

The WFL Victorious Drums

William Ludwig Sr. and William Ludwig Jr. are shown proudly inspecting the New Victorious Parade Drum in the September 1942 The School Musician magazine. The drum (which has U.S. painted on the side) features offset lug casings attached directly to the hoop. These are used to semi-permanently attach the head to the drum, but the tensioning is provided by a system of expanding bows inside the drum which are used in conjunction with a set of movable inner hoops. The hoops expand or compress when adjusted with the shell mounted tension rods located on the side, and in the center of the drum. There were six tension rods mounted around the side of the drum to operate the inner mechanism. This concept of tensioning, conceived of by then Ludwig employee Cecil Strupe, was not really well accepted by the general drumming public. In fact, Strupe had little success marketing this tuning system in the mid 30s under the L & S name. The main reason for WFL's success during World War II was the fact that they got the largest Armed Forces musical instrument supplier contract ever written. If not for that, the Victorious models might have been the end of WFL.

Leedy Alliance Drums

The Leedy answer to the 10% rule wasn't quite as elaborate as Slingerland's Rolling Bomber or WFL's Victorious drums. Leedy "Alliance" drums were produced with wooden hoops without collar hooks, similar to those used by Ludwig & Ludwig. Only the top heads of the tom toms were tunable, the bottom heads were tacked onto the shell. As with the Ludwig & Ludwig bass drum hoop, there was a flat rail (wooden) mounted on both the front and back hoops, for attaching cymbal stands, spurs, mounting hardware, trap trees, etc. The wooden lug casings were painted to match the shell color, which was also limited to Black or White marine pearl. The lugs on the Alliance Bass drums and marching snares looks a little like a modern Ludwig High Tension Casing, only fatter, and rougher and made of hard rock maple. Leedy was also able to produce a drum that fit the 10% restrictions, yet still use a metal strainer.