



The Ka-Hon Ensemble



STUDY GUIDE



RHYTHMIX CULTURAL WORKS



Dear Teachers and Educators,

Rhythmix is excited to have you and your students join us for **PAL - Performance, Art & Learning**. PAL assemblies are designed to foster awareness of world cultures, stimulate a sense of pride in students' cultural heritage and deepen connections to their communities.

PAL assemblies also serve as a catalyst for arts learning and a springboard for integrating arts education into your classroom.

To help your students gain the most out of each PAL assembly, we suggest that the learning begin before, and continue after, every performance. Utilizing the resources provided, your students can engage more fully with the performance experience, connecting what they see and hear to their personal lives, culture, community and any school subjects you choose.

Aligning with the **California Arts Standards**, the accompanying study guides and slide sets help foster students' artistic competencies, cultivate their appreciation and understanding of the arts, and support them to fully engage in lifelong arts learning.

At Rhythmix, we believe exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience, helping us to learn about ourselves, each other, and the world.

Thank you for joining us on this journey,

Your "PALs" at Rhythmix



The Ka-Hon Ensemble

World Rhythms on a Wooden Box

Discover an explosive array of rhythms from around the world that can be played with a simple wooden box (cajón). Immerse yourself in the music as Ka-Hon shares rhythms, songs and dance from Peru, Mexico, Colombia, Spain, Jamaica and Venezuela in this highly interactive and engaging performance.



The *Ka-Hon* musicians invite you to join them on a musical journey and to think about the ways you can learn about other people and countries through music and the arts.

The Name of the Group is Ka-Hon!

Omar Ledezma Jr. was born and raised in Caracas, Venezuela, and has been playing professionally since the age of 17. After graduating from law school in Caracas, Omar packed a bag and a drum and moved to Boston to follow his dreams and study at Berklee College of Music.

Today Omar is a GRAMMY® Award-Winning singer and percussionist who performs and teaches throughout the Bay Area. Omar created The Ka-Hon Ensemble for the San Francisco Symphony's Adventures in Music program.



Javier Cabanillas has come a long way since his early days performing in pop-up flea markets in the streets of Tijuana.

Performing and teaching throughout the Bay Area, Javier is a composer, percussionist, band leader and GRAMMY® Award-Winning artist.

In addition to performing with Ka-Hon, Javier leads his own band, the CABANIJAZZ PROJECT.

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Born in Peru, **Braulio Barrera** started playing Peruvian folkloric music at age 5 on the cajón, claves, cowbell, congas and bongos. Once mastering the streets of Peru, he moved to L.A. to play in the Salsa scene.

Braulio currently lives in the Bay Area, playing percussion and singing with many different bands including Pacific Mambo Orchestra, Montuno Swing, and his own salsa band, Somos el Son. Braulio is also a GRAMMY® Award-Winning artist.



Born in Lima, Peru, **Pedro Rosales** discovered his passion for the cajón at the age of fourteen, taking classes at the Museo de Arte de Lima. In the Bay Area, Pedro is celebrated for his fierce, energetic cajón playing, and is well-known as a collaborator, sharing his knowledge and curiosity with musicians immersed in a variety of Afro-Latin traditions.

Pedro co-founded the groups Malambo Kombo and De Rompe y Raja Cultural Association, and formed his own band, Proyecto Lando.

José Roberto Hernández is a multi-instrumentalist, singer, composer, musical educator and ethnomusicologist. Born in the city of Cardenas, Tabasco, Mexico, he now lives in Oakland.

José is known for his innovative use of traditional instruments in combination with contemporary music. José is always learning about other cultures, investigating customs and traditions in dance and music.



What is a Ka-Hon (cajón)?

The *cajón* (literally "big box" in Spanish) is a wooden box instrument from Peru. First documented in the late 1800s, the *cajón* is used to play Afro-Peruvian music.

The first *cajones* were made of shipping crates used as percussion instruments by the enslaved Africans living in coastal Peru.

Musicians improved and developed the *cajón* into the 20th Century, and in the 1970s, the *cajón* was taken to Spain and adapted to play flamenco music. Now the *cajón* is used all over the world to play all kinds of music!

What kind of music can you make with a box?



*For more history of the *cajón*, share this video with your class (preview it first)

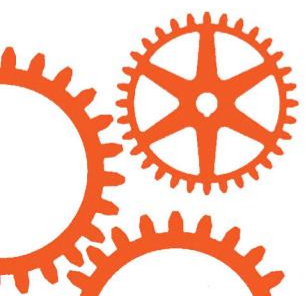
["Rhythm in a box: The story of the cajon drum - Paul Jennings"](#)



Where will we travel in today's show?

Today we will hear music from Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico and Spain.

Can you find all of these countries on a map?





What can we learn about each other through music?

