

# NEW GEAR

## ROUND-UP

# CAJONS

**From £83** Ever been tempted to try a fascinating box drum but been put off by the outlay? Charlie Price has a crack at a quartet of affordable entry-level models

**T**he cajon is becoming increasingly popular in the marketplace, with drummers and percussionists of a diverse range of styles incorporating them into their set-ups to great effect. Several well-known companies now produce bewildering arrays of high-end models, and these come in addition to those produced by 'boutique', hand-crafting brands. It's this level of quality and, often, the choice of expensive exotic woods that may previously have made these instruments seem a bit of a luxury purchase. What we have here, however, is a collection of models for the discerning player on a tighter budget, which we've put through their paces - and the results are quite a revelation...



## SONOR STANDARD £95

Standing 48.5cm high, 30cm wide and 30cm deep, Sonor's model features a birchwood body and birch tapa, which for an instrument in this price range is quite astonishing. Its snare mechanism is not guitar strings, not snare wires, but vertical strips of bamboo. And how does this sound? Unbelievable. The strips are fixed mid-way down the cajon, left unhindered at the top, and fine-tuning can be made via two screws in the middle of the tapa. The sound is punchy, snappy and much drier than the other instruments here, but for me this lent it an air of classiness. Innovative and pro-quality.

Rating ★★★★★

[www.sonor.com](http://www.sonor.com)

## MEINL HEADLINER SERIES £125

Similar in design to Meinl's high-end equivalents but with a plainer look. Standing 46cm high, 30cm wide and 31cm deep, both the body and front-plate are made from Rubberwood and it comes with a rather plain matte finish, anti-slip sitting surface and four adjustable internal guitar-string 'snares'. I did detect a slightly metallic note to the tone, but this might be due to one of the 'snares' not laying flat. The overall tone was a little bland, with not enough separation between high and low tones. Nonetheless, a reasonable choice for the novice.



Rating ★★★★★

[www.meinlpercussion.com](http://www.meinlpercussion.com)

## TYCOON TK-224 £99

An exceptional instrument for the money. Tall at 50cm (29cm wide and 30cm deep) and exotic looking, with an attractive wood-grain effect 'tapa' (or front-plate). Internally, two small clusters of jingle bells combine with a set of four guitar-string 'snares' to add an additional subtle clatter to the sound. The 'snare' wires are adjustable via two Allen key screws underneath the cajon. The overall sound is truly impressive, with superb bass and snare tone separation and bucketfuls of volume if needed. Feature-packed, wicked sounds and superb value.



Rating ★★★★★

[www.tycoonpercussion.com](http://www.tycoonpercussion.com)



## LP ASPIRE SERIES £83

This beginner's model from LP is 46cm high, 30cm wide and 30.5cm deep. A solid hardwood body and a smooth plywood tapa combine to create a hugely playable model with bags of articulation. Even the subtlest finger strokes are easily translated and snare response via two adjustable Velcro strips is easily controlled. Finger strokes towards the centre of the tapa beautifully translate 'muted' rolls and rudiments, and - even though this model possesses a lively snare sound - the huge bass tones and snare crack isn't undermined.



Rating ★★★★★

[www.lpmusic.com](http://www.lpmusic.com)