

Cajon FUNDamentals

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 Saturday, November 15, 2105 at 2pm

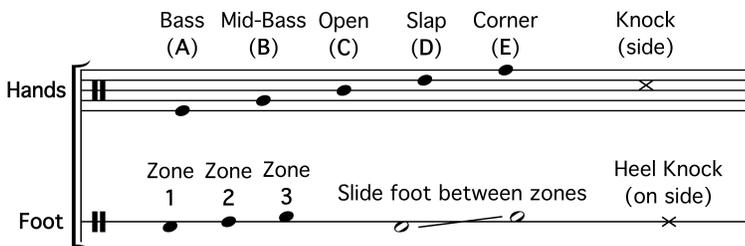
The History

The cajon is a hand percussion instrument which likely originated in Peru approximately 500 years ago. Searching for anything that might substitute for African drums, imported slaves converted readily available shipping crates into both a seat and an instrument. The cajon was eventually integrated into Spanish flamenco music, with the addition of an internal wire snare, and within the last decade or so, has become a popular “drumset in a box” used in pop, rock, and country music, Broadway shows, and contemporary percussion and chamber literature.

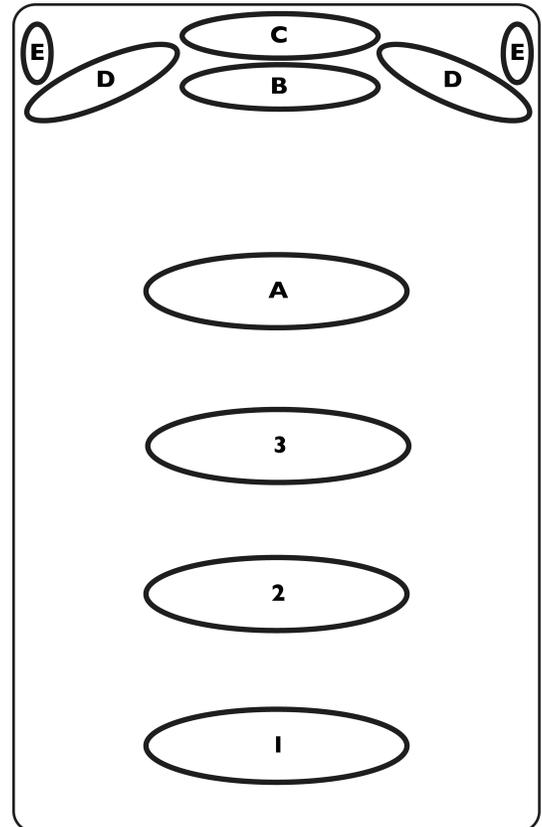
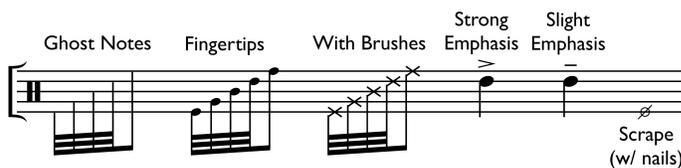
Playing Spots & Notation

The cajon is typically played with the hands, fingers, and feet, but it can also be struck with a variety of implements to create any number of different sounds. The front panel of the instrument is a thin, resonant wood and is the primary playing surface. The most common playing spots are indicated in the following illustration. Zones A through E are hand positions, each generating a slightly different sound. Zones 1 through 3 are foot positions that can be used to change the timbre of the hand sounds.

Cajon music is often improvised and not notated. In order to create performance literature for the instrument, a notation system was required. For this collection, the following notation system will be used, which corresponds to the playing spot illustration (to the right).



Additionally, several different articulation markings and notehead shapes will be utilized to specify degree of emphasis, part of the hand or fingers used, and/or the use of a brush.



Special thanks to C. Alan Publications and Meinl Percussion who were instrumental in making this clinic possible. Additional thanks to Chandler-Gilbert Community College for supporting my participation in this conference, PAS for inviting me, and to Klint McInturff for creating the guitar play-along tracks for this clinic and the book.

