

Cajon Essentials

PART 4 BY BYRON MARK



Paradiddle #1
RLRR LRLl

Have you tried to play paradiddle patterns on your Cajon?

Originally played with sticks, consisting of a combination of single and double strokes, the **paradiddle** is also extremely useful when applied to the Cajon. **Paradiddle rudiments** have been used for centuries amongst drummers around the world; including colonial parades and ancient Fife and Drum Corps in American military field music. This has since been translated to modern drum-kit playing today. But why stop there?

BACK TO BASICS:

The first paradiddle we are often taught is R L R R L R L L, with an accent every 4 strokes. If you play the basic rock beat on your Cajon with this paradiddle pattern, the groove has a slightly different swing, and sounds more musical, than if you were to play it all as single strokes: R L R L R L R L.

SO WHY USE PARADDIDDLES ON THE CAJON? Many people play their Cajon using only single strokes, however if you just stick to singles, you are limiting your development and creative options.

- Paradiddles open up so many more *dynamic and rhythmic opportunities*, creating *syncopation* and a unique funkiness to your groove.
- They provide a foundation to our rhythm library; like scales do for a pitched instrument. Just like a pianist would practice their scales everyday, a percussionist must practice their paradiddles!
- They are great to use as a launch pad for a *fill idea*.
- Once familiar with a particular paradiddle, you can play a *faster, cleaner groove* with doubles amongst your striking pattern.
- My favourite reason: You can easily move the double-stroke tones around on the Cajon and *create a totally different groove*.
For example, replace the *double Left snare tones* at the end of the groove below with a *double Bass tone*, and you have a *completely new groove!*

OR

SOME OF MY FAVOURITE PARADDIDDLES (and accent structures) FOR CAJON:

90% of all the grooves and fills I play on Cajon use paradiddles. Whether its funk, flamenco or Latin rhythms, I am using doubles everywhere in my playing. To me it is the most natural way to play a Cajon, allowing you to be ultra-expressive and unique within your grooves. In fact, for some Latin grooves especially, doubles are critical to playing the rhythm correctly.

Some paradiddle patterns I love to play are:

In a straight feel:

- R R L R L R L L
- R L R R L L R L
- R L L R L L R L (*Spanish Rumba groove*)

In a triplet feel:

- R L R R L R L L L L
- R L R L R R L R L L (Great variation to learn how to accent the *2nd* note of a double!)

Have fun experimenting with these, and many more paradiddle patterns on your Cajon. Remember, paradiddles to drummers are like what scales are to other instruments! Happy practicing!

YOUTUBE Performance Links: "Paradiddle vs Single Stroke on the Cajon"

Stay tuned for the next edition of PERCUSscene where we'll be looking at more performance tips and summing up this series on Cajon Essentials!

Have any comments or suggestions? Please share them with me at byron@learncajon.com. Want to learn more about modern Pop & Rock Cajon playing? You can download a free video and PDF notation on '4-to-the-floor Grooves' at www.learncajon.com/learn

Byron Mark has been performing, recording and teaching percussion for 10 years. With a Bachelor of Music, Masters of Teaching, and undergoing intensive study regimes in Spain and Africa, he has an energetic performance style that has paved the way for many tours using his unique percussion station.