

Caring for your *Roosebeck* Bodhrán

If the head is a natural skin, it will react to humidity; high humidity can loosen the natural skin head. Low humidity will tighten the natural skin head. If the head is synthetic, it requires no adjustment and keeps a constant pitch. These heads don't react to temperature and humidity the way natural skins do; making them nicer for playing outside.

For natural heads, avoid extreme heat, cold, and humidity. Do not leave your bodhrán in a hot car.

Avoid placing any objects on top of your bodhrán.

Clean the bodhrán frame using a soft damp cloth or spray it with a water bottle and then lightly wipe it down.

If you have a hole in a drum head and it is not getting bigger and the drum sounds good, you may not want to tamper with a good thing. If the hole is small and you are afraid it will tear, just close it up with super or white glue; apply a little glue to both the inside and outside of the drum head around the hole to close it up. There are also some commercial patch kits available. In a pinch, strong tape will hold temporarily. These drums can also be re-headed. Natural skin heads can usually be put on drums with yellow wood glue, a hose clamp, and masking tape.

Roosebeck Bodhrán Accessories



Bodhrán Case

You probably want to get several bodhrán tippers of different sizes. Mid-East offers a variety of bodhrán tippers. Experiment with them until you find one that's comfortable. Due to the nature of the materials used to construct a bodhrán, it is recommended that you keep your bodhrán in a case when transporting or when you have it in storage. Mid-East also sells a variety of bodhrán cases which are also displayed on our website.

If you want to learn more about how to play the bodhrán, check out Mid-East's bodhrán instructional materials on our website.



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Bodhrán

Roosebeck™ FINE INSTRUMENTS

BODHRÁN



— OWNER'S GUIDE —

Roosebeck Bodhrán

About

Bodhrán (pronounced bough-rawn) is a Gaelic word that translates to “deaf” or “dull sounding.”

The bodhrán is the premier percussion instrument for traditional Celtic music. Frequently referred to as the Irish frame drum, the bodhrán enjoys a place in both Irish and Scottish folk music.



Roosebeck Bodhrán

Construction

The head of a bodhrán is usually goatskin over a circular wood frame. The head is glued and tacked to the outside of the frame, and struck with a double-headed stick called a cipín, tipper, or beater. The head of the drum can be tunable or fixed (non-tunable). Tuning can be achieved externally, by hardware hooked to a metal ring holding the head in place. The exterior hardware may make playing more cumbersome, but these drums are usually less expensive than interior tuned drums. Internal tuning is achieved by hardware inside the frame that pushes a wooden ring against the head. While more expensive, they are lighter in weight than a bodhrán with exterior hardware.

How to Play

- 1 While seated, hold the beater in your dominate hand.
- 2 Rest the drum on your opposite thigh, with the head slightly angle toward your chest.
- 3 Pull the drum frame against your chest, tucked into your armpit.
- 4 Place the palm of your non-dominate hand on the back side of the head. Varied pressure of your hand on the head, will control the tone and pitch.
- 5 Swing the end of the beater across the surface of the head, letting it contact the head once per swing.

When all the actions are combined, one hand swings the beater against the head, while the other presses the head to deafen the sound.

Tuning a Tunable Head Bodhrán

If you have a tunable bodhrán, just loosen the tension on the lugs for a lower pitch and tighten the tension on lugs for a higher pitch. While you adjust the lugs on a tunable bodhrán, tap the drum near each lug position to be certain you have the same pitch all the way around.



Tuning a Fixed Head Bodhrán

For a higher pitch, you will have to tighten the drum head. For fixed heads, you need to add heat to tighten drum head. Keep your hand on the drum head while you apply heat, if it's too hot for your hand, it's too hot for your drum. You can use a heating pad, blow dryer, or any other heat source.

For a lower pitch, you will have to loosen the drum head. To temporarily loosen the head of a fixed bodhrán, you can try a little bit of water, rubbed evenly into the head with a cloth. This is not a method we recommend you rely on repeatedly.

A little oil, head conditioner, or moisturizer will permanently loosen the skin, so be careful.

