

Time Capsule By Donn Bennett



Keith Moon's Gretsch "D.R.B. Special"



Keith Moon is legendary for many things, including his manic drumming style, his crazy antics, and his habit of destroying drum kits. As a result, very few of Moon's drums still exist and are considered among the rarest and most sought-after collectibles anywhere.

This drum was lucky enough to survive. It is a D.R.B. Special — Basically, a hot-rod

1970 Gretsch 14" x 5" wood shell snare drum. It's identified by the chrome DRB Special badge and "Who 1" scratched into the shell right below. Moon used the drum during The Who's 1970-'71 world tour. He can be seen playing the drum (with a cricket bat!) in the included photo.

In November 1971, a new opening band called Bell & Arc, featuring a young Alan White on drums, was added for the final leg of the tour. White and Moon became friends and Moon would regularly show up early to check out White's performances. After the tour, Moon gave White this snare. Several years later, White used the drum to record Yes' 90125 and *Big Generator* albums.

Fast-forward to the late 1990s when Alan White shows up in my shop selling Girl Scout cookies for his daughter. White had relocated to the Seattle area several years earlier but this was the first time we met. I already had a small collection of famous drums in the shop and White proceeded to tell me about the Keith Moon snare. Of course I was intrigued and wanted the drum but White assured me it was not going anywhere. Over the years I would always joke with him about "how many Girl Scout cookies will I have to buy before you'll sell me that drum?"

One day, out of the blue, he called and said he decided my shop was the best place for the drum so that it could be seen and appreciated by more people. A few minutes later he arrived with the drum and I've had it ever since.

Ironically, the drum could have easily ended up on the other side of the Atlantic. Bob Henrit, who owned Henrit's Drum Shop on Wardour Street in London during the 1970s, recalls a day when Moon showed up with a pile of snare drums in the trunk of his Bentley. Moon offered him the drums but Henrit (he now regrets) declined them. He specifically recalled the walnut-stained Gretsch with the chrome DRB Special badge.

This Keith Moon snare drum is one of the earliest acquisition's in my collection and definitely one of the highlights. I've met fans from all over the world who have visited my shop just to see this drum. The drum is a constant reminder of Keith Moon's explosive talent and extraordinary influence on generations of drummers.

Donn Bennett is a world-renowned collector and dealer of rare and vintage drums. His collection is on display at Donn Bennett Drum Studio in Bellevue, Washington.

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