Steigart is one of the most elaborate and thoroughly utilized setups in contemporary drumming. Mike Portnoy's kit is practically a symbol of the power and complexity of Dream Theater's music.

Clair is a kit well known for its complex sound, texture, and rhythm, one of the classic rock and roll drum sets. Lars Ulrich's new-dug signature kit is designed to bring the iconic juggernaut that is Metallica.

Art reflects Life.

And life today means change. Styles of drumming have changed rapidly, as have the drums themselves. Changing kits at a whim is not a realistic option. Using a different snare drum is.

Today more drummers than ever are availing themselves of an array of snare drums to create the right sound for the right situation.

For 2001, Tama's Signature Palette snare series offers an even wider spectrum of colors. The original Signature Palette series of Kenny Aronoff, Bill Bruford and Simon Phillips are joined by equally impressive, but very different designs inspired by Stewart Copeland, Mike Portnoy and Lars Ulrich.
Talk about influential drummers of the past twenty-five years and one name is sure to rank high on anyone’s top ten list – Stewart Copeland. Already well established as a musical force from his work in Curved Air and his Clark Kent solo outing in the mid-70s, Stewart’s notoriety skyrocketed with one of the most popular bands in all of rock and roll – the Police.

From the first snare crack of ‘Next to You,’ Stewart’s approach to World-Rhythms in rock forever altered the way people listened to music. His sound, especially his snare sound, inspired a generation of drummers. But after the last Police concert in 1983, Stewart Copeland put the drums aside and went on to a hugely successful career scoring music for films and TV and composing orchestral and operatic works. Fortunately for drum fans, Stewart’s back behind the kit... ready to blow the world away once more with his unique approach to drumming and his unrestrained musicianship.

The SC145 honors one of the most recognized drum sounds in popular music. Its brass shell puts out a sound like the bark of a live beecher. What more would you expect from a man whose playing is equally explosive.

"There's always been a need for the snare drum to cut through the racket!"

"There's always been a need for the snare drum to cut through the racket!" -- Stewart Copeland

The clarity of the drum is its most unique feature. You can do roughs and drags and other cool stuff and they all sound cleanly without getting lost as they would with a booming or rattling snare drum. The sound of the drum also complements the rest of my kit. My mutes are tuned very high to very low and have a lot of ring so the snare drum is a good contrast.

To answer the question of how the drum came about, I originally found this mystery drum a long time ago and ended up using it for everything, including the Police. I asked Tama to reproduce it, since it was of unknown provenance. What they came up with is my signature snare drum; it’s as close to the original drum I used with the Police as the metallurgists at Tama could make it.

Then there’s the question about the Egyptian hieroglyphic styled design on the drum. It’s always felt an exercise with graphics sitting..."
An explosive live player, an exciting studio musician, and respected drum educator, Kenny Aronoff stands as one of the most charismatic and in demand players of the 90s. Over the years, Kenny has refined a style of playing that has earned him the drummer's throne with artists such as John Mellencamp, Bob Seger, John Fogerty, Melissa Etheridge, Smashing Pumpkins, Les Claypool, Bob Dylan and Elton John to name but a few. Kenny is famous for his extensive “library” of modern and vintage snare drums.

“Whenever I use my 4 x 15” Super Piccolo people always seem to say, cool...what kind of drum is that?”

Most of all, he's respected for knowing which of those drums to choose and just how to use them on the vast and varied performances and recordings he is called upon to play.

My 4 x 14” Trackmaster is just a great all around snare drum. I've played it on tour with both John Fogerty and the Pumpkins and I've used it in the studio. Its sound is very characteristic of my own style—lots of crack, very aggressive, loopy attack. But because it’s drums, it's warm, too. I tend to sit a bit more when I play a backbeat and this drum is perfect for that. But I've also used it where I'm playing some sort of solo in the center and it has an incredible ring, great definition, but very warm. It works well tuned here to go above the guitar or tuned low to go beneath them. And it works well with triple flanged hoops or die-cast hoops and it sounds tremendous with the Air-Nox system.

“Whenever I use my 4 x 15” Super Piccolo people always seem to say, cool...what kind of drum is that?” It’s a very unique sounding, very special kind of drum. Great for players who want a drum with identity, but not too much that it can only be used infrequently. With the 15” diameter, you’ve got more openness and sustain than a piccolo, but you’ve got the 4” depth for control.

“With the detailed engraving, both the Trackmaster and the Super Piccolo have the appearance I always wanted for my own signature drums, the beautiful, classy look of the old vintage snare.”
When it comes to the icons of heavy music, Lars Ulrich is among the giants of the genre—a genre which he and his band created almost single-handedly. Metallica’s marriage of powerful British metal to punk’s chaotic energy produced a raw power that rock hadn’t experienced in years. And at the center of it all was the band founder, drummer Lars Ulrich.

A devout Tama player even before Tama achieved prominence, Lars was one of the very first drummers to harness the power of Tama’s legendary bell brass snare drums. That was because Tama’s bell brass snare was the only drum that could handle

“When Tama asked me about doing a signature snare drums, I had two things I wanted: they had to sound exactly like what I play, and they had to look #5% @#%$ cool—and that did it.”

Metallica’s incredible sound pressure levels. In a semi-enclosed environment like that, you have to have a drum capable of stunning skulls with a single whack.

