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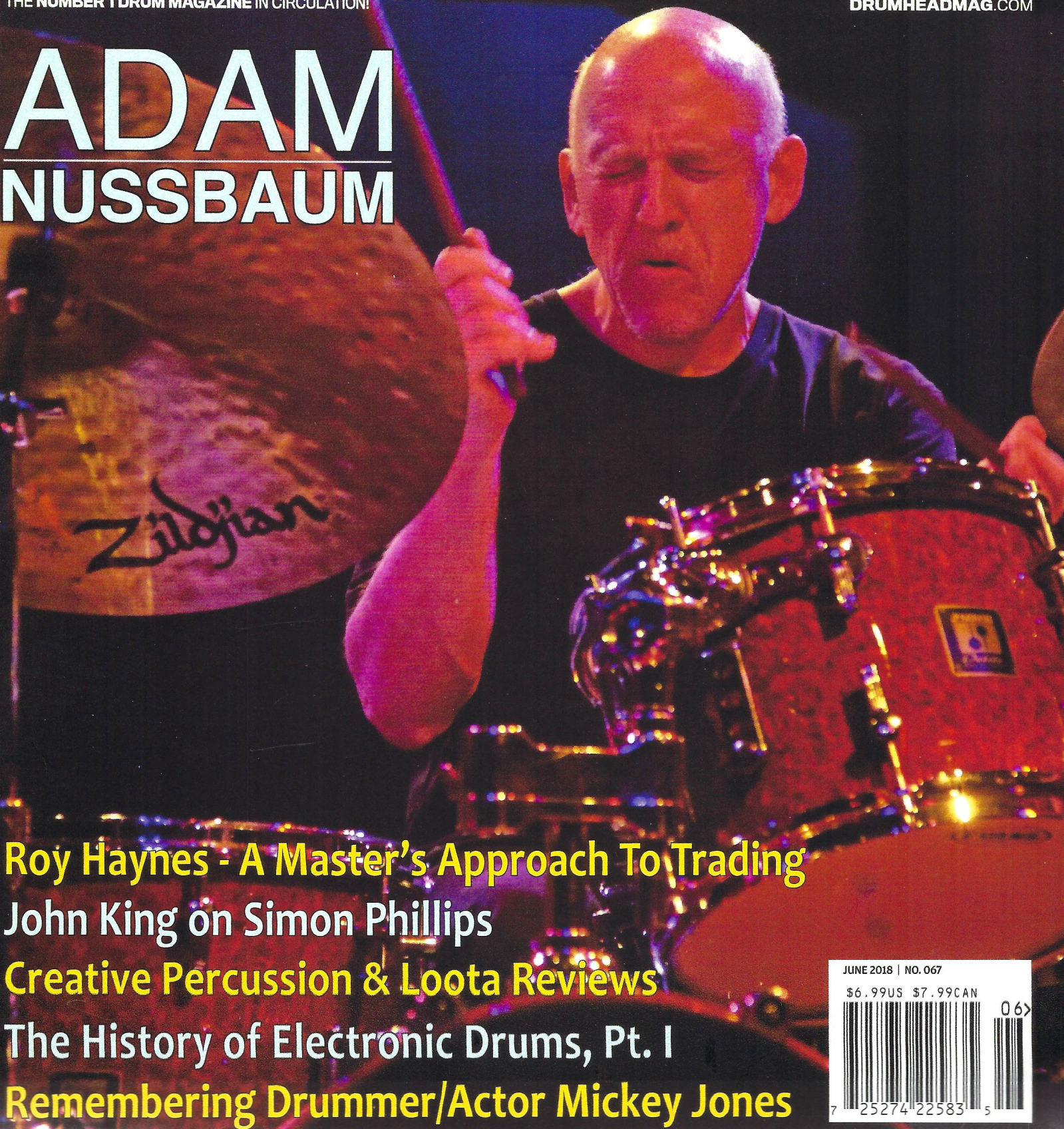
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# CREATIVE PERCUSSION

Creative Percussion's owner, operator, drummer and inventor Kevin Feeny has spent the last 30 years customizing and creating new tools for drummers to use; whether it is an actual modification to drum gear, building a new type of Twist Rod stick or his previous work at Rich Sticks and Noble and Cooley, Feeny has always been experimenting with custom percussion gear and products.

