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Brand

## Tekra Application Spotlight

### Mylar Film for Drumheads

As far back as percussion drums can be traced across ancient societies, drumheads were crafted using animal hides due to their unique acoustic properties and toughness. However, as rock and roll was taking America by storm by the late 1950s, another American-borne innovation was transforming the music industry: synthetic Mylar® PET drumheads. Compared to animal hide drumheads, polyester PET film provided superior durability, moisture and temperature resistance, and acoustic consistency. These benefits made the material widely popular among drummers, and the improved production scaling that PET film provided resulted in the material quickly becoming the industry standard. As more and more musicians adopted Mylar drumheads, manufacturers began to develop a diverse array of product constructions suitable for the music industry's ever-evolving tastes and genres.

#### The Science Behind the Sound

Experimenting with different film types, thicknesses, coatings, and layering constructions has allowed manufacturers to commercialize drumheads for niche markets with fine-tuned acoustic and physical properties. For instance, the polymer resin comprising a clear PET film produces a brighter sound with more overtones than that of a hazy film. Increasing the thickness of the film improves durability while allowing for better resonance and longer sustain. For coated drumheads that are opaque in color with added texture, a proprietary chemistry is applied to the Mylar PET base film by manufacturers to provide a warmer, fuller sound and enhance durability.



There are also single or multi-layer drumhead constructions each with distinct characteristics. Single-ply drumheads composed of one PET film layer are more sensitive to contact with longer resonance, favoring lighter playing styles in genres like jazz and soft rock. Double-ply constructions, by contrast, consist of two PET layers fused together to produce a more precise

sound and offer greater longevity, making them ideal for heavier, louder techniques found in genres like hard rock, metal, fusion, and R&B. Depending on the type of sound and durability they are looking for, drummers may choose different products for the batter head – the side that they actually strike – and the resonant head on the opposite side which responds to the vibrations.

Countless famous drummers have found their distinct sound through experimentation with various Mylar drumhead products. Jazz drumming legend Elvin Jones for instance – who played in John Coltrane's famed quartet – used single-ply coated drumheads which provided the right balance of warm tone and contact sensitivity critical to his free-flowing jazz style. While the use of single-ply drumheads would normally sacrifice some durability, Jones's finesse technique meant that he rarely needed to replace them. Conversely, on Nirvana's 1991 breakout album *Nevermind*, heavy hitter Dave Grohl used clear, single-ply drumheads with a reinforced, coated dot in the center to produce the powerful, resonant snare heard throughout the record. The coated center design was key to dampening Grohl's most punishing strikes – and was also the only type he didn't break.

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## **Mylar PET Film Solutions for Drumhead Applications**

As a longstanding Authorized Distributor of DuPont Teijin Films™, Tekra stocks a wide range of clear, hazy, and white Mylar® and Melinex® brand polyester PET films in various thicknesses for drumhead applications with the ability to convert to custom roll widths or sheet sizes. Standard stocked materials can be shipped within 24-48 hours, and we also offer flexible stocking solutions on a per customer basis. Tekra is your one-stop shop for plastic films and adhesives with a team of technical experts who can recommend the optimal PET film product for your application. Below are a handful of our popular options for drumhead applications:

Melinex 462 – clear PET stocked in 2 to 10 mil thicknesses

Mylar A – hazy PET stocked in 2 to 14 mil thicknesses

Melinex 339 – white PET stocked in 3.8, 5, and 10 mil thicknesses

Contact us for more information or assistance with your next application!