

Tone Wings

Add Some Focus to Your Drum Tone

By Jason Mehler

I wasn't quite sure what to expect when I first saw Tone Wings by Liquid Sound technologies. It's not your every-day drum product. At first glance, you might think they fell off a piece of expensive furniture. However, garnering my science education from countless seasons of *MythBusters*, I couldn't wait to experiment with a few sets of Tone Wings.

What are Tone Wings?

Tone Wings™ are solid pieces of precision engineered bell brass alloy that mount on the inside of a drum, and are used to refine and improve the sound characteristics of a drum. They are another way to chase a more pleasing drum sound by slightly modifying a drum that just won't tune properly. Add a few Tone Wings and there's a good chance you'll breathe some life into a drum.

The Science

Each brass wing is precisely tuned to the same pitch as the others. When mounted inside of a drum, the wings vibrate together at the same frequency while also slightly dampening any rogue vibrations that cause unpleasant overtones.

Installation

Tone Wings suffer from the same downside as any other internally mounted piece of hardware on a drum set. You will need to remove a drumhead, and in some cases the tension casing screws for the Tone Wing to attach. If removing tension



casings is a bridge too far, Tone Wings offers a variation using powerful rare earth magnets instead of screws. I was provided with both options for testing. The screw-on version of Tone Wings fits most drum brands, however the thickness of Tone Wings means that some tension casing screws are not quite long enough to reach through both the wing and the drum shell. In that case, it's time to head to the

hardware store.

The magnetic version of Tone Wings use a very strong internal and external magnet for mounting purposes.

My Experiment

I wanted to set up a controlled experiment to see how the Tone Wings affect the sound of the drum after installation. I chose the 12" tom from my Yamaha Beech Custom drum set as my first experiment. This drum doesn't tune as nicely as other drums and the sustain is

littered with ugly overtones. To set up the test, I mounted the tom on a stand and removed the bottom drumhead. I wanted to leave the top head in place so the drum would stay tuned to the same note throughout testing. I placed a microphone under the drum. For the test, I wasn't trying to get the perfect drum sound, I only wanted to detect if there was a change to the internal sound after installing Tone Wings. I first recorded the drum without Tone Wings installed, striking one of the drum lugs with a drumstick. Again, just trying to get more of the internal sound of the drum, not the drumhead. I then added a Tone Wing (magnetic version) between two top head lugs and recorded that. I repeated this process, recording with up to four Tone Wings. Then I slid the four magnetic tone wings to the center of the drum and then to the bottom, recording both of those positions. Next, I removed the magnetic Tone Wings and installed one screw-mounted Tone Wing on a top head lug. I recorded that and continued the process until all four wings were attached. I repeated the same process on a 14" tom, except the microphone was outside this time and I was striking the head instead of a lug.

The Results

Listening to the recordings, the most noticeable difference was on the 12" tom with four Tone Wings mounted to the lugs. After the bottom head was reinstalled and tuned, it sounded much better than it did before the Tone Wings. Tuning the drum was easier and the tone had a balanced decay that didn't create ugly overtones. This has become my favorite tom on the kit. The 14" tom showed similar results, the Tone Wings made the drum a little more solid.

In Conclusion

I chose a dead drum to test out the Tone Wings because I was skeptical. However, after they revived that drum, I wouldn't hesitate to try them on anything. They won't hurt the drum and can be removed if the result is not satisfactory.

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