

VINTAGE GEAR

TRIXON TELSTAR (MODEL 2000) KIT

Famous German conical shelled kit in a rare finish

WORDS: GEOFF NICHOLLS PHOTOS: JAMES CUMPTSY

The American Telstar 1 communications satellite was launched on 10 July, 1962, hotly followed by The Tornados' hit instrumental 'Telstar' and Trixon's cockeyed German-made drum kit which would soon adopt the same name. It's the kit Trixon will probably always be remembered for. The conical shells were show-stoppers, though hugely wasteful of wood and plastic wrap. Ivor Arbiter, who had successfully imported Trixon, felt the company had lost the plot with Telstar. The following year Ringo Starr bought his first Ludwig from Ivor, after which Trixon's popularity in the UK plummeted.

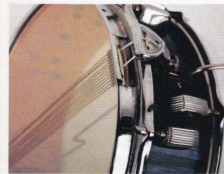
This is the second kit from Trixon collector Dave Prince, who says, "Telstars were built from 1962 'til the early '70s. This set is a rare one because it is the original style, produced in the first year (1962/63), with the teardrop lugs and big floor tom." Dave alludes to the massive 16"-deep floor tom which has a 16" batter expanding to a 20" diameter resonant side. It is actually the same shell as the bass drum, which has a 16" front end with metal hoop and 20" batter side with wood hoop. Evidently the floor tom proved too large though, as Dave reveals: "In 1964, Trixon

changed to the 16" batter, 14" resonant (still 16"-deep) floor tom." The small tom goes from 14" to 13" and is 8 1/4" deep. Adding to the kit's rarity is the Blue Stripes (T'X) finish, which Dave says was typical for UK Trixons, but rarely used on Telstars.

"I noticed the kit for sale in the UK and just had to contact the seller immediately," Dave recalls. "I had an early-1960s Beverly Blue Oyster kit and it transpired that the seller had been after one for ages as he was in a 1960s tribute band. Four hours later I am driving off with this rare kit having agreed the swap for my Beverley."

Trixon also made a conical snare with 14" batter and 13" resonant. Dave's however is a standard 14"x5" and has the later oblong lugs. "The 1963 snare, also in Blue Stripes, was bought from a seller in Scotland. The snare release was broken and I had to fit a spare one that I had stored previously. I have played the kit at many gigs with my two rock'n'roll bands, Sure-Can Rock and Serious Charge, and it always gets a second look due to the conical bass drums. I really love the full sound of the floor tom and the bass drum is perfect for those small gigs where you are at the back with not a lot of space."

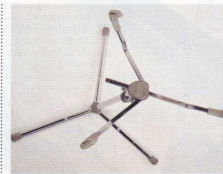
"I HAVE PLAYED THE KIT AT MANY GIGS AND IT ALWAYS GETS A SECOND LOOK DUE TO THE CONICAL BASS DRUM" OWNER, DAVE PRINCE



■ SNARE
Oblong-lug 14"x5" snare drum is missing its original Trixon clip-on parallel-action snare wires.



■ BASS DRUM SPURS
Telstar conical bass drums required elongated 12 1/4" spurs with the type 'C' ship-form mounting bracket.



■ SNARE STAND
Trixon's 'lick-black, rick-zuck' 11/071 standard snare stand has fold-out flat-based legs which require no locking nut.



■ FLOOR TOM
16" deep floor tom has a 16" batter expanding to a 20" resonant side



■ THRONE
Model 11/070 stool, was catalogued from 1950-62 and bought by Dave Prince from Germany in August 2012.



■ TOM
Small tom is 8 1/4" deep and is also conical, going from 14" to 13"

■ ORIGINAL
Teardrop lugs and huge floor tom date this kit to the first year of the Telstar's production, 1962

■ FINISH
Blue Stripes finish was typical for UK Trixons but rarely used on Telstars

■ BASS DRUM
Bass drum shell was the same as used for the floor tom, 16" front to 20" batter

Need to know



TRIXON'S
Telstar was introduced in 1962, the name inspired by the launch of the American Telstar-1 satellite that same year.

'TELSTAR'
produced by the tragic Joe Meek, featured Clem Cattini on a normally-shaped Trixon Luxa and was the first single by a UK group to reach Number One in the USA.

FREDDIE
Marsden of Gerry And The Pacemakers and "You'll Never Walk Alone" fame played a Red Croco finish Telstar. On YouTube search 'Gerry & The Pacemakers - How Do You Do It? (HQ)'