Creative Percussion's website ([www.creativepercussion.net](http://www.creativepercussion.net)) states that their mission is: "to produce high-quality, creative percussion products with no limits. We think outside the drum shell!" and one glance at their products and you can see that is true. One of the most important questions I ask myself before buying is how practical and useful a new percussion product is. I play in a variety of musical settings and want something that I can use for multiple types of gigs, musical styles and applications. Creative Percussion sent us four different types of Twist Rods, four different bass drum beaters, a groove effects jingle, a groove effects golf ball shaped shaker and a Drum Taco to review.

The Twist Rods come in four different variations: Rock, Jazz, Jazz Lite and BIGFOOT. All of the rods are made from North American birch dowels and each model has a different number of dowels and, in some cases, thickness of the dowels. The Rock, Jazz and Jazz Lite models have a heat-shrink wrap that extends past the "Rimshot Zone" and features an aluminum ring at the end of the shaft. The BIGFOOT model has the heat-shrink wrap but it doesn't extend past the "Rimshot Zone" and there isn't an aluminum ring on this model either. All of them come with an adjustable "O" ring that can slide up or down to adjust the fan of the rods.

One of the first features that jumped out at me when comparing these to other bundle sticks is that these rods actually twist up from the bottom base all the way to the top, hence the name Twist Rods. There isn't a foam center or a larger dowel in the middle holding the rods in place, just the actual dowels themselves. The heat-shrink wrap is thin enough that you can feel the twist of the rods in your hand. You can easily rotate your hands on the wrap to find a very comfortable position to grip them. In addition to being comfortable, the wrap is not too hard or slick. The only limitation I found with the softer shrink wrap is getting a defined cross-stick sound.

The Rock, Jazz and Jazz Lite all come with a rubber mallet on the butt end of the rods that can be switched out with a smaller vinyl cap that is provided as well if you prefer. The rubber mallets sounded full, warm and controlled for cymbal swells and I preferred them to some traditional mallets I have. I also used the mallet end for playing back beats on the snare and it sounded punchy and warm.



The Twist Rod Rock model is made of seven 3/16" x 16" dowels. Playing with the "O" ring higher up the rods provided nice articulation on the ride and hats. It also provided a compact but firm sound when hit in the middle of the snare drum. Playing rim shots with the Rock model sounded full and dry. Volume-wise, the Rock model was the loudest of the four models. Having the "O" ring lower down the rods provided a full spread of sound on the ride and cymbals with some nice articulation. You definitely lose some definition in your hits, but that is to be expected when you're using the rods more like brushes, fanned out. And with that being said, these worked great on the snare for playing shuffle patterns.

The Jazz model is made from nineteen 1/8" x 16" dowels. Playing these with the "O" ring higher up the rods provided tight snare hits and clear definition on the cymbals. This model also has the aluminum ring at the end of the shaft and it is great for bell work on the cymbals.



The stick definition was a little more compact and softer on the hats in comparison to the Rock model. I felt the Jazz had a bit more spread sound-wise than the Rock. I'm guessing that's due to the dowels in the Jazz model being thinner and more numerous. Rim shot volume was comparable to the Rock model as well. Having the "O" ring lower down the rods provided a slightly fuller sound compared to the Rock with a little less definition; the Jazz being a little softer and warmer in tone.



The Jazz Lite model is just how it sounds, a lighter version of the Jazz model; this model having fourteen 1/8" x 16" dowels. The Jazz Lite sounded very similar to the Jazz model (in a good way) with the "O" ring further up the rods. The main difference being how much volume you could get out of the drums with these rods. The Jazz Lite's had nice articulation and control when playing them all over the kit. If you tend to be a heavier hitter I might shy away from this model. Playing these with the "O" ring lower gave a little less spread than the Jazz but very similar volume-wise when playing the ride and hats.

