



TURKISH

VINTAGE SOUL CYMBALS

Review by Michael Dawson • Photos by Rob Mazzella

MODERNDRUMMER
DIGITALLY ENHANCED

Turkish is an Istanbul-based company known for crafting a variety of classic, creative, and modern cymbal sounds using secret seventeenth-century processes. With some of Turkish's more unusually named lines, including Kurak, Sehzade, and Zephyros, it can be difficult to figure out their intended application without hearing the cymbals first. The Vintage Soul models we have for review this month, however, couldn't be more appropriately branded.

THE LINEUP

The Vintage Soul series, which was designed with the help of L.A.-based journeyman drummer Chris Wabich, consists of a limited selection of hi-hats (14" and 15"), crashes (16" and 18"), and rides (20", 21", and 22"), all in a medium-thin weight with a traditional finish. Their unique lathing pattern, which features widely etched circles on top of the traditional thin markings, gives the cymbals a more distinct yet still classy appearance.

We were sent a pair of 14" hi-hats (\$585), an 18" crash (\$421.20), a 20" ride with two rivets spaced about 6" apart (\$585), and a 22" ride (\$678.60). This particular setup fell right in line with the *vin-tage* part of the cymbals' name, lending

itself perfectly to a classic bebop-style configuration with one ride on each side of the kit (sizzle ride on the left, 22" on the right) and the crash just to the right of the main ride. Once I started playing the cymbals, I discovered that these aren't cliché vintage jazz replicas. In fact, I wouldn't call them "jazz" cymbals at all, as they proved to be much more universal than any one style would suggest.

FLASHY CRASH

The 18" Vintage Soul crash was warm and rich sounding, with a very quick response. When struck on the edge, it opened up with an explosive flash of color. It also had a papery timbre that reminded me of some older cymbals from the 1970s, minus the hollowness that's kept me from loving crashes from that era. The Vintage Soul had a more glassy sheen in its long, even sustain, making it sound quite full, even for a medium-thin cymbal. This crash would work great in almost any playing situation, from bebop to funk to classic rock.

SILVERY AND SIZZLING RIDES

The 20" rivet ride and the 22" regular ride worked great as a dynamic two-cymbal team. Since they're both fairly thin, they could be crashed for big, emphatic hits,

ROCK-STEADY HI-HATS

It took only one "bark" of the 14" Vintage Soul hi-hats for me to pinpoint their familiar sound: Aretha Franklin's "Rock Steady," featuring R&B legend Bernard Purdie on drums. (This is where the *soul* part of the name comes into play.) In my opinion, there's no funkier hi-hat sound than the one on that track: crisp attack, gritty sibilance, and warm, rich tone. The Vintage Soul hi-hats had those exact qualities, plus a touch of metallic ring similar to what Radiohead drummer Phil Selway achieves in his up-close cymbal sound on his band's 2007 album, *In Rainbows*. Normally I don't like these high-pitched overtones in hi-hats, but they added an extra edge of complexity to the Vintage Souls. When played with the foot, the hats were articulate and clear.

and they both elicited a clean, woody stick attack for articulate patterns. The 22" was more silvery and smooth sounding, due to its more prominent and even sustain. And its bell sound, while rich and thick, blended more with the overall wash of the cymbal than it did on the 20".

The 20" rivet ride was more distinct, as its bell sound was stronger, its crash sound was richer, and its bow sound had more personality due to the subtle sizzle added by the rivets. This ride perfectly embodied its Vintage Soul moniker, as it sounded a lot like the cymbal that funky drummer Jabo Starks spansks during the bridge beat of the 1970 James Brown hit "Super Bad."

CONCLUSION

In an era when many cymbal companies seem to be on a never-ending quest to reproduce quirky and eclectic sounds based on the dark and trashy jazz tones of Tony, Elvin, and Art, Turkish went the other direction with its Vintage Soul line, focusing on warm, classic colors that will satisfy many drummers in a variety of musical contexts. Yes, there are shades of Philly Joe Jones' and Max Roach's cymbal sounds in these instruments. But there's just as much traditional R&B, Purdie/Jabo/Idris Muhammad flavor in there too, as well as some of the more reckless vibes of early rock forerunners like Mitch Mitchell, Keith Moon, and Ginger Baker. As stated on Turkish's website, "It is no small feat to produce a cymbal that rings in such a way as to enchant the human ear." We couldn't agree more.

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