

Tuning the Pearl

By Blair Brown, SFUPB © 2001

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Extract from the Side Drumming Discussion at the [Bob Dunsire Forum](#).

Here is all the luck we get with our Pearl Drum's and we get some unbelievable tone with them.

1. Don't tune the Pearl like a Premier ! Pearl has it's own sound not to be compared in tuning to that other brand

2. Play a sharp set of drum sticks. We play Eric Ward stick's. They a white maple and can make a somewhat flat drum sound good. Tom Brown sticks are also very high in pitch. Kilpatrick sticks are flat on a drum as well as Neil and any stick with drum wrapping. Kids love the drum stick with the coloured leather wrap around them. That will make for a flat sound as the stick can't vibrate.

3. If you don't have " Ambassador " bottom head you behind the 8 ball right away. If your bottom head now say's Pearl S/T or something like that .. all these numbers and letters anyway that S/T or S/P head is to thick and you'll get nothing from the top head but misery. You'll keep cranking the top head and get no tone. Get a set of Ambassador Bottom's from Pearl. The Ambassador heads are very thin .. 5 mil come to my mind. Take your time tuning the new bottom head. The more tension you get on the bottom the better sound you get. When pitching a complete new set of bottom heads turn all drums over and take the bottom snares off. Now this is important don't hit the bottom hard, it will leave dimples in the skin. Just give it a light tap, line them all up, and find the highest pitch drum. Have some of your corps listen to help you out. Once you find the highest pitched drum leave it and give all other drums 1/4 turn. After this wait a few minutes. We found out the bottom heads take a little time to season the new tension anything to soon after tension might give you a false tone while it is setting in. Now again tap the drums to find how they all came up. They should all now be higher than the first highest pitched drum that wasn't touched. If that's the case now you can give 1/4 turn to it. Let it sit a few minutes and now go through this procedure again if you need to. We put a lot of tension on the bottom heads. You don't need to destroy the head at the first games and crank it to much. We find just 1/4 turn the day of a games brightens up the pitch. New heads can get big tension for the day you need them without going to far with the drum key...

4. Tendrua top heads are now your next problem. They are to hard to play on. To much Kevlar and when you don't get tone you crank them to the point you can't play on the head. The Pearl head has a thinner Kevlar and more Mylar and believe me it's a softer and easier head to play on and you don't have to crank it much when you get the bottoms heads working for you. The key is tension on the bottom and it will brighten up the top.

Pitching the Pearl Top Head you want to try this. SFU's Snare tension is not that tight. You'll have to play around with that but we have about 1/4 inch showing on the tuning bolt.

You might be able to see that from the bottom head looking up to the top but it's not really tight. Now lower the snares with the height bolt till the snares are right off the drum, again fine the highest pitch drum and go the same routine you just did for the bottoms. When you get a close even sound now have one drummer at a time harness up the drum and start playing. Now you want to set the Bottom Snares to get a nice snare sound. You would ideally want a wee bit of a sustaining snare not rattling but not choked.

Now start to raise the top snare slowly till you fine the sound you want. It's not too far off the initial snare to head contact. Once it starts to touch the top you within a 1/4 turn or so from getting what you want. If you go too far take the snares right off again and start over.

I hope this helps. In SFU we have the luxury of big players that can play in or out with the tone pressure.

Buzz
SFUPB

So you still use the pearl heads??

We are testing new heads for Pearl. I liked the heads they gave us last year but understand they won't be marketing them even though we won the worlds with them. We do take our time playing them in and have had good results. Not many pulling out. The trick is getting the top to sound almost to where you want your choice of tone then give the bottom and huge crank and bingo... the bottom head is the tone maker

The Buzzard

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