

INTERNET

A. Lange & Shne hits on timepiece's tonality through drum solo

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A. Lange & Shne Zeitwerk Minute Repeater beside violin crafted in Saxony

By SARAH JONES

Swiss watchmaker A. Lange & Shne is demonstrating the intricacies of its Zeitwerk Minute Repeater by turning to another precise craft.

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The chiming timepiece is the first mechanical watch to blend a jumping numerals display with a decimal minute repeater, creating what the brand describes as a "fine-tuned musical instrument for the wrist." To demonstrate its rhythmic qualities, A. Lange & Shne's product development director Anthony de Haas was captured engaging in his other passion: percussion.

"A. Lange & Shne is taking this approach to highlight the watch in order to tie in and leverage the heritage and craftsmanship of musical instruments from that region," said Donnie Pacheco, founder/CEO of [Donnie P. Consulting](#), Seattle. "The region has a long history of constructing quality musical instruments and they wanted to tie into that history of quality and craftsmanship.

"It is also being used to both visually and sonically explain the choice of the case material, platinum," he said. "They state that they could have used any material, but chose platinum because it has the best sound and use drums to demonstrate the variation of sounds produced by different materials; it is a way to justify the metal choice and to reinforce that they were going for quality of sound."

Mr. Pacheco is not affiliated with A. Lange & Shne, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[A. Lange & Shne](#), owned by Richemont, did not reply before press deadline.

Keeping the beat

A. Lange & Shne's Zeitwerk Minute Repeater, the brand explains, was designed with attention to its aural purity, much like the musical instruments that have been crafted in Saxony for centuries. Special care needed to be taken to the acoustics, requiring exacting measurements for placement and attachment of the gongs, in order for the chiming volume to be present but not overbearing.

Also, the gongs need to harmonize in with one another. This led to hand-tuning throughout the assembling process.

A seven-minute video opens with Mr. de Haas tapping out a rhythm on his drum set. He is then asked a series of questions about the development of the timepiece.



A. Lange & Söhne's Zeitwerk Minute Repeater

He explains that while the brand's classic 1851 would have been the more expected choice for the first minute repeater, they did not want to start with that. He also walks the viewer through the challenges of making the watch and key decisions, such as making the case in platinum.

While sitting behind the kit, he compares the metal choice to the varied materials present in the array of drums and instruments included. Like the difference between a steel and copper drum, picking gold or platinum is guided by the preference for type of sound.

When asked about the rhythm of the timepiece, Mr. de Haas makes the comparison between two different beats by using the drums in front of him. After tapping out an even, steady tick, he then contrasts with a lopsided pattern, describing the craftsmanship and adjustments that go into ensuring the sounds that come from the watch resemble the former.

Another intricacy that may go unnoticed is the care taken to ensure the hammer strikes the gong with the right amount of weight and then retracts with a spring rapidly to prevent dampening of sound.

Closing out the video, Mr. de Haas puts on his headphones and shows off his drumming skills.

Resonance and rhythm of the Zeitwerk Minute Repeater

"While this film does a solid job of tying it to the musical heritage, it does not help the consumer understand the mechanics of this watch," Mr. Pacheco said. "This video is meant to tie it to the musical heritage and explain why they created this watch and used the materials chosen instead of explaining the actual mechanics."

"They have a separate video (one on of the brand's most viewed videos) that explains the movement in much greater details and demonstrates that this video is about tying it to music and not about explaining the mechanics," he said. "It is interesting to note that in this video you do not actually see or hear the watch."

Consumers who want to hear the timepiece for themselves can do so in person at some of A. Lange & Söhne's points of sale.

Shared values

Due to their similar timekeeping properties, a number of luxury watchmakers have turned to music to highlight their craftsmanship.

For instance, Swiss watchmaker Raymond Weil showcased its expertise with a classical music-themed campaign that comprised a microsite, film and social efforts.

The campaign titled "Precision is my Inspiration" showed the brand's connection to music and the similarities between music and watchmaking. In addition to launching the microsite, the brand pushed the campaign on social media with the branded hashtag #RWinspiration ([see story](#)).

In the face of competition from tech players, most haute horology brands have continued to focus on their traditional craft.

Interest has grown for timepieces priced between \$6,000 and \$8,000 as a result of affluent consumers' expectation of value for their money, according to Digital Luxury Group's World Watch Report 2015.

Overall, the World Watch Report 2015, released just as the annual Baselworld watch and jewelry fair began on March 19, shows that interest in timepieces has grown by 10 percent between 2013 and 2014. Affluent Asians accounted for 68 percent of global growth of interest, with China, despite its economic slowdown, leading growth ([see story](#)).

For A. Lange & Shne, this type of mechanical challenge helps to differentiate it from the non-traditional watchmakers.

"I don't believe the intent of this film is to position this watch as a musical instrument," Mr. Pacheco said. "It is meant to use music to explain the material choices made and to use instruments to help explain what the watch does.

"In the video they state that this type of watch was expected of them, but they wanted to push themselves and come up with something that challenged themselves," he said. "The video is more about leveraging a heritage of craftsmanship to explain what the watch does, why they created it and why they chose the materials they did."

Final Take

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