

# Kelly Concepts Shu Composite

## Bass drum microphone mounting system

The relationship between drummer and sound engineer is not always a smooth one, but this innovative new product from Kelly Concepts might be just the thing to rekindle the flame.



### Chris Mayes-Wright

**A**s a drummer and a sound engineer, I know what's required both on and off stage when it comes to miking a drum kit. With my sound engineer's hat on, I prefer a simple approach, with a few good mics where it matters so that the crowd gets a decent overall picture of the entire kit. When playing, I want to make sure that everything I play will be heard, whether quiet or loud, and that the mics don't get in the way of my playing. But both sides of me want a chunky bass drum sound that flexes the PA's subwoofers, drives the band along and keeps the audience on their feet.

My usual approach to miking a bass drum on stage is to use a short, heavy-bottomed boom

### Performing **Musician**

Kelly Concepts Shu  
Composite **£57**

A great accessory for gigging drummers who want a simple and effective bass drum mic mount.

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## The Kelly Shu Pro

Another, 'professional,' version of the Kelly Shu is also available. It's made of aluminium, not a composite material, and is available in different colours: anodised black or silver. There doesn't seem to be any performance benefit to the Shu Pro, although the aluminium may prove slightly more durable in the long term, and in silver I think it looks much sleeker! It costs £99.

stand propped in front of the drum, with the resonant head of the drum removed. (I try to avoid using a tripod, because there's inevitably a compromise involved in getting the legs to thread between the cymbal stands and bass drum spurs.) This approach is great in an ideal situation: set up the mic, find the sweet spot, and leave it there for the evening. But as any of you who have engineered a gig where there's even the slightest amount of 'energy' on stage will know, mic stands get kicked, bass drums — nay, entire kits — skate across the stage, and the sound is ruined, at best until the end of the song, and at worst for the entire set. (It depends how sharp your engineer is!)

So the Kelly Shu seems the perfect solution for sound-conscious drummers. It is a mic-mounting system that fits either inside or outside the bass drum, providing a mounting point that is fixed to, but acoustically decoupled from, the drum. It can't be kicked over and, if the drum moves, the mic stays in the same position relative to the shell and head.

The Shu part is a U-shaped bracket with 10 grommeted holes for attaching the flexible rubber straps. Any mic clip with a 5/8-inch thread fits on to the screw post, which can be moved forwards and backwards in relation to the bracket along a roughly three-inch long track. The manufacturers say that the Shu will work in any position, so long as the clip in use permits the mic to be aimed as desired.

### Get your Shu on

The Kelly Shu comes with eight leather straps, a three-foot-long (90cm) stretch of very elastic rubber, and 16 robust plastic clips. The user is required to fix the leather straps (if mounting inside the drum — the drum's lugs are used if attaching externally) and assemble the rubber cords; a process that is fairly fiddly but not difficult. As my Shu was to go inside the drum, my first step was to figure out where to attach the straps. I chose to fix five to the outermost ring of bolts, with the other three evenly spaced around the ring of lug bolts nearest the batter head. (This will make much more sense later.)

The stretchy cords were next: the two parts of the hook snap together and pinch the rubber so as to hold it tightly inside the fastening. The instruction manual states that »



▲ If mounting internally, you'll need some simple tools to fit the Shu: a knife to cut the rubber, a screwdriver to unscrew the lug screws and a drum key to remove the batter head.



▲ A kitchen chopping board will come in handy, too.



▲ No drilling is required to fix the Shu internally; the leather straps mount to the drum's existing lug or strut bolts.

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» the rubber should be cut to 50 percent of the desired total (taut) distance. In other words, if I required a four-inch stretch, I'd cut the rubber two inches long.

I wanted the Shu offset, as that's where I get the best sound, but because my bass drum is only 18 inches in diameter, and the Shu itself is about eight inches wide, the gap between the Shu and the edge of the drum in my optimum position varied between just three and seven inches. The longest stretches were not a problem, but the shortest cords were slightly more troublesome. Because the sleeve of the two-part clip needs to be threaded on to the cord before the hook part, and just under an inch of rubber is threaded into the pinch mechanism, the shortest distance you can cut the cord is about an inch and three quarters: good enough for three and a half inches when optimally extended.

To get around this limitation, I used the leather straps nearest the batter head (and furthest from the desired suspended position) to stretch the rubber and maintain position, and attached some of the hooks to the outer edge of the shell to pull the Shu back to where I wanted it to be. Despite these niggles, with eight straps and mounting points, I still found it quite easy to position the mic (which was

### A question of versatility

While I found the Shu fitted inside my drum well, after careful measurement of the internal dimensions, some users might want a bit more versatility. Anyone who uses different bass drums for different types of music (say, a 26-inch drum for that flabby jazz sound, and a 22-incher for the standard rock thud) will find that the supplied kit of fittings is inadequate to fit both drums.

One option might be for the manufacturers to redesign the stretches of rubber so that their lengths are adjustable, but the obvious choice is to have a spare set of straps, complete with hooks, for drums of different diameters. UK distributors Affinity Audio assure me that spare fitting kits (comprising hooks, rubber, and leather straps) are available, at a cost of about £15.

now attached) where I would normally put it. Of course, to get around this, the lengths could be looped through the leather straps and hooked on to two points of the Shu, enabling mounting in even smaller drums.

### This Shu was made for gigging

Once attached and positioned correctly, it was time for the Shu's first outing. The ultimate test was to see whether the Shu holds a mic in situ during transit; after all, you don't want to spend your valuable setting-up minutes re-attaching the Shu after it has sprung its mounts in the back of the tour bus. So I was pleased to discover that, on arrival at the venue, the Shu and mic were indeed still attached. Furthermore, the feeling of not

having to poke a small mic stand between cymbal stands was deeply satisfactory, and I didn't have to keep checking the mic.

All in all, the Shu lives up to expectations, and is a worthwhile add-on for drummers who gig regularly. I found that, after continued use, the mic clip screw became loose due to the vibrations inherent in being suspended inside a bass drum, but this could be rectified by fitting additional sprung washers, and just making sure it's tight every now and then. In most drums, installation is fairly simple, and even in my small 18-inch drum I found that I could mount the Shu exactly where I wanted it. But to cater for smaller drums, I reckon the 'Mini Shu' should be high on Kelly Concepts' product-development list. ■ **PM**



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