed in collaboration with Shadows Fall drummer Jason Bittner, the cymbal sports a huge bell and a slick, brilliant look. The well-articulated stick sound was glassy, shimmering, and surprisingly nonabrasive. The bell was an ear pleaser as well, cutting with a rich tone that didn't leave my ears ringing.

HOLMES'S SPECTRUM RIDE

Shifting sonic gears a bit, we have the 22" Spectrum ride. Just like the artist it was developed in conjunction with, Rodney Holmes, this cymbal is capable of adapting to pretty much any style and situation. It's said to be a mixture of old-world craftsmanship and modern technology, and its appearance reflects that description. The combination of a lathed and a raw finish with small dimpled hammering not only made for rich all-around tones but also gave the cymbal a sophisticated look and feel.

The bell of the Spectrum ride is slightly undersize but was still very playable, bringing out a good deal of overtones from the entire cymbal. The bow produced dark yet sweet overtones when played with the tip of the stick, while crash accents produced a colorful explosion. If you're a rock drummer who occasionally plays jazz, or vice versa, you'll want to check out this versatile little number.

KUMAGAI'S SKY

The 19" Sky ride, from the Byzance Dark series, was designed along with Japanese drummer Noriaki Kumagai. This relatively heavy cymbal sports a raw hand-hammered finish. The stick sound produced a contained roar of overtones that didn't overpower the ride's definition. The bell sound was articulate and brought out the cymbal's overall tone without being too washed out. Meinl has succeeded again in creating a versatile model, this time with just a hint of that classic Steve Gadd ride sound.

HAFFNER'S CLUB

Getting more into the softer side of things, we have the 22" Club ride from the Byzance Jazz series, which was developed with German session/jazz drummer Wolfgang Haffner. It was a delight to play, as it offered up an ideal sound for a jazz combo. Being that the ride is flat, thin, and riveted, it doesn't have a lot of volume potential, but it created a great deal of presence. The stick sound was shimmering and articulate and never got covered up by the cymbal's minimal wash. The wash that was created was dark and rich. Even when I crashed on it, the ride sounded contained while still getting the point across. Everything about the cymbal, from its stick response to its appearance, had a gem-like quality. This was one of my favorites of the bunch.

RABB'S SAFARI

Despite its name, the 18" Safari ride, from the Generation X series, is more of an effects cymbal than a true ride. It was designed with Johnny

Rabb and is actually made up of two cymbals. On the bottom is an 18" flat ride with a rippled ring near the middle. The top cymbal is an 8" splash with a rippled edge that sits on the rippled ring of the flat ride. The ripples help increase the movement between the cymbals, which creates a short sizzled crash sound when you play the Safari as a ride. The amount of sizzle can be manipulated through what Meinl calls "tension tuning." This simply means you can adjust the effect by tightening or loosening the wing nut on your cymbal stand.

RIDES OF SUCCESS

After I played these cymbals, it was evident that Meinl's efforts have not been in vain. There's something for everyone in these new products. Whether it's a loud heavy metal ride or a sweet-sounding, expressive jazz cymbal, Meinl has proven that quality and tonality are the main objectives.

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