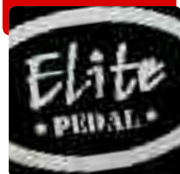


Elite Series Hardware

From £35 | Decent, affordable hardware isn't easy to find, but that's about to change, as **Jordan McLachlan** discovers.

ESSENTIALS



PRICES

Elite Series Hardware

Hi-hat stand	£40
Boom stand	£50
Straight stand	£40
Bass drum pedal	£35
Stool	£75

CONTACT

Birmingham Drum Centre

Unit 2-3
Sparkhill Trading Estate

Evelyn Road
Birmingham
B11 3JJ

Telephone
08702 404484

Email
bhamdrum@aol.com

Cheap drum hardware was long a thing of little beauty. Until fairly recently, low-rent metalwork was flimsy, poorly designed, second-rate rubbish that you would upgrade as soon as you got a chance. Today, however, there are some decent options open to drummers on a budget. With various Taiwanese manufacturing plants getting their heads around the intricacies of hi-hat and kick drum design, things have never been better if you're strapped for cash but in need of superior stands.

Birmingham Drum Centre (BDC), one of the UK's best-known drum retailers, is behind the latest addition to domestically available affordable hardware, having recently released its Elite collection. A modest assemblage (with new models in the pipeline) the Elite Series currently comprises all the important bits – including the cymbal stands, stool and bass drum pedal before us here.

Brand new

You might be wondering why anyone other than the big drum brands would bother making their own hardware. After all Pearl, Yamaha, DW, Tama et al have huge ranges of the stuff for players of their drums to add to their kits. Very true. But get over the brand snobbery and it's clear that a) a lot of this branded metalwork will emanate from just a few Far Eastern manufacturing bases – the

very same as the own brand gear, and b) 'self-branded' hardware can represent exceptional value these days.

Considering BDC's Chris Payne has the opportunity to scrutinise everything that passes through his store and gain direct feedback from customers on the strengths and weaknesses of what's currently available, he is in a good position to come up with design ideas. Which is exactly what he's done in the case of the Elite Series. According to Chris, BDC has teamed with a Taiwanese factory with no little experience in producing hardware for other high profile brands and worked with the manufacturer closely on BDC design concepts to come up with the range.

Standing firm

Each member of the Elite family is double-braced (except, of course, the bass drum pedal), but the hi-hat stand keeps its mass down a tad by being of the twin-leg persuasion. This also makes for easy positioning if you're using a double pedal – and transportation is also made easier thanks to its fully collapsible footplate arrangement. The physical nature of the set-up is tricky to describe, but it involves a sliding catch on the left-hand side of the base frame that secures with a hex bolt. When in play, the catch slides down over

one of the legs of the L-shaped footplate section, and when you're packing away it unbolts, slides up and allows the footplate to fold flat against the stand itself.

There's plenty of scope for adjustment in terms of feel where the hi-hat stand is concerned and the lower frame of the unit is chunkily cast and looks set for considerable longevity. The nature of the twin-leg design means that there's some trade-off between stability and convenience – Mark Richardson-style beltors will be better off with a third leg, but otherwise this is a good start.

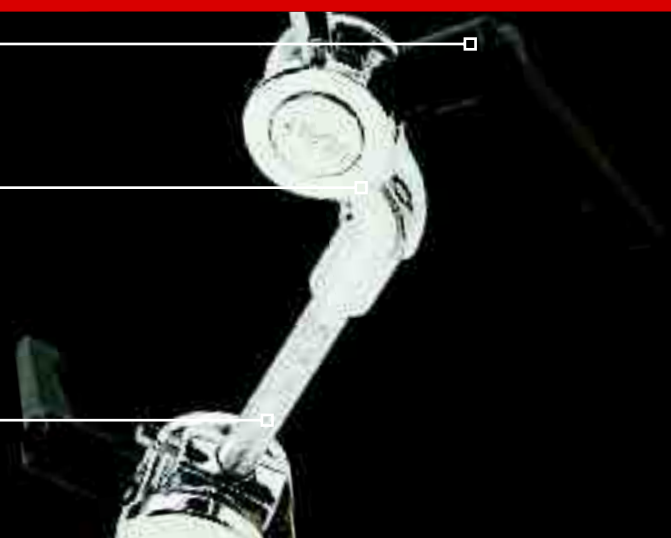
The Elite boom is mightily firm once rigged – thanks to a generously wide base – and implies that even the most heavy metal of ride cymbals won't cause it to flinch. The stand's adjustment is tailored and secured by lever-operated clamps à la DW, which are less fiddly than the usual wingnuts, if a bit more noticeable from the front few rows. The use of levers also limits the scope of movement where the boom arm is concerned – it has to be set more upright

KEY FEATURES

You can adjust the angle of the stand via a lever-operated clamp.

The Elite boom is a sturdy stand and should support the heaviest of cymbals.

The Elite Series hardware was created in association with an experienced Taiwanese manufacturer.



If you are in need of quality stands at a low price, then the Elite Series range could be the answer.



than 90°, which is a shame, although it is easy enough to work around.

The situation is much the same with the straight stand. You'll struggle to knock it over, it goes plenty high enough and uses the same lever as the boom – and the tilter doesn't adjust to point straight up, so it is always at a slight angle, just as most of us would use it anyway.

Pedal to the metal

A decent bass drum pedal for £35 seems like a great deal, and the Elite unit is just that. The baseplate is a tad thinner than on some pedals of my acquaintance, but all cost considerably more, and this doesn't seem to impact performance at all. It's a highly tweakable pedal with a business-like twin chain drive set-up and reversible felt/plastic beater and it feels great – smooth, quiet and responsive.

The fat, wide seat of the Elite stool was home while I tested the rest of the hardware here, and it proved a very

pleasant place to park. The stool top is pretty big, which might cause problems and actually be less comfortable for smaller-built drummers than a more modest-sized throne. But for the rest of us the thick, generously padded seat and solid, anchored feel of the base section leads to a feeling of security and 'planted-ness' which is very welcome. There is a choice of good colours, including blue, black and red so you can co-ordinate the stool to match your kit. Unless your drums are green. Or brown. Or purple... **R**

RHYTHM VERDICT

There is little to suggest that the Elite Series hardware will be anything but dependable, abuse-shrugging partners in percussion for years to come. Their design and performance belies their price. If your set-up requirements include a boom arm that you can set at 90°, or if you are heavy-handed where hi-hat stands are concerned, then the current Elite crop might not have something to suit, but for most players there will be something here of interest. If you don't mind stuff that doesn't bear the logo of your drum company (or other big brand), you'll get a good deal with the Elites.

+ Well priced, well made and good-looking.

- A couple of minor set-up details.

RATING