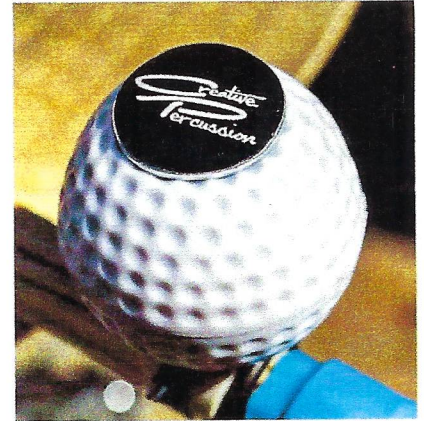


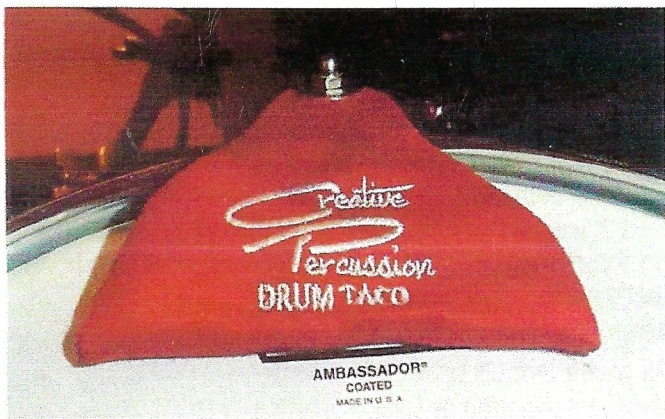
The BIGFOOT Twist Rods are made of thirty 1/8" x 16" dowels with a shorter grip and no aluminum ring at the end of the shaft. This model only comes with the nylon tip at the butt end of the rods. With a name like BIGFOOT I was expecting fat, loud and warm sounds from these rods and that's what I got! The BIGFOOTS are loud but not as loud as the Rock model; they have a very controlled sound with the "O" ring higher up. These are very lush and warm sounding and great for laying into a ride, crash or sloshy hats. The spread on the ride with the "O" ring lower was full and washy; not as much stick articulation as the Rock but you can definitely lay into these.

All of the models were comfortable to play matched or traditional grip and with the rubber mallet or the nylon tip at the butt end. It's easy to pull off the mallet and replace it with the nylon cap. It takes a little more work to put the rubber mallet back on, but once it's on it stays pretty snug. All of these rods worked well for playing on cajon as well. It will take a little adjustment to your grip depending on the model because of the thickness of the rods, but that's necessary no matter what stick you're playing. All of the models provided excellent rebound as well.

The Groove Effects Golf Ball Shaker attachment is lightweight, only 1.4 ounces, and clips onto a stick or rod. It also has a rubber strap that wraps around the stick to help keep it secure. The shaker itself has a clear, full and rich sound. I was able to fit the shaker on the Jazz model Twist Rod fairly easily, and also onto a 5A stick. If the stick or rod is too thin, the shaker will shift and rotate around the stick when you play. Volume-wise the blend with rod and shaker was very balanced; you just have to play softer with a stick to match the shaker volume. The added bonus is you get two shaker notes for every stick hit, the actual hit and on the rebound up, which provides additional depth to any groove. The rubber strap was sturdy but that would be my only concern, that it might wear out over time; with that being said, the clip is very stable and could probably hold the shaker on by itself if the fit on the stick or rod was snug enough.

