

RHYTHM

EVERY DRUMMER NEEDS IT



SOFTAPADS SMX SERIES

Problems with noise? You must be a drummer then. Geoff Nicholls checks out the new SMX range from old favourites Softapads.

The basic principle of Softapads is simple enough – you lay circles of rubber material onto the appropriate size toms or snare, and bash away. The kick pad is a four-inch square sandwich and cymbal pads are half-circles in a C-shape. Each Softapad has two different surfaces. One is smooth plain rubber, the other is a 'printed fabric'. The pads come with rolls of double-sided sticky tape, but you only really need to use tape on cymbals and bass drum. The tape leaves no messy residue and can be re-used.

Because each pad is an exact fit... Softapads have easy-removal tags. Incidentally, Softapads will supply just about any diameter pad you need.



The C-shaped cymbal pads leave the bell exposed and you can play on the rubber or on the metal depending on where you position the pad.

The pads have two different surfaces – smooth rubber and coarse cloth, resulting in slightly different stick responses and sounds.

SMX Series

Softapads' pad material has been improved and given the name SMX...The difference is subtle but the new fabric side has a slightly more coarse finish, while the rubber body of the pad has a more absorbent, cushioned feel. The good thing about this is that there is a lot less stick-clicking noise when you play the pads. What you hear is the sound of the drum coming through but at a drastically reduced volume...Softapads allow the drum to retain some feel and you can still hear the note...The fabric surface has more bounce and stick friction, something like a coated head...

Snare Pad

It's claimed the pads reduce practice noise by up to 90 per cent... If you leave the snares tensioned in the 'On' position, you can even play a reasonable press roll. This is fine and actually makes it more fun to play.

Bass Drum

...The bass drum pad certainly cuts down the noise, which is the idea since the bass drum causes your neighbours the most grief... The damping also makes you work harder at your technique and will certainly strengthen your leg muscles.

Cymbals

The cymbal pads are C-shaped half-circles with the cymbal bell left exposed and can be positioned so that you play on the metal of the cymbal or the rubber of the pad...

...The hi-hat fitting allows you to play the hi-hat normally, yet still at mightily reduced volume.

Verdict

...Obviously noise is a problem for most drummers and if you have to put rubber discs on your toms, then Softapads are as good as it gets. They retain reasonable feel and you can still hear pitch variations in your toms.

Softapads solve your noise problem effectively – no excuse not to practise now.



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