

NEW GEAR

EXCLUSIVE

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

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

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



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

BLACK STEELY 2
stands come as part of
the package

These instruments have an attention-grabbing aesthetic and are actually much lighter than they look but still beautifully solid and inspiring to play...

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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surface and lip to stop your
toys from rolling off



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simulating the sound of a
cascading waterfall

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tool

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