The Groove Effects Jingle attachment is four tambourine jingles stacked on top of one another. The jingles also have the rubber strap for added security (just like the shaker) and can attach to sticks or rods. The jingle attachment fit well on the Jazz model Twist Rods and 5A sticks as well. That's not to say it doesn't fit well on other size sticks, a little experimenting is needed to find the combo that works for you. The jingles sounded clean, bright and articulate and would certainly be heard playing in a singer/songwriter setting with sticks or rods. It works just as well for time keeping on hats or a ride as it does for playing backbeats on a snare. Just like the shaker, you get two jingle notes for every stick hit. Using the mallet end of the rod with the jingle attached provided a really nice dark, spacey vibe on the snare.





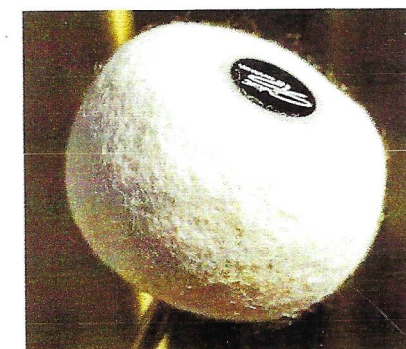
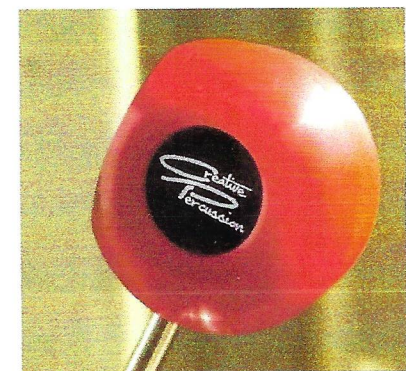
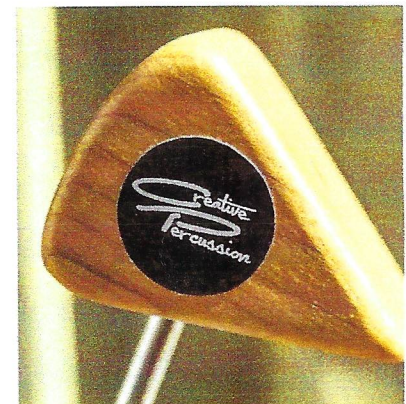
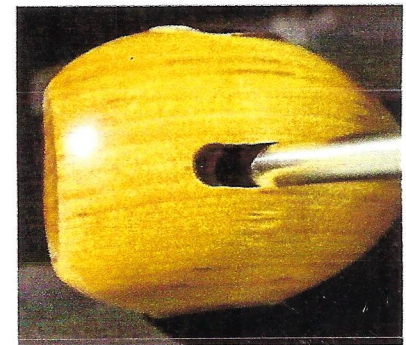
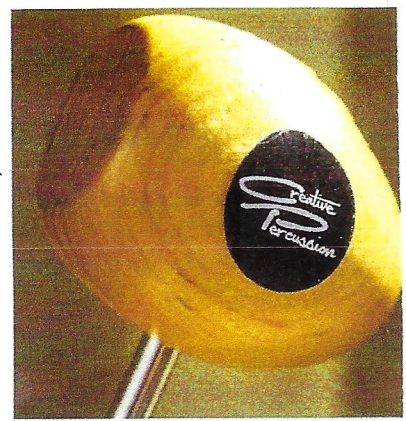
When it comes to dampening or muffling snare drums I feel the dampening object falls into two categories: too much or not enough. As with everything music-related, it is somewhat subjective what is too much or too little. I have used dots, gels, rings, tape, towels and my wallet to change the tone of my snare drum and/or reduce the overtones of the drum. Creative Percussion's Drum Taco was designed to control overtones with the wallet concept in mind. As mentioned above, I have used my wallet for dampening my snare and I have also hit my wallet off the drum and watched it go flying, receipts and all, to the floor. The Drum Taco is not only about the size of a taco, it is also taco shaped (as the name would imply). It features a Rare Earth magnet rated for 26lbs of pulling strength, which sits at the top of the Taco, and the felt pouch is filled with what feels like metal beads. The Taco comes with a figure 8 fastener; your tension rod goes into one end of the fastener while the magnet attaches to the other end of the fastener. I will confess it did take me a minute to figure out where the figure 8 fastener slides off of the magnet. The magnet is so strong that I wanted to make sure I was actually detaching the magnet from the fastener and not tearing something. I used the Taco in multiple settings on a few different snare drums. I was expecting the Drum Taco to deaden the drum far more than it did and I was quite pleased with what I heard. It dampens the tone of the drum but doesn't overly muffle it like a ring or towel would. It does dampen it more than your standard gel or dots. For my tastes, it cut out just enough of the overtones without taking away the actual tone of the snare and reduced the volume a little as well. You don't have to attach the Taco through the figure 8 fastener either; you can just place it on the drum and it is heavy enough to stay on without flying off (not like my wallet). The benefit of attaching it with the fastener is you can flip it on and off the drum; the benefit of not attaching it with the fastener is you can move it to different parts of the snare while playing, which I did during a session. I could hear how my snare changed subtly during different parts of the song depending on the placement of the Taco. The other thing I liked was it does dampen and dry out the hoop a bit, since it is touching it, and that gave me a different cross-stick sound and different rim shot sound. I moved the Taco to my floor tom and it added a cool, deadening affect to it.