Metallica has evolved over the years, as have Lars drumming and his drum set. But his bell brass snare remains a constant. While Tama’s current standard bell brass snare comes equipped with bell brass hoops, Lars’ LDR46SB signature model features die-cast zinc hoops and even more zinc. The latest addition to Lars’ arsenal is the LDR445 bell brass 14” x 6.5” slab of diamond plated steel precision cut to his exact specifications. This drum may be even louder and more powerful than a traditional drum head or not, the LDR465 is the right vehicle for his most musical explorations with Metallica.
It's early 1989. The masses and the recording industry have long abandoned progressive rock in their pursuit of the next big thing. Dream Theater isn't concerned — they revel in playing the music they believe in. Their first album, released that year, for progressive music disciples of any age looking for something more challenging. Dream Theater signals the return of real music. Three years later, the album IMAGES AND WORDS put Dream Theater on the map.

Since then, DT has never failed to deliver on the musical potenences. Neither has Mike Portnoy. As DT's drummer, music brought huge audiences back into the prog fold. Mike's intelligent and powerful playing proved that there was still a place for virtuoso drumming in popular music. Beyond that, Mike has made time for two equally high-charged projects, Liquid Tension Experiment and Transatlantic. In addition, Mike has won tremendous respect for his ability to communicate ideas and techniques to his fellow drummers through his three signature models visitor clinics and 12 other Modern Drummer Reader’s Poll Awards.

Yet another side of Mike's appeal comes from his sound, not content to merely generate new ideas for playing drums, he's constantly coming up with innovations for the drums themselves. One of his many ideas led to the development of the Three-Way throw-off which is now used on his new Melody Master Signature Rack Drums.

Mike Portnoy's Three-Way Tension Adjustable Snare can lock into three different positions, off, loose, and tight.

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Mike Portnoy’s Three-Way Tension Adjustable Snare can lock into three different positions, off, loose, and tight.
Perhaps one of the most distinctive, identifiable and influential players of the past three decades, Bill Bruford’s signature drum has literally become the standard round the world. Bill has played with and led some of the most adventurous musical ensembles ever assembled. Aside from being a founding member of Yes, the band he has lent his musical vision to the likes of UK, Genesis, National Health, Gong and most notably, King Crimson. As a leader, his credits include his late 70s outfit Badger, and more recently Blue, featuring Tony Levin, David Torn and Chris Bozzi. Bill’s main focus over the past years has been his acoustic jazz ventures with Earthworks as well as his work with Ralph Towner and Eddie Gomez. The Bill Bruford Signature Palette BB146 is based on the snare drum Bill uses with his Earthworks jazz ensemble and the drum he used in the most current incarnation of King Crimson. The 5 1/2" x 14" BB146 photo represents Bill’s latest concepts in expanding the scope of snare drum colors in the jazz genre.

“$need something lively when it comes to the snare... something with a wide range of sounds.”

“...As my musical focus has shifted over the past five years or so towards playing jazz, I have my preference in terms of what kind of sound I’m looking for from my drums... especially the snare drum. It used to be that when I was playing with a rock band like King Crimson, there was a much greater need for a brighter, easier kind of snare sound. The kind you got from a metal drum. But when you’re playing jazz, you want something that has a warmer, woodier, more friendly tone. For instance, a rim shot on a metal snare might be just a bit too bright for jazz... whereas this drum would do very well. It’s a drum that blends right with the weight of the kit, which is exactly what this drum does."

The other feature of these drums is that they use triple flanges. It’s easy to get the sound I like because the cymbals tend to come through because of the open sound. It’s easier to get a good open sound on these cymbals. It’s easier to get a good open sound on these cymbals, and the snare sound is very good, and it’s very nice to play on. I like the sound of these drums. They’re a little bit louder than I use a certain amount of skill, but once you’ve got it, they’re marvelous.

“...Great drum, that, my requirements are fairly normal... a simple easy to use snare throw-off, a good level of craftsmanship and a general cluttered appearance. Oh yes... and they had to be black... all over"
Simon Phillips' playing came as somewhat of a revelation back in the mid-70's. Prior to that time, no one had even approached the level of precision and control in rock music. His independence and sheer musicality Simon brought to rock music. Drawing upon jazz, big band and rock influences, Simon conjured up a style of playing that continues to stand as a benchmark for drummers around the world. At the heart of it all is his incredible sense of time. Well known in the UK and Europe for his work with artists such as Toto, Level 42, Phil Collins, and Phil Manzanera's Pink, his popularity didn't really take hold in the US until 1980.

"Something anyone could use in almost any situation"

...when he began drumming with Jeff Beck in support of the album *There and Back*. Since then, he's been on top with Beck. In 1989 Simon was called upon by the Who to serve as the drummer for their tour. He joined them as the replacement for Keith Moon. In between gigs, Simon has been the time to load and write material for his own band. Off the two snare drums in this photo, one chrome, the other maple, are Simon's current favorites for both live and studio work.

"From 1977 until 1997, I've been using mostly wood drums, usually 6 1/2" depth. But I've used a variety of snare drums and I really dug the sound. I was looking for a bit of the wood side to it...slightly warmer. I also discovered I liked the sound of a 12" shell. We tried everything, different diameters, different lugs, different finishes...but the combination of the brass 6 1/2" inch shell and the nickel plating worked in nearly every circumstance. And that's what I wanted—a signature sound. That's why the Who used it, and it's now my signature sound."

"Then I thought, if we could have two different snare drums, let's have them be very, very different, which is exactly what I want. And that's the difference between the two snare drums on a track, or maybe it's just the way they sound together. One can be tuned high or low. One can be tuned high or low, but it might still be very hard to tell the difference between them when recorded. But...one can also get both drums on a track, which is very nice."

"Then I thought, if we could have two different snare drums, let's have them be very, very different, which is exactly what I want. And that's the difference between the two snare drums on a track, or maybe it's just the way they sound together. One can be tuned high or low. One can be tuned high or low, but it might still be very hard to tell the difference between them when recorded. But..."