

NEW GEAR

EXCLUSIVE

THE CONGAS are comfortable to play and give a lively, full response

WIDE OPEN top edges give this sturdy Turbo cajon a more voluminous slap

MEINL DESIGNER SERIES PERCUSSION

ESSENTIAL SPEC



PRICES

11" quinto £300.00
Turbo cajon £272.00
11¾" conga £315.00
Bongo Snare cajon £58.00
12½" tumba £330.00

SHELL MATERIAL

Congas: 2-ply rubberwood
Turbo cajon: red oak
Bongo Snare cajon: rubberwood

FINISHES

Congas: four loud graphic appliqué designs. Turbo cajon: matte red oak wood grain. Bongo Snare cajon: natural wood matte finish

SUPPLIED HEADS

(on congas)
'Tru Skin' natural buffalo head.

CONTACT

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From £58 True to form Meinl has introduced some innovative and truly cost-effective additions to its percussive catalogue. Charlie Price digs in...

What we have in this month's hand percussion round-up is more additions to an ever-broader selection of instruments from German giants Meinl. This popular manufacturer certainly doesn't rest on its laurels and produces more ground-breaking designs and innovations than possibly any other percussion company. Its painstaking attention to detail and broad perspective are reminiscent of other flagship German companies like drum kit icons Sonor - or even BMW for that matter.

Build

Firstly, let's take a peek at Meinl's updated and 'graphic' version of their popular Classic Series congas. These instruments have an attention grabbing aesthetic and are actually much lighter than they look but still beautifully solid and inspiring to play. The black counter-hoops are a little on the slim size but these more traditional dimensions enable the heads to sit well for comfortable playing. Meinl chose to send us a set of standard diameter drums which comprises an 11" quinto, 11¾" conga and 12½" tumba which all stand proud at a cool 30" tall. Wooden stave constructed shells are surprisingly lightweight but full in their dimensions and, with the included black Steely 2 stands, offer pretty good overall value. The inclusion of Meinl's protective Conga Savers means that those crazy finishes will stay looking good for longer too.



Meinl's new Turbo cajon is an interesting development on the standard cajon design and, although similar in most ways to existing models, it features wide open top edges that add a much more voluminous slap than that possible on standard cajon designs.

Interestingly, both the body and frontplate (or Tapa) are constructed from the same material. Red oak is used giving the cajon an attractive deep grain matte finish that oozes quality. The Turbo has a set of internal fixed snare wires that lay down the rear of the frontplate and the degree of sizzle is non-adjustable - which may or may not be a good thing depending on your musical style.

The new Bongo Snare cajon is a thoroughly welcome addition to any percussionist's arsenal. It is effectively an extremely affordable, lightweight bongo-sized cajon made from Meinl's sustainable rubberwood. It contains two different sized sound chambers which both house non-adjustable internal

snare wires laying against the rear of the soundplate. The natural matte finish of the body of the instrument contrasts well with the ebony black soundplate and with no tuning required, not to mention its tough construction and highly durable, continuous playing surface, it's going to prove popular.

Hands on

The congas are comfortable to play for extended sessions and even when played sitting on the floor give a lively, full and voluminous response. They're light enough that you don't have any concerns when tilting them forwards but are reassuringly solid in feel. Tones have a slight mid-range bias but when tuned well they give impressive results.

The Turbo cajon is sturdy even when played resting on just the rear rubber feet, and the integrated padded seat seems to be even thicker than normal. The Turbo is one loud and super-snappy cajon. The sizzle can be



MEINL OPTS FOR
a 'Tales Of The Unexpected'
-inspired dancing girls design

BLACK STEELY 2
stands come as part of
the package

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quite overwhelming, which you may not like, so compare it with one of Meinl's many other Cajons before you make your mind up.

The Bongo cajon is the revelation here. The inherent problem with most weighty bongo sets is that they're tough on the legs when playing them for extended periods between your knees. This new lightweight Meinl invention affords hours of painless but hugely rewarding playing possibilities! The bottom is contoured so that you can rest them on a table top or lap without fear of them slipping. The tapa is also comfy for long jam sessions.

Verdict

Meinl has succeeded in producing a variety of top quality and superb sounding instruments that are fun to play and, in the case of the wonderful Bongo cajon, highly affordable too. Despite my reservations about the 'dancing girls' graphic on the congas, everyone else who saw them actually quite liked it. The

Turbo cajon is not cheap but with this level of craftsmanship, innovative top edges and all housed in luscious red oak, it actually offers great value. **ii**

Rating ★★★★★

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