

## DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED TECHNIQUES

### Afûché (Cabasa)

The “cradle twist” is a common performance technique where one hand cradles the instrument with a cupped hand position and the other hand sharply twists the handle to produce semi-staccato rhythms.

The “palm strokes” are produced by first executing a continuous, rhythmically-even shaking of the instrument (e.g., sixteenth-notes), moving the instrument forward and backward (away from and toward the body). Sound is produced by the beaded loops shaking against the aluminum serrations of the cylinder (it may be useful to carefully stretch each loop, independently, with a medium-thin triangle beater – this will increase the volume of the rhythmic shaking). As the instrument is rhythmically shaken, accents are produced by striking into the palm – forward for accents on the numbered counts and “and” counts, and backward (repositioning the palm) for accents on counts “e” and “ah.”

### Shekere

While the instrument can be played in many ways, the approach here is to hold or cradle the gourd with the neck to the player’s left (right-hand player), generally positioned in a sideways manner, with the right hand playing the lower body (bass tones). Without gripping the neck tightly, the left hand holds under the neck with the thumb on one side (toward player) and the fingers on the other (away from player). Often the instrument is managed in a very light handling, almost in a floating manner (the left thumb may not always come into contact with the instrument). While the palms can play “into” the side (left hand) or bottom (right hand) of the gourd, it is the fingers which often cradle and gently pulse the instrument back and forth – sometimes with light pushing, or light tossing, or heavier firmly-delineated pulsation.

The basic motion is a back-and-forth, rocking motion between the left and right hands. Some refer to this activity as a “pouring” motion – pouring water out of the gourd to the left, and the reverse, pouring inward to the right. The neck and bottom of the gourd may be moved in arched motions where the stopping (or arrival) points are approached with a basic vertical motion (a heavy tone production), or the motions may define a path which is more horizontal and lighter in sound. The term “bass” refers to the low tone emitted by the gourd when struck (usually in the right hand) with the palm at the bottom (center) of the gourd. The palm is utilized in both left- and right-hand technique to emphasize weighted and accented notes. Weighted notes have a definite rhythmic bite in the pulse, while un-weighted notes serve as sonic “fill” for the time groove.

“Swirls” describe a sound and a technique where there is a quick up-and-down motion of both hands, throwing the beads upward (and slightly in a circular path, typically moving toward the player over the top of the instrument) to create a somewhat slurred articulation within a rhythmic pattern.

While there are various types of roll techniques, the method here requires one hand to remain stationary or fixed while the fingers of the opposite hand rapidly shake the other end of the instrument to-and-fro. Either hand may activate the roll, while the opposite hand holds the instrument as a pivot point.

### Triangle

Either hand-held or mounted on a stand, the triangle typically is played with one hand (beater) while the opposite hand opens and closes (muffles) the instrument, lightly wrapping the fingers around the triangle near the top.

### Pandeiro

The pattern notated is that of playing a *partido alto* samba with thumb (open tone near edge) and slap strokes (semi-dead strokes closer to center), and attaining a “fill-in” jingle sound after the slap sound. This jingle sound is executed by leaving the slap hand on the head while simultaneously moving the entire instrument up-and-down (in rhythmic time) in a short, crisp gesture. The rolls are executed by rubbing the tip of the middle finger, positioned in a perpendicular angle to the head (along the edge/circumference), skidding along the surface, and releasing the roll by falling into the heel of the playing hand.

### Caxixi

The basket shakers are played here by either moving both hands (in parallel) outward and inward in a constant pulsation, or the hands move in opposite directions similar to that of pedaling a bicycle. With either technique, weighted notes (or accents) are executed by directing the “fill” pellets into the gourd surface (bottom), alternating with a light time-keeping sound (technique) by directing the pellets into the sides of the baskets. The rhythms are achieved by rotating the hands and wrists back-and-forth, in a palms-out/palms-in fashion).