

# SCHLAGWERK AGILE PRO AND X-ONE CAJONS



**From £79.99** Brand new German-made cajons from Schlagwerk should meet the needs of beginner and pro level alike

WORDS: TOM BRADLEY

**S**ince producing their first Cajon nearly 30 years ago in 1986, these German percussion makers have been at the forefront of the development and increased popularity of the instrument over the years. This month, *Rhythm* takes a look at the brand new entry-level X-One along with its pro-level sibling from the Agile range.

## Build

Taking artwork out of the equation for a moment, one could be forgiven for thinking that the two boxes are in fact identical. Both measure in at 30cm x 30cm x 50cm, feature an eight-ply birch construction and are finished in a smooth, natural satin with

surface while the Agile Pro remains a mystery, being described simply as 'cappuccino design veneer'.

The most noteworthy contrast though, lies within the internal snare set-up. The X-One employs a rudimentary snare system, using two short (11cm) 20-strand vertical snare wires secured at the top of the resonance box at a 45° angle, ensuring a tight contact against the back of the playing surface. The Agile Pro however, incorporates its own slightly more hi-tech solution. The aptly named 'Agile String Technology' features horizontal strings which can be tightened toward or loosened away from the tapa using a control at either end. A central knob is then used to adjust

**THE SNARE WIRES APPEAR TO KNOW JUST WHEN TO JUMP IN AND ASSIST A TOP-END SLAP BUT STAY DORMANT WHILST PLAYING FURTHER DOWN**

rounded top edges. Both also sport a 12cm port hole on the rear, a non-slip sitting surface and engraved Schlagwerk logos on each side.

To increase snare sensitivity, the top third of both playing surfaces have been secured with small screws while the bottom is glued in place. This also makes it possible to further adjust the tonal response by experimenting with the screw tension, although Schlagwerk recommends they stay in factory position.

So what sets the two apart, I hear you ask? Well, the obvious difference is the design of the frontplate or 'tapa'. The X-One is available in three printed designs - these are named Fingerprint (as review), Styles and Illusion. The Agile Pro is available in Cappuccino (as review) and Zebra. The Agile Pro also features a third logo positioned at the bottom right of the frontplate. Unlike the birch resonance box, the X-One uses beech for its playing

the tension of the strings and thusly, manage snare dampening.

## Hands On

With both cajons out of the box and ready to go, the X-One is the first to be put to the test. With a small thump to the centre of the playing surface, a rich bass note is produced with a satisfying length of decay. A firm slap to the edge coaxes the snare wires into action, delivering a well-balanced woody note, accompanied by a tight snare response. As a predominant kit player, the instant appeal with this cajon for me is the convincing kick and snare-type sounds that emanate from it. Helped on the most part by the unexpectedly thunderous low-end response which is barely (if at all) affected by the tiny snare wires. They appear to know just when to jump in and assist a top-end slap but stay dormant whilst playing further

## Also try...



### 1 TYCOON CRATE CAJON

**We say:** "This is a good sounding cajon which has plenty of body and feels good to perform with."



### 2 PP PP142

**We say:** "This superb value cajon fills a much-needed space in a market which is abundant with mid-price and mouthwatering high-end 'Boutique' instruments."

## X-ONE CAJON

Cajon has two 11cm-long, 20-strand vertical snare wires secured at the top of the box at a 45° angle

down. There is though, some middle ground available when playing around a quarter to a third of the way down the playing surface.

In regard to the finish, it's probably fair to say that the Fingerprint design is fairly cool but nothing to write home about. To be frank, I assumed it was some kind of animal print before realising that it was supposed to be a fingerprint. The Cappuccino finish of the Agile Pro however, is a lot easier on the eye. A luxurious design which gives the instrument a

## AGILE PRO CAJON

*Agile Pro model's snares can be tightened towards or loosened away from the playing surface*



### Essential spec

**schlagwerk** »

#### PRICES

X-One: £79.99;  
Agile Pro: £149.99

#### MATERIAL AND CONSTRUCTION

X-One: 8-ply birch resonance box, beech playing surface;  
Agile Pro: 8-ply birch resonance box, unknown playing surface

#### FINISHES AVAILABLE

X-One: Fingerprint (as review), Styles, Illusion;  
Agile Pro: Cappuccino (as review), Zebra

#### SNARE WIRES

X-One: 2 x fixed 20 strand wires; Agile Pro: 'Agile String Technology' with adjustable dampening

#### CONTACT

Headstock Distribution  
0121 508 6666  
www.schlagwerk.com  
info@schlagwerk.com

sophisticated and professional look. I would be as happy with this as a piece of furniture at home as I would be rocking it on stage.

Sonically though, don't expect it to get anywhere near the same low register as the X-One. This discernible difference in pitch leads me to believe that the mystery 'cappuccino design veneer' is in fact different from the beech playing surface of the X-One. The less boomy nature of the Agile Pro offers a more percussive quality, complemented by

the ability to completely dampen the snare wires for a traditional cajon sound. Further experimentation with the strings provides a more sensitive snare response that allows a more subtle approach to the instrument.

Considering the similarities in build and presentation, it seems tricky to justify spending so much extra money for the Agile Pro versus the cheaper X-One. The ability to change the snare sensitivity is welcomed but does it justify the extra cash? **R**

**VERDICT:** Undoubtedly, these are well crafted instruments which look and sound excellent. Both bring different qualities to the table; the Agile Pro is the looker in the family while the X-One is the best sounding.

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
PLAYABILITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING	★★★★★