



in gear
by Robert Cohen

keeping the beat

Good Vibrations

Improving Sound Quality with Auralex Acoustics

I recently purchased two interesting and effective products that have helped to improve the sound quality and reduce the noise level in my drum room. For some time I had been unhappy with the sound of my space. My room sounded "wet" and the vibrations from the drums were going right through the floor. Also, my home studio recordings had been lacking sonically in certain ways despite having good recording gear.

The solution to my problems came after hearing drummer Kenny Aronoff talk about Auralex Acoustics, a sound control company that produces "a full line of Studio-Foam materials that enhance room ambience and minimize sound transmission." Aside from their products, what sets them apart is their free educational Web site, which features "Acoustics 101" and "Auralex University." At www.Auralex.com, you can learn everything that you ever wanted to know about putting together a great-sounding room. After studying their Web site, I called them and described my drum room dimensions and sound problems to their representative. He recommended two products that were designed for drummers: the Max-Wall and Platfoam Hoverdeck.

The Max-Wall is an affordable, mobile, easy to

assemble, modular expandable wall system that is made of sections of interlocking absorptive acoustic foam that are mounted on sturdy lightweight stands. Basically, each section is a wall-of-sound absorption material that you can move around your room any way that you like. You can also add more sections as you need them, as they lock together seamlessly. You can even buy several Max-Walls and literally enclose your kit in a circle of absorptive acoustic foam. They can also be used to baffle guitar amps or create a portable vocal booth. Another advantage of the Max-Wall is that it is freestanding, so you won't damage your walls. You can pack it up and take it with you when you leave.

I have the Max-Wall 420, which consists of two approximately 4-foot-by-4-foot foam sections. Since positioning these around my kit, I have noticed a big difference in the clarity and definition of my drums, as well as a great reduction of overtones in the room. The Max-Walls look really cool, too. I plan to add more sections for greater control of sound transmission.

The Platfoam Hoverdeck is a system of acoustic foam planks on top of which you float a drum riser, preferably made of plywood, particle or MDF board.

Each individual plank resembles a 2-by-4, but is made of sturdy absorptive acoustic foam. The Platfoam system is designed to reduce the transmission of vibrations through the floor and improve the sound of your drums by cutting low-frequency "muddiness." One box of Platfoam consists of 24 planks, which is enough to float an 8-by-8 drum riser. I built my Hoverdeck two weeks ago and it was easy to do. I simply went to the lumberyard and bought two 4-foot-by-8-foot pieces of particle board.

I glued each of the Platfoam planks to the boards as shown in the directions. I then placed the boards side by side with the foam side down, and put an 8-by-8 rug on top. I then set my kit up on top of it and was ready to play. The whole job took me about an hour to finish, and the end result has been a tighter, controlled, warmer, more tonal drum sound.

Correction: The correct spelling of the name of last month's featured artist is Glen Velez (www.Glenvelez.com).

Also, the correct spelling of the name of his musical collaborator is Zakir Hussain. My apologies to Glen and Zakir for the typographical errors. 🎸

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