

TAYE

MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

STUDIOMAPLE, STUDIOBIRCH, AND ORIGINAL SERIES SNARES

by Anthony Riscica

Taye is one of those companies that take enormous pride in the craftsmanship of their products by making everything in-house. From the shells to the drumheads themselves, not a single piece of a Taye drum is outsourced. Recently the company took that mentality of quality control and created a few new snares to add to its Studio and Original series. We were sent two 7x13s, one from the StudioBirch line and one from the StudioMaple line, and a 6¹/₂x14 birch drum from the high-end Original series. Here's the rundown.

A LITTLE EXTRA DEPTH

The two 7x13 drums come with identical hardware setups, from rims to strainer. The throw-offs are super-smooth, but they need to be dropped a full 180 degrees in order for the snares to disengage completely. This threw me off a little when I started playing the drums, because I couldn't figure out why the snare was still buzzing when I released the lever. Then I pushed the lever all the way down and—poof!—no snare sound. This isn't a big deal, but it took some getting used to.

The hardware on these drums is where the similarities end. The 7-ply StudioBirch snare has a thickness of 7 mm, while the 10-ply StudioMaple drum is 7.5 mm. Both snares cracked with plenty of R&B flavor when cranked up. The birch drum cut a little more, while the maple model had a bit more warmth to its tone. Choosing between the two would really come down to the drum's application and whether you want more volume or more richness of tone.

These models' 7" depth allows for more versatility than you would normally find in 13" snares. The drums sounded sweet when cranked up popcorn style but also had great range and produced useful sounds at a medium tension or even a bit looser. The lower tuning really brought out the character of the wood; at that tension and with the snares set more loosely, the drums gave off some of the fattest sounds I've ever heard from a 13".

AVATAR BLUE ORIGINAL

Next up was the Taye Original 6¹/₂x14 snare in striking "avatar blue." This drum was an all-around beauty, from the black nickel-plated lugs to the 10-ply premium birch shell and 4-ply North American maple sound rings (known to most as reinforcement hoops). Add to that a pair of 10-lug die-cast hoops, and you have a snare that sounds as fat as you'd ever want.

Out of the box the drum was tuned pretty loose, but I gave it a whack anyway just to see how it responded. It offered a rich thud, even with the snares at a slack tension. It wasn't my ideal sound, but I could imagine tuning the drum this way in the studio to give a song an unmistakable character. Next I tuned up the batter head to a medium-loose tension, which is where I liked it best. The drum responded wonderfully, with an ultra-round tone that would kill in most rock settings, especially on big ballads. The die-cast hoops gave off a beautiful rimclick sound, and they also helped dry up the overtones so that no dampening was necessary.

The Original birch drum was also no slouch when the head was cranked. Tuned way up, it had tons of volume and projection, while still maintaining its sensitivity for quieter strokes. The die-cast hoops again helped by controlling the sound and producing a rimshot that felt like it would blow the roof off my studio. The supreme quality of this drum does come at a much heftier price than the Studio models (\$2,335). But when you consider its details and workhorse-type versatility, the Original snare could be well worth the investment.

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FINISHED FOR IMPACT

The 7x13 StudioMaple snare (\$419) is finished in a beautiful "java burst," which has a rich coffee tone. The wrap on the 7x13 StudioBirch snare (\$359) is a brilliant turquoise sparkle. This striking finish caught the eye of everyone who saw it in my studio. Given their competitive prices, gorgeous looks, and exceptional sound quality, these very versatile 13" drums are well worth checking out.

