

Vater Brushes/ Sticks

Vater has some dynamic solutions that can help define your groove with Monster Brushes and Splashsticks

words: Ian Croft images: Eckie

There are occasions when sticks will not provide the required volume level or dynamics and you find yourself fumbling in your stick bag for a solution - which can be messy, not to mention stressful as the other musicians wait for you to supply the required tones, all adding to the anxiety.

However, Vater has some options when it comes to handling those awkward moments, allowing you to slip back into your comfort zone without breaking into a sweat by suggesting its Monster Brush or Splashstick as alternatives to go to.

DO THE MONSTER BRUSH

When I first saw Vater's Monster Brushes my initial reaction was 'what the heck are these?' However, once I got the pairing out of their packaging and into my hands, the - what at first appeared to be super-heavy-weight brushes - turned out to be extremely lightweight and well balanced. The Monster Brush is a collaboration twixt Vater and New York's La Frae Olivia Sci and as Vater tells us 'is a versatile specialty brush that can be adjusted to provide the subtlety and swish of a brush or a stick like feel for a fat backbeat without a ton of volume'. The brush has a large diameter handle (1.5") that belies its extreme lightweight and comprises wavy polymer strands. Rubber 'O' rings allow for splay adjustment that affects the level of sound produced from the 14" overall length brushes. The polymer strands produce a highly feathery sound allowing you the opportunity to wade in without fear of being too loud. Roll the 'O'

ring way back towards the grip area and your sweeps and swishes become wispy light, creating a highly dynamic brush sound that is truly hushed! For more attack roll the 'O' ring forward which compresses the poly strands and adds additional volume. The Monsters will evoke smaller crashes to speak should you need accents that remain reasonably 'hushed'. Vater produces a Little Monster version that is smaller in diameter should you find the Monster version a tad on the fat size.

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOOD

The Monster Wood Brush features the same polymer bristles as those found in the Monster Brush though this time placed in a traditional brush arrangement with a conventional wood/stick handle that is the same as a 5A stick in diameter making switching from regular sticks to these puppies a breeze and coupled with the excellent balance, the Monster wood brushes are a joy to play with. The bristles create a funky and textured swish sound and due to the wood stick/handle produce easy backbeat accents when you need to dig in and deliver. The neat thing about the polymer bristles is they are also less likely to get all tangled up as wire brushes can tend to.

SUPER-CALI-SPLASH(TA)STICK

Splashstick - No, not Steve McClaren doing a lame Dutch imitation or the two Dutch cops from the *Harry Enfield And Chums* TV show but a genuine stick - of which, there are five models to choose from - so plenty of options. However, for this review we are going to juggle either end of the range with the Splashstick



Heavy and the Splashstick Traditional Jazz models.

The Heavy model is built like the proverbial tank and features a 16" length grouping of seven heavy-duty birch dowels of which the first 12" are heat shrink wrapped with a white plastic wrap. This buxom stick produces almost as much volume as a regular stick due to the hefty sizing though you do tend to hear the note as a slight flam as the rods have some movement. The large diameter does make them a little cumbersome and awkward though.

The Jazz Splashstick is ideal for really low volume applications and features seven thin dowels wrapped in a blue wrap around the grip area and again at mid-point down the sticks length. These are really thin rods that offer comparison for those that rarely use rods and are more accustomed to playing with a thinner traditional stick, as the diameter is so close.

Overall, the Heavy model offers a high level of robustness whilst the Jazz version delivers lightweight notes from easy to handle sticks with good balance. **■**

HEADS UP

PRICES:

Monster Wood Brush	£23.95
Little Monster Brush	£23.95
Splashstick	
Traditional Jazz	£22.49
Splashstick Heavy	£22.49

UPBEATS:

- ▲ Monsters offer super lightweight sounds
- ▲ Traditional Jazz Splashstick offers stick-like feel

DOWNBEATS:

- ▼ Heavy Splashstick is unwieldy

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