

Remo Layne Redmond Signature Tambourines

by Rick Mattingly

Those who think of a tambourine only as a shell with jingles are missing out on a lot of the tradition of the instrument—as well as its possibilities. A true tambourine has a head and is a member of the frame drum family. In the right hands, a tambourine can produce a range of colors and effects far beyond the sound obtainable by slamming it against your thigh. Percussionists have included tambourines in their arsenal for years. But drumset players would also do well to consider them as alternative sound sources for live playing or recording—especially in this age of “unplugged” performances.

Layne Redmond specializes in tambourine performance. Viewing her video, *Ritual Drumming*, or listening to her CD, *Since The Beginning* (both available on Interworld), is a revelation even for those (like myself) who may already be familiar with orchestral tambourine techniques or the Brazilian pandeiro techniques employed by performers such as Airto. Of special interest is her ability to produce a variety of traditional hand-drum techniques with her right hand while manipulating a pair of jingles with her left hand so as to produce castanet-like clicks.

Remo is now producing a line of *Layne Redmond* signature tambourines, which includes the *Riq*, the *Lotus Tambourine*, and the *Tar-rine*. Each features an

Acousticon shell with an overlay of maple veneer stained with an aqua finish. The heads are Remo *Fiberskyn 3* models, which are great for thumb rolls. Each head has a Lotus insignia, which is one of the oldest symbols found on frame drums and



WHAT'S HOT

- all three models provide alternative sound sources for drumset players as well as percussionists
- *Tar-rine* is especially versatile and adaptable to playing styles

WHAT'S NOT

- *Riq* model is particularly heavy and can be difficult to control

represents creation and birth.

The *Riq* is based on the traditional Middle Eastern tambourine that dates back at least five hundred years. It measures $2\frac{5}{8} \times 9$ and has five double sets of brass jingles that are slightly larger than the jingles found on most tambourines. Although the *Riq* is physically the smallest of the three *Redmond* models, the brass jingles make it the heaviest. Because of its small diameter, the head is extremely taut, producing an almost bongo-like sound when played open.

Those experienced in Middle Eastern tambourine techniques will delight in the *Riq's* authenticity. The tight *Fiberskyn 3* head compares favorably with the fishskin heads used on professional *riqs* in terms of pitch and resistance to humidity. It's an excellent instrument for serious tambourinists and frame drummers, but this instrument is not recommended for the casual user.

Because of its weight, one has to have a certain amount of hand strength to manipulate it properly, and the large brass jingles can be difficult to control. List price of the *Redmond Riq* is \$67.50.

Far more “user friendly” is the *Lotus Tambourine*, which measures $2\frac{5}{8} \times 10$, has eight double sets of German silver (nickel) jingles, and is based on the design of a standard orchestral tambourine. The jingles produce the type of sound typical of orchestra models, which is somewhat drier than that found on more commercial models (like those from Rhythm Tech or Ludwig). Inside the shell is a large grip for those who wish to use the tambourine for orchestral shake rolls (or bang it against their thighs in a rock band).

The *Lotus Tambourine* responds well to a variety of styles including Middle Eastern as well as Brazilian pandeiro techniques. List price is \$105.

The *Tar-rine* is the most radical design. After seeing a 20" tar (a type of frame drum) in Turkey that had three pairs of jingles, Redmond was inspired to create a large tambourine that could be