

Professional Concert Castanets

A Guide to Playing Black Swamp Handle Castanets

Your Black Swamp® Professional Concert Castanets are made with Rosewood or Ebony castanets. The hardwood handles have a unique design that make BSP castanets the most versatile available. Here's just a few things that our exclusive design allows you to do:

- Play the castanets in the air or on your knee
- Adjust the elastic tension in seconds with the thumb knob
- Adjust the tension while you play
- Play combination redoble roll/articulated rhythms with ease

Holding the castanets

Play the castanets individually and determine which castanets are low pitched (*macho*, male) and which are high pitched (*hembra*, female). Traditionally, most accents and strong beats are played with the *macho* castanets, which are placed in the left hand. We suggest you place the *macho* pair in your strong hand, or the hand that leads most often.

You can play the castanets with the knob facing up or down. With the knob up, you can play rhythms in the air or on you knee. With the knob facing down and the tension carefully adjusted, you can play mixtures of *redoble* rolls (see below) and rhythms.

Adjusting the Castanet Action

Our new handle design allows you ultimate control over the tone and action of the castanets. **Do not turn the adjustment knob excessively! The TOTAL adjustment range is about 1/2 turn.** For more tension, turn the knob clockwise. For less tension, turn the knob counterclockwise and gently pull the castanets away from the handle to loosen the elastic. If the knob begins to turn loosely in the handle, remove the black plug and tighten the nylon locking nut with a pair of needle nose pliers. If in time you need to replace the nut, you can obtain a size 10-32 nylon nut at any hardware store.

Playing a redoble

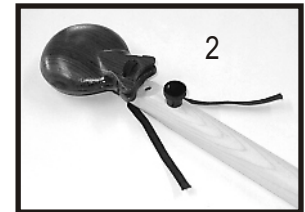
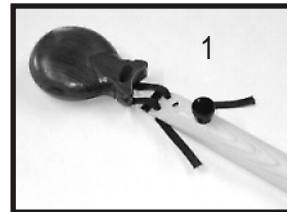
A *redoble* is a long, clattering castanet roll found in flamenco music. This effect is possible by turning the castanets so that the black knob is facing down, or toward your knee. Play rapid single strokes with one pair against your knee. You should hear two strikes, one strong and the other weak. The first strike is from hitting your knee, and the weaker strike is from the rebound. Practice each hand individually, then play a rapid, single-stroke, alternating roll to mesh the two sounds together. With a little practice, you should be able to produce a dense, clattering *redoble*.

Single strokes can also be played on your knee with the knob facing down. Keep the bottom castanets close to your knee to avoid the rebound stroke, and experiment to find the correct tension. When tensioned properly, you should be able to play a mix of rolls and articulated rhythms with ease.

For increased rhythmic accuracy, place the tips of your index fingers on top of the castanets while playing. Putting your fingertips approximately one inch up from the base of the castanet will increase control, and make executing rhythms easier and clearer.

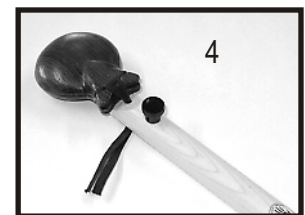
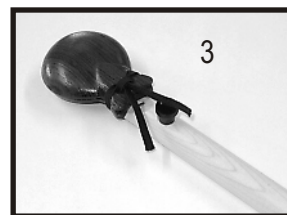
Replacing the Elastic

If you use your castanets often and find the response sluggish or adjustments are no longer effective, you may have to replace the elastic. You can buy 1/4" wide elastic from any fabric store. Remove the black plug from the handle and carefully note how the elastic is attached to the threaded stud.



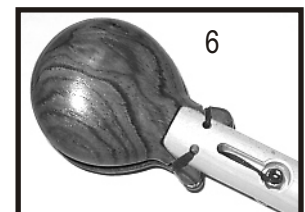
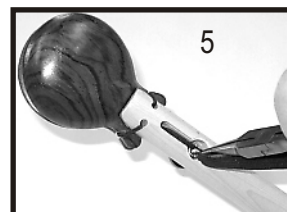
1) Thread the elastic through the castanet pair as shown.

2) Thread each end through one of the smaller holes in the handle, taking care that the castanets will aim the correct direction when tightened.



3) Bring each end up its respective side of the handle and loop under the elastic in the direction of the knob.

4) Thread both ends down through the large hole in the handle and pull the entire system taut, making sure that the elastic rides in the notches on the sides of the castanets.



5) Once the elastic is completely threaded, stretch the ends of the elastic slightly and insert both pieces into the cut that is in the threaded stud with needle nose pliers. You may need to *very gently* open up the cut 1/16" with a small screwdriver. Once the elastic is between the two legs, *gently* squeeze the legs together to hold the elastic. Cut off the excess elastic, tighten the knob, and check the action. You may also need to slightly tighten the nylon locking nut at this time. Once you are satisfied with the action, replace the black plug.

Mounting frame also available for machine style playing. Ask for Model CMF.