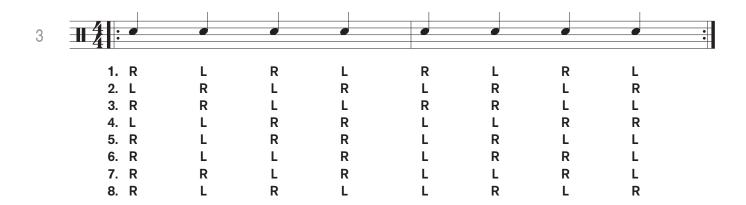
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#### **Control Exercise**

The following warm-up patterns are considered by most drummers to be great exercises for gaining control of the hands. Play them slowly enough so that as you watch your hands, your mind can process where and how you're striking the drum. Try to avoid developing any bad habits by playing fast and sloppy. The speed will come later! I suggest you practice the following patterns daily for two weeks in the following order:

- 1. Both hands on the high tones
- 2. Both hands on the low tones
- 3. Right hand on the high tone, left hand on the low tone
- 4. Left hand on the high tone, right hand on the low tone



### **■** The Money Beat

Now, let's get practical!

Believe it or not, you are now ready to play your first groove on the cajón. And, it happens to be one of the most common found in popular music. This beat, often called the "money beat," can be heard on songs such as "Billy Jean," "Back in Black," "Benny and the Jets," "Eye of the Tiger," etc.

### Two Hands, Two Tones

Let's play the two tones together.

Place your left hand in front of the low tone and the right hand over the high tone. Notice that the lower note on the staff represents the low tone, and the higher note represents the high tone. Play the following pattern starting at a tempo of approximately  $\rfloor$  = 60 bpm. Gradually increase the tempo as you get comfortable with the tones.



Now, reverse your hand position, and play the same groove.



## Two Essential Singer/Songwriter Grooves

Beyond the "money beat" and its variations, the following grooves are also commonly used in a singer/songwriter setting and fall under the funk/R&B and rock genres as well.

### The "Ah And"

Because there isn't a specific title for this groove, I made one up: the "ah and." It's a must-know groove, so it's worth spending some time explaining it.

The name comes from the rhythm played on the bass drum or, in our case, the low tone. The last sixteenth note of a beat is on the "ah." The low tone will play the "ah" of beat 2, followed by the "and" of beat 3. The high tone will again be played on beats 2 and 4.

Play the following sixteenth-note exercise with accents to fully understand where the low tone fits within the groove. Let's approach this groove the same way we did the previous accent exercise. First, play the accent pattern (starting with the right hand) on the high tones.

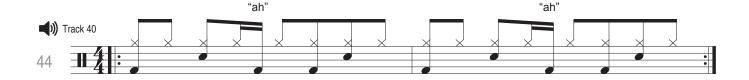


Now play the bass tones where notated.



Knowing where the low tone falls in relation to the other sixteenth notes will help you play the groove correctly once the ghost notes have been eliminated.

Play the following exercises using the right-hand brush to play the hi-hat pattern, while the left hand plays both the low and high tones. Notice how the "ah" falls in between the two brush notes. Practice the exercise extremely slow at first, and focus on when the hands play together and independently. The eighth-note brush rhythm should remain consistent even when the bass tone is placed on the "ah" of 2. After you can play the groove consistently, go back and add a metronome at a slow tempo of around J = 60 bpm. Only when comfortable at J = 60 bpm should you begin to increase the tempo (J = 89 to 95 bpm tends to be a common tempo for this groove). Work your way up from J = 60 bpm in increments of 2 to 3 bpm.



### The Cajón Pedal

After you've spent time with the instrument and learned all the patterns and grooves discussed in this book using the hands, a cajón pedal can be a nice addition to your acoustic rig. Certain grooves such as four on the floor and the train beat can really use an extra limb on the low tone to free up the hands. However, I have yet to find a pedal that gets the same volume and low-tone quality I get when I use my hands. I've even tried playing some grooves with the hand and some with the pedal in the middle of a set. The low tone changed so drastically between the two that it did not appear effective or ideal. However, this may change as new accessory products continue to be introduced into the marketplace. In my opinion, the best pedal made at this point is the DG De Gregorio Cajón Pedal Remote.



DG De Gregorio Cajón Pedal Remote

### **More Texture Options**

Up until this point you've spent quite a bit of time playing the grooves with a brush in the right hand. As a result, the development of this coordination has prepared you to be able to expand your sound options. One option would be to change your brush grip from traditional to matched grip so while your left hand plays the low/high tone, the right hand can move to a different surface.

Other surface ideas include:

- 1. A hi-hat can add a nice sound to your cajón setup. Try playing it with a brush or rod!
- 2. Having a small cymbal you can ride on or crash can be a nice addition as well.
- 3. To the right is a photo of a hubcap to which I added jingles and then placed on a snare stand. Playing the cajón with a brush or rod can offer a nice texture change to highlight a new section of a song.



Hubcap with Jingles

In the photo on the right, I turned a bass cajón on its side and added a Cuban cajón. I used the same techniques described in this book but moved the left hand to the bass cajón and kept the right hand on the Cuban. Notice the hi-hat and the tambourine pedal on the left side. No harm in adding as many texture options as possible.



Bass Cajón with Cuban Cajón

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