



Steve Smith's Paul Jamieson Custom Radio King Snare

Long before vintage drums had come into vogue with modern drummers, the Slingerland Radio King snare drum was embraced by drummers like Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa, who needed a deep, loud, and sensitive drum that would allow them to be heard clearly over the rest of their band. This is exactly what Steve Smith needed as he prepared for Journey's 1983 *Frontiers* album and subsequent arena tour.

In the early 1980s, drum tech and custom drum builder Paul Jamieson developed this hybrid Radio King snare and it became popular with many top drummers of the time. He replaced the original Slingerland snare

system with a more modern Sonor throw-off and a Rogers butt plate. The original holes were plugged with dowels and the shell refinished in his signature honey-amber sunburst lacquer finish. The original "Stick Chopper" hoops were replaced with more durable and focused Gretsch die-cast hoops and the original metal tension rod washers were replaced with nylon. Jamieson completed the drum with a custom nameplate engraved for Steve Smith. The drum started its life in the 1940s. All that remains of the original drum is the 14" x 5" single-ply maple shell, the tension rods, and the "Streamline" lugs.

Steve Smith remembers the

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way it sounded. "It was a very deep-sounding snare. I tuned it low and hit it right in the middle with no rimshot. We made a ring of gaffer's tape around the top edge of the batter head to eliminate the high-end overtones. It was the perfect sound for the Journey records we were making at the time."

Jamieson recalls an invitation from Smith to see Journey's *Frontiers* tour when it came to the L.A. Forum. "The snare had

performed flawlessly throughout the entire recording and tour so far, but the night I show up Steve blows out the bottom head. Just my crazy karma I guess."

The drum was acquired directly from Steve Smith.

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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