



# Impression Cymbals

A new name in handmade Turkish cymbals Words: Nick Carter Images: Eckie

## HEADS UP IMPRESSION CYMBALS

### Prices:

- 20" Mixed series ride: £179
- 14" Mixed series hats: £192
- 16" Mixed series crash: £116
- 20" Traditional series ride: £179
- 14" Traditional series hats: £192
- 13" Traditional series hats: £179
- 18" Traditional series crash: £143
- 16" Traditional series crash: £116
- 16" Traditional china: £127
- 10" Traditional series splash: £69

### ▲ UPBEATS:

- Very well made, by hand
- Relatively affordable – certainly for such bespoke instruments
- Aesthetically superb
- 14" Mixed hats particularly stand out as great instruments

### ▼ DOWNBEATS:

- Shrill tone of 16" mixed crash
- Sonic mismatch between certain models of Traditional range

### Percussion Plus Ltd.

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**Genuine handmade Turkish cymbals.** Four words that instantly excite and intrigue anyone with a passing interest in cymbals. In days gone by, such instruments were held in very high esteem by many classic drummers from the swing, jazz and early rock and roll eras, while in more modern times many players look for cymbals resembling and recreating those classic sounds. Over the last few decades, a few notable company names have come to the fore in this area, and here before us we have a selection of cymbals from two ranges from Impression Cymbals, a new name to us at *Drummer*. These are imported and distributed by Percussion Plus – the company has launched into the drum and percussion retail market and are importing quality instruments at an affordable price. We've already reviewed their Sonix kits, so we were curious to take a look at their imported Impression cymbals.

## CONSTRUCTION

We have here two ranges of cymba from Impression: the 'Mixed' range and the 'Traditional' range. Both are made from Impression's 'secret recipe' of melted copper and tin

(the secret being what percentage of each metal is used), and are built completely by hand throughout the whole process, including hand-hammering. All of the cymbals featured here have brilliantly finished, expertly lathed undersides, all signed by the cymbalsmiths that forged them within the bell section, and each cymbal has its own unique, handwritten serial number. The brilliant finish/lathed surface continues on the topside of the Traditional series, while the Mixed series features a lathed topside, but with an unlathed band running around the bow of the cymbal, as well as the same raw, unlathed texture for the bell.

## MIXED SERIES

**20" Medium ride:** Playing on the bow of this cymbal gives a well-defined, clear note, with a long sustain and slightly 'metallic'-sounding overtone which at times overpower the patterns being

played, particularly at faster tempos, although with a little control this is easily overcome. Moving up onto the bell, what you get is a very clear, loud note with excellent projection, while crashing this ride gives a rich, dark, deep tone with a long, shimmering decay.

**14" Medium hats:** Played closed, these cymbals offer up a crisp, medium-pitched note with a very clear and precise initial note, and a hint of darker, deeper overtones, particularly when played with the shoulder of the stick. Played open you get a full, clear, medium-high-pitched bark, which if played with the shoulder of the stick offers excellent projection and volume. Pedalling the hats produces a full-sounding, crisp, slightly dark-sounding 'chick', while splashing with the foot gives a loud, dark note with long, shimmering decay. Very nice indeed!

**16" Medium crash:** This sounds very thin (physically it's so thin



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that you can actually bend it with your hand) and very hollow, with an almost shrill tone. It's more of an effect cymbal to my mind, as it produces a metallic 'clang' which makes for some good accents.

This cymbal was disappointing as a crash, though, especially when compared to the ride and hi-hats accompanying it in this range.

### TRADITIONAL SERIES

**20" Medium ride:** Riding this cymbal produces a very clear, precise, medium-pitched tone, which is very responsive to the slightest touch, accompanied by long, shimmering sustain, which although is very present and audible, never threatens to overpower the patterns being played at any volume or tempo. The bell produces a much higher-pitched note, again with plenty of sustain, but it is slightly understated; to get any kind of projection or volume, you really have to 'lay into' the bell quite hard. Crashing this cymbal gives a dark, loud, shimmering note with long decay, which sounds very appealing, with none of the 'metallic' overtones that are present with the same-sized cymbal from the Mixed series.

**14" Light hats:** Played closed, you get a very responsive, clear note. While these cymbals are very thin and lightweight they provide a very full-bodied, warm sound, which would be useful in a variety of musical settings. Open notes give a clear, bright, medium-high-pitched note, which sounds superb, while pedalled notes provide many of the same attributes: clear, precise notes which when splashed (with the foot) give a full-bodied tone with long, shimmering sustain. A highly recommended pair of hi-hats.

**13" Light hats:** These cymbals offer all of the same attributes as their 14" counterparts, but at a slightly higher pitch, making them sound funkier than their larger companions. In comparison they were slightly lacking in depth, but this is still a very nice pair of hats.

**18" Traditional crash:** When struck, this cymbal produces a

loud, deep note which, after the initial fast attack, quickly subsides into a dark, shimmering note with long sustain, which would sound perfect for many different musical settings.

**16" Medium-thin crash:** In comparison to the 18" crash, this crash sounds slightly thin; however, it isn't bad by any means. When struck it provides a clean, clear initial note with fast decay followed by a long, dark, shimmering sustain. Although it doesn't sonically match up to its larger counterpart in either tone or volume, it is still a very useful and musical instrument in its own right.

**16" Thin china:** This is a very loud, trashy, high-pitched cymbal. The initial tone quickly subsides into a dark sustain. It's slightly harsh at louder volume. I found that unless this cymbal was played with control it tended to overpower the rest of the cymbals from the range, but as a separate instrument it was useful. Although musically it's slightly limited, it's a well-made cymbal.

**10" Splash:** The remaining cymbal from the range was this very thin splash, which emits an extremely high-pitched, fast, almost trashy-sounding note with fast decay and excellent projection. The more I played it, the more I

### CONCLUSION

Overall, these are very well-made cymbals – handmade, genuine Turkish instruments that are aesthetically appealing, which makes playing them a very pleasant experience indeed. The majority of the models sound superb, especially considering their prices. In both ranges a couple of the models (particularly the 16" crashes from both ranges along with the 16" china from the Traditional series) don't seem to match up sonically to their siblings, which if you wanted to buy the full spectrum of either range may be a big downside. That said, however, if you are looking for bespoke, individual, genuine cymbals, at a good price, then these are certainly worthy of consideration.



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