



Selecting the Perfect Tom Head

Many drummers place great importance on having the right “pitched” tom sound, especially those who favor multi-tom set ups and like to play melodic passes around the drums. Other drummers tend to choose indeterminate pitch—a fat, thudding tone that is more primal than melodious. Between these two extremes, there are innumerable options and variations. Your selection of the perfect tom head begins with forming an idea of the sound you’re going for and ends with articulating it. Crafting this idea involves a certain amount of homework but thankfully not in the common vein of academia. To build the framework for your desired tom sound listening to music and hearing how other drummers’ toms fit into the band sound is crucial. By comparing what your drum set sounds like with the sound of the mix and tone of another bands record you can made great strides in developing your own identity as a player. In this period of building the outline of your own desired sound it is also important to honestly evaluate how powerfully you play. If you are a heavy hitter that enjoys 2B sticks or rock-weight hickory sticks, you may enjoy the response of a single ply tom head but be better off using a more durable double ply tom head. What ever the conclusion you draw is, Evans has a tom head that will match the sound in your head and put creative control in your hands.

Batters and Bashing

Once you have arrived at a reasonably clear idea of the sound you’re pursuing, refer to the Evans Sound Spectrum chart. This chart will assist you in your choice of head in regards to response, brightness, and durability. Many times durability isn’t just a matter of head choice, but is also dependent on how you strike the drum. The best and most efficient way to strike a drum is to draw the tone out of the drum, rather than continue to apply pressure to the head. If you leave your stick on the head after each stroke, you will prematurely dent the head and choke the natural sustain of the drum, regardless of the durability of the head. This type of playing with stunt the resonance of the drum and create a dull slapping tone rather than a explosively rich tone.

Single ply tom heads are a favorite among drummers, so it should be no surprise that the Evans G1 coated and uncoated heads are so popular. The coated head on the G1 slightly mutes the higher frequencies while tightening up the stick attack component. Conversely the clear head of G1 uncoated promotes a wider frequency range and diffuses the attack. Both of these tom heads offer a tone that comes highly recommended by players the world over and in some cases could be considered the “universal tom sound”.

For an increase in response and a brighter sound in high tunings (and a ambient “sliding pitch” when tuned low), a player may consider our etched J1 heads. Ideal for acoustic jazz, the J1 delivers bright and lightning fast response when tuned high and a rootsy rhythmic groan when tuned low. Although they’re not designed for heavy hitters,

the J1 series heads allow any player who clears the head with each stick shot to enjoy a long life with these heads.

If there is any doubt about what your playing style might do to a normal drum head consider going to Evans double-ply G2s. There are many people who might think that 2-ply heads will mute the toms or greatly restrict the frequency range. These observations may be true based on *other companies'* two-ply heads, but not Evans. Remember that Evans uses a sophisticated, proprietary process for mating two plies of film when constructing their G2 heads. From the minute you take them out of the box, it is obvious that Evans' heads are more consistent in timbre and build. When tightened onto a drum, they feel lighter and, indeed, give a livelier sound than the generic variety two-ply head. For players concerned with maintaining the ring or sustain of their toms, Evans G2s are superior. They ring out clearly and make tuning easy. Furthermore, they work well from tom to tom. The clear versions afford a wetter tone, while the coated focus regular overtones slightly. When tensioning the G2s a little tighter than normal, they will sing out. Their construction allows them to even yield a pleasing rimshot from a tom.

If you are looking for the maximum in overtone muting, you should consider the Evans Hydraulic head. Like the G2 head, it consists of two layers of film. These heads do however differ in one large way. The Hydraulic heads incorporate a thin layer of oil between the two plies to serve as a muting medium. The oil *drastically* curbs high frequencies and delivers a fat, almost retro thud. Although a hydraulic head not amplified by a microphone might lack the project of a stand G2 series head, it avoids the negative effects that certain reverberant venues can have on toms.

Many drummers elect to muffle their toms mainly for the purposes of miking or reducing annoying overtones. For this reason, and to guarantee spectacular unmiked performance, Evans created the highly-acclaimed EC series. By incorporating a thin, slotted "EC ring" on the underside of the batter, unwanted overtones are selectively removed and strong fundamental pitches are promoted. The clear version, the EC 2, is unbelievably effective and provides a rich and modern, musical tom sound rife with sustain. The two plies, as always, equate to super durable heads. To increase note focus, try the Evans coated EC 2 head. Less muted in comparison to the clear EC 2s, they coated EC 2s provide the ultimate bottom end response. Both the EC 2 Clear and Coated versions can be tuned up high without choking, so if you're a multi-tom drummer, you can crank these heads to any specification to accomplish the proper effect with punctuated pitch and melody.

What's That Underneath?

When selecting bottom, or resonant, tom heads, remember that the bottom head plays a large part in the tonal character of your toms. As a rule, if you wish your tom to sustain long, employ the identical bottom and top heads. For instance a G1 coated

batter will take a G1 coated bottom head. The modes of vibration are similar and there won't be competition resulting in a unified and lengthier sound.

The most common preference of drummers is a thin head for the resonant side. Such a head provides a cleaner tone and, when tuned higher than the batter, brings out a richer palette of frequencies from the toms. This allows for a player to pass between different genres of music with great ease and have the versatility in tom sound that is required.

When selecting tom heads, constantly reference our Sound Spectrum Chart. It's a handy graphic that places our tom heads in perspective based on the criteria of attributes such as brightness, focus and attack.

Good luck in your search and remember to be patient in your tuning. You may miss your ideal tom sound without realizing it if you tune in a rush! There are many great resources on proper tuning including Bob Gatz's excellent DVD to help you along your path of musicianship.