

Double Bases Or Double Beater Pedals - Drum Hardware Discussion

First, let me state that I am not implying that double bass playing is a "must" for all drum solo artists. I'm only saying that if you do want to use double bass drum effects, that today there are two basic directions to consider. Second, I'm limiting my discussion to acoustic drums, since I believe electronics is a separate category to discuss at another time. Okay, let's discuss both acoustic bass drum options. For many years I used two bass drums and there are at least two distinct advantages with that option. To the audience, it has a distinctive visual appeal. You can use different pitches and/or different sized bass drums for unique tonal patterns. But, there are also some possible concerns about using two bass drums. They (perhaps) take up a larger area for your drum kit on stage. There is an extra bass drum to transport (which certainly may not bother everyone). The positioning of other components of the drum kit may be more difficult. Depending on your reach and the "spread" of the other components, this can impact your comfort and dexterity. The Zalmer Twin pedal was in production when I started using double bass drums. If you've never heard of it, you may want to Google that one. I tried the Zalmer Twin pedal but the secondary pedal was not smooth at all and it certainly was not responsive (quick) enough to consider for my playing purposes. Although it was a very cool concept for its day, it just wasn't my "cup of tea". I initially used an 18" bass drum and a 22" bass drum (obviously with different pitches) which opened up some pretty cool possibilities for jazzy improvisations. However, after evaluating the possibilities of using them in my hired gun work, I realized that two 22" bass drums with the same pitch was probably better. Using two bass drums meant getting my hi hat stand footboard in a comfortable and playable position. After all, I would play it more than I would the secondary bass drum pedal. I took a hi hat stand, from which I removed the legs, and then attached it to the secondary bass drum counter hoop with a Rogers brand hoop clamp. That didn't prove to be sturdy enough, so I added a second clamp to lock the stand into position solidly. That worked. So far, so good, but now there was another "gear" problem I had with my cymbals. When I first started playing double bass drums, boom cymbal stands were not around (yeah, I guess I'm really getting old now). So I also had to rig something up for the cymbals on the left side of my kit that was dependable and solid. Here's what I did. I used the Ludwig double tom mount on the second bass drum and placed two of the old shell mount style sliding cymbal holders onto the L rods. Later, I saw a picture of Ginger Baker in Cream, and guess what He was doing the same thing. I then mounted the two rack toms on a stand between my right and left bass drums. Everything on the right side of kit fell into place without special modifications. Anyway, if you look at pictures of double bass drum kits in the mid sixties, you'll see that a lot of drummers were rigging up comfortable ways to position the hi hat and other cymbals on their kits. Well let's go back to the double beater bass drum pedal. Since 1986, I've been using a double bass pedal on one bass drum. Basically, when they finally produced one that was smooth, durable, and responsive enough to suit me, I bought it! And for me that has worked out fine. The other double bass pedals I've used since 1986 have constantly improved and the ones I have today are indeed, as responsive as anyone could desire. The double beater bass drum pedals on one bass drum provide me with a comfortable set-up and the "feel" is great. Additionally, the rotating leg hi hat stands made today and highly adjustable boom cymbal stands are so well thought out that it makes my old rigs look like Frankenstein engineering. I had some other rigged up hardware too, but we'll discuss another time. So today, in my opinion, at least the factors involved in making a decision of whether you want to use double bass drums or double pedals comes down to simply your own personal preference. If you prefer the attention-getting cool look and the ability to use different pitches, then use two bass drums. All the hardware you need to get a comfortable set-up is available nowadays. If you want "less to transport" and if you like both bass drum beaters generating the exact same pitch, then use a double pedal. You'll find several drummers today, who like me, switched to double beater pedals for those reasons. Either way, I encourage those who are interested, to enjoy the creative possibilities of double bass drum figures in their performances. Also be glad that the old drummers, that were out there before you, pushed drum designers to improve double bass drum equipment. Today you have great choices! Until next time, Cheers, Ken Sanders

About the Author

Ken Sanders is using pedals and hardware from [Pearl Drums](#) and [Mapex Drums](#). Ken is also an active [Drum Forum](#) member at Drum Solo Artist where he is answering drum related questions, and helping drummers with tips and advices.

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