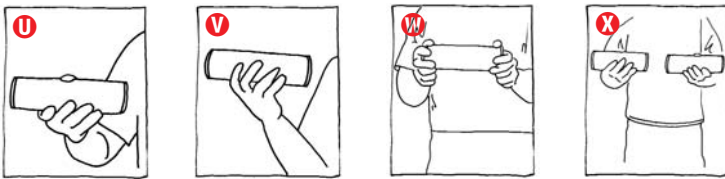


Track 3: Shakers, Maracas, Cabasa & Clavés

Shakers, Maracas and Cabasas are representative of a large family of percussion instruments generally known as "rattles". These instruments are among the oldest and most common of all percussion and appear in many cultures around the world. And, while their basic designs and construction materials may differ, their earthy, groove-enhancing sound and relatively simple performance techniques have made them all an important part of the modern percussionist's bag of tricks.

The Shaker

Related to Brazilian Ganzas, which are bean-filled metal cans or tubes of different diameters and lengths, modern Shakers come in a wide variety of sizes, plastic and metal cylinder materials and fills; from bird-seed and buckshot to beans and beads. Due to the abundance of types currently available, most percussionists carry an assortment of Shakers and select the model with a sound that is most appropriate for the mood and texture of each song.



Shakers are held in the palm of the right or left hand, from underneath, and played by moving the hand in a smooth back (U) and forth (V) motion. For accents or emphasis a sharper wrist movement is used. Shakers can be added to many live and recorded performances and are also characteristically played using both hands individually (W) or in pairs (X)—in unison or an alternating, hand-to-hand motion—depending on the situation.

The Maracas

Originally, Maracas were simply sacks made from animal skins or hollowed out gourds filled with beans, attached to wooden handles and used for indigenous musical styles throughout Cuba, the Caribbean and North, Central and South America. Today, modern materials are used both to replicate the original sounds and increase the durability and consistency of the instruments.

In the authentic method of Maraca playing, one maraca is held by its handle in each hand using an overhand grip. Rhythms are played by alternating strokes; as though tapping on a snare drum. In contemporary pop and rock situations, however, two maracas are often held in one hand and they are played together using a back-and-forth, shaker-style technique (Y). For increased volume and easier performance, Rhythm Tech's "Gemini" Maracas combine two maracas on one handle (Z).

Shaker and Maraca Exercises For Live and Studio Applications

Examples 1-4 can be played with shakers (in one or two hands) or maracas, using alternating (hand-to-hand) or unison strokes, as well as on the Cabasa, using even back and forth wrist movements. For accents or emphasis use shorter, more forceful motions. Practice at a variety of tempos and dynamics. Cabasa Exercise 1 is a characteristic pattern that incorporates long and short sounds. The "+" symbols indicate a short stroke while the "o" symbols indicate a long stroke. Articulate the rhythm with a series long-short-short-short back and forth motions by the right hand. Maracas Exercise 1 is a more traditional Afro-Cuban Rumba pattern. Cabasa Exercise 1 is a characteristic pattern that incorporates long and short sounds. The "+" symbols indicate a short stroke while the "o" symbols indicate a long stroke. Articulate the rhythm with a series long-short-short-short back and forth motions by the right hand. Maraca Exercise 1 is a more traditional Afro-Cuban Rumba pattern.

Shaker / Maraca Exercises 1 -4



Performance Note: Accessory percussion instruments can be used to enhance the sound, texture and feel of contemporary music in many ways. They can be played individually to add intensity or in combination with one another to produce a multi-layered effect. They can be used sparsely to create a rhythmic hook, in specific sections to help establish the form of a song or in a consistent, repeated pattern throughout an entire track. The key to determining which instruments will be used and when lies in experimenting, keeping an open mind and using your ears to discover what's right for the music you're playing. Among professional percussionists the standard rule of thumb is "When in doubt, leave it out".

For additional content and further information, go online at: www.rhythmttech.com

Cabasa Exercise 1

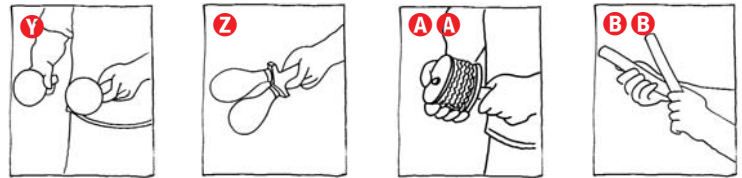


Maraca Exercise 1



The Cabasa

A cross between an African Shekeré, a Cuban Afuché, a Brazilian Reco-Reco and the hi-hat on a drumset, the Cabasa is a modern, hybrid instrument. The traditional African and Cuban instruments were hollowed out gourds that were covered by a netting made of beads or shells. As the gourd was rotated back and forth by one hand the other hand controlled the pressure of the beads against the outside of the gourd; creating the characteristic scratching sound (AA).



A somewhat similar sound is also produced by scraping a stick across the ridges of the Reco-Reco from Brazil or Guiro from Cuba. The modern Cabasa duplicates these sounds by replacing the gourd or ribbed tube with a textured aluminum cylinder and the beads with several rows of metal ball-bearings strung together. This creates a brighter, more consistent and easier to play instrument.

For the basic Cabasa playing technique, the handle is held in the right hand with the left hand cradling the beads/sound cylinder. The rhythms are played by rotating the right hand quickly back and forth while the left hand applies pressure to the beads. Short and long strokes create short and long sounds.

The Clavés

Clavé, which means "key" in Spanish, refers to both the traditional two measure pattern that creates the underlying rhythmic pulse for many authentic Cuban and Brazilian forms as well as the instrument that plays it. However, the clavé rhythm can be found in a variety of non-traditional situations and forms, too, for example in the famous rock 'n' roll pattern known as the "Bo Diddley". Rhythm Tech currently offers a wide selection of clavés and blocks in conventional wood and synthetic versions. These instruments are often used to simulate and double the sound of a snare drum cross stick and for other percussive effects.

For right handed players, one clavé is cradled loosely in the left hand so that it can resonate while the other, which is held tightly in the right hand, strikes the first (BB). In addition to playing the traditional Clavé pattern in both ethnic and contemporary situations, simple back beats played on the clavés are often effective in many styles; especially slow-tempo compositions and ballads.

Clavé Exercises For Live and Studio Applications

The traditional two measure clavé patterns shown below provide the basic rhythmic pulse for many authentic Cuban and Brazilian styles and can also be used in a variety of non-traditional situations.

Clavé Exercises 1 -3

