

VINTAGE GEAR

VOX USA SPEEDFIRE KIT

A rare 1960s kit with an egg-shaped bass drum

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So, if you thought Trixon's conical Telstar drums were bonkers, how about the Speedfire with its elliptical, 'egg-shaped' bass drum? The Speedfire was built and patented from 1956, way before 1962's Telstar. This is the third from Middlesex drummer Dave Prince's Trixon collection and, aside from the loony bass drum, you'll notice the drums are badged 'Vox'. This was due to a play by Vox/Trixon's American distributors (the Thomas Organ Co.) to cash in on the popularity of the Vox brand, Vox amplifiers being synonymous with The Beatles during the mid-'60s. And in the USA the Speedfire was called the Telstar, while the Telstar was called the Vox Fanjet.

The idea behind the elliptical drum was to combine small and large diameter bass drums into one. Dave's is 26" across and 18 1/4" high at its maximum and about 13" deep. The flat bottom of the hoop can accommodate two bass pedals side-by-side.

"In 1967/68 Trixon drums were sold under the Vox brand in America and are very rare to come by," says Dave. "I'd always wanted one and searched to no avail for about six months. In despair I posted on the Vintage

Drum Forum. Three months later I got a message from a forum member saying there was one for sale in San Francisco. Another forum member in the area kindly viewed it for me - it's a bit too far to fly for a viewing! He assured me all the parts were intact and it was in very good condition, with the wrap very sparkly. I then had to pay the third party first, who collected the drums, paid the seller and packaged it off to me. Which just goes to show that with fellow vintage drum enthusiasts around the world you can overcome any obstacles. Four weeks later the drums were in the UK."

One other aspect which differs from Dave's previous two Trixon kits is the change from teardrop lugs to oblong lugs set on plastic plinths. Dave also points out that this bass drum is actually turned around and facing the 'wrong' way in order to present the Vox logo head on what is actually the bass drum's batter side. "I have played this kit at UK rock'n'roll festivals and it always creates a great deal of interest. It is an awesome kit with the full and deep sound of the bass drum and the timbre and quality of the earlier 1963 model Trixon snare drum."

"A FORUM MEMBER IN THE SAN FRANCISCO AREA KINDLY VIEWED IT FOR ME - IT'S A BIT TOO FAR TO FLY FOR A VIEWING!" OWNER DAVE PRINCE

■ LUGS  
Speedfire kit has oblong lugs set on plastic plinths

■ VOX LOGO  
The bass drum has actually been turned by 180 degrees to face the 'wrong' way in order to display the Vox logo.

Need to know  
VOX

CONFUSINGLY  
In the USA, to avoid legal problems, the Trixon Speedfire was called the Vox Telstar.

VOX  
Vox drums and amps were used by James Brown. Check the drum at this historic concert for Martin Luther King: <http://bit.ly/jwv9w2w>

LUGS  
Oblong lugs set on grey or black plastic plinths replaced the teardrop lugs from around 1963 on.

■ BASS DRUM  
The idea behind the elliptical drum was to combine small and large diameter bass drums



■ BADGE  
"Made by Trixon, West Germany". Note the TX-13 Red Sparkle finish and post-1963 oblong lugs on grey plinths.



■ STRAINER  
14"x5" snare drum has parallel action strainer and throw-off. The (early) oblong lugs are set on black plinths.



■ TRIXON & VOX DRUM KEYS  
Dave Prince also displayed this collection of six Trixon and Vox drum keys at the 2012 National Drum Fair.