The Egg Beater bass drum beater is egg shaped and made of birch with a shaft of stainless steel. You can manually rotate and adjust the angle that the beater hits the bass drum head. This is a really useful feature as I've

used the standard half felt/half hard plastic beaters for most of my playing career and would always wear out the felt unevenly. It never dawned on me that this was due to the fact that the beater wasn't actually hitting the drum flat on the head...the more you know! It's very easy to adjust the angle of the beater, and I had no problem with it staying in place while playing. The Egg Beater was a little heavier than my usual beater and the tone of it was rich and full with plenty of mid and low range. I used it on two rock gigs and an indie rock session and it worked well for both. I also experimented with the different angles of the beater and how that affected the sound; less contact on the head gave a more focused attack with less depth.

The Tomahawk Beater is shaped like a tomahawk and comes in your choice of oak, cherry, sapele, tigerwood, and African mahogany woods. The one that we were sent was made of cherry wood. The weight of the beater was lighter than the egg shape and the Tomahawk doesn't have the adjustment feature like the Egg Beater. The Tomahawk had a focused attack, warm tone and plenty of punch. I used this in both a rock and a pop setting. I felt it worked best in the pop setting; the added punch and clarity blended nicely with the other instruments during the session. It had a good attack in the rock setting but there wasn't as much weight behind it like the birch.

The Skateboard Wheel beater is made of just that, a skateboard wheel. Creative Percussion's



website says this is the heaviest beater they offer and it comes in a variety of colors. You can manually adjust the angle of this beater as well. The Skateboard Wheel is punchy like the Tomahawk but with a lot more fatness and weight behind it. I thought it was a little quieter volume-wise than the other two but I think part of that has to do with the frequency range this beater sits in and that some of the volume is being replaced with the fullness of the thump. The attack allows it to be felt and heard without overpowering any of the other instruments, making it useful for multiple genres.

The Marshmallow beater is made of 100% wool and although the beater size is big, weight-wise it feels similar to my standard beater, even a little lighter. The sound of this guy was warm and soft, but still with some articulation. The reduced volume and sound of this beater is ideal for slower, vibey tunes and ballads. The spread of the sound is a little wider and using it with a more open bass drum allows the drum to breathe and be heard more organically. The size and weight of the beater didn't affect my foot speed either; I was still able to play quick patterns with my foot.

Going back to my original question, of how practical, versatile and useful is the drum product I'm about to purchase? I can say all of the products I reviewed from Creative Percussion fit my criteria. They all offered something unique that I could use on a variety of gigs and their prices are very reasonable as well. If you're looking to add another color to your palette, definitely give Creative Percussion a look. ✨



WEBFOOT

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