Instruments



In Venezuela, they have a special percussion instrument: *La Maraca*. The maraca is an indigenous instrument made from a dried gourd filled with seeds. You may see the maraca played in many countries throughout the Caribbean.

The most famous maraca player in Venezuela is Ernesto Laya. Watch Ernesto play some amazing maraca rhythms. Click the image on the right to play video (15:50 - 21:34)



[Make a maraca with your class and play along with the video!](#)





Celebrations

In Venezuela, there are also many special celebrations. Ka-Hon will play a *sangueo* for *San Juan Bautista* which is celebrated on the summer solstice (June 24th and 25th). In this celebration, people sing, dance and play music in honor of the saint, San Juan Bautista. The dancers wave colorful flags while people dance with the San Juan Bautista figure through the streets and around the town. Dancing continues well into the evening.

Listen to these beautiful *sangueo* and watch the celebrations in the videos below. ***Can you see the colorful flags? Can you find the small figure of San Juan Bautista? Can you hear the maracas?***

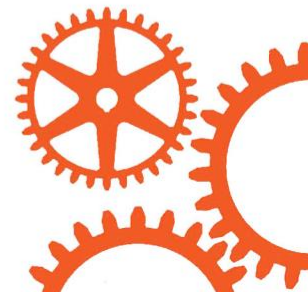
Sangueo de San Juan Bautista



In La Victoria (0:34 - 2:15)



Grupo Vera (18:00 - 19:35)



Combining Rhythms – Combining Cultures

In the song *Cumbia Ehui*, Ka-Hon will show you how combining rhythms from different parts of the world can create something new, unique and beautiful.

Click on each image below to listen to the rhythms.
Try to follow along with the beats!



Güira (instrument & rhythm pattern found throughout the Caribbean)



Dancehall Reggae (Jamaica)



Cumbia (Dance, music and rhythm from Colombia)

Can you imagine what all 3 rhythms might sound like together?



Making Music with your Feet

In Peru, there is a very special tradition of making music with your feet. It is called *zapateo*. Watch Peruvian *zapateo* masters, Huevito and Lalo Izquierdo [in this video](#) and see what *zapateo* is all about.

Can you think of any other types of dance where the performers make music with their feet?

Zapateo Challenge!

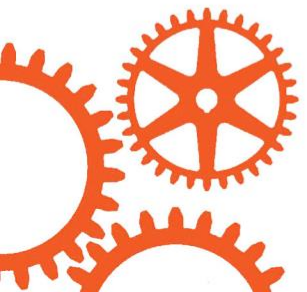
How many ways can you make music with your feet?
Find a partner and find out!

Person 1: Make a fun rhythm using only your feet.

Person 2: Try to copy the rhythm from Person 1. Then create a new pattern for Person 1 to try.

Continue as many times as you like.

Here are some tips: Start simple. You can create more complex patterns as you go. Partners can even take turns performing their creations for the class! Can the whole class perform a pattern together?





¡Gracias! Thank You!

Thank you for joining Rhythmix Cultural Works and The Ka-Hon Ensemble!

We hope you enjoy exploring all of the musical journeys that are right around you, and we look forward to seeing you next time!



Ka-Hon (from left to right): Pedro Rosales, Javier Cabanillas, Braulio Barrera, Omar Ledezma Jr., and Jose Roberto Hernandez.

The Ka-Hon Ensemble was conceived of by Omar Ledezma Jr. This show was developed by Ka-Hon in conjunction with the San Francisco Symphony's Education Department for the SF Symphony's Adventures in Music Program.

This study guide was developed by the Ka-Hon Ensemble with additional editing, activities and design by Rhythmix Cultural Works, ©2021





About Rhythmix Cultural Works

Rhythmix Cultural Works brings people of all ages together to experience and explore music, dance, visual art and educational opportunities. The organization seeks to build community by inspiring engagement in the arts as a way to learn about each other and the world. With a strong commitment to provide programming relevant to the local population, Rhythmix strives to promote cultural awareness, encourage participation in the arts, and support local artists in the presentation of their work.

Since Rhythmix opened its doors in 2007, the community-based arts facility has built its reputation through the artistic excellence and cultural depth of its programming. To date, more than 150,000 people have engaged in arts experiences, attending high-quality performances of world music, dance, theater, exhibits and community events, as well as enrolling in classes for youth and adults in the arts, crafts, and movement-based practices from other cultures.

About PAL - Performance, Art & Learning

Rhythmix Cultural Works believes that exposure to the arts can be a transformative experience and a catalyst for cultural celebration. In support of this vision, Rhythmix developed PAL as an assembly-based youth arts education program in collaboration with the Alameda Unified School District. PAL fosters awareness of world cultures and empowers underserved youth through exposure to educational music and dance performances.

Thanks to the belief in the power of arts education and generous support from our funders and sponsors, PAL has served over 90,000 students since it launched in 2012.

For more info about Rhythmix, please visit: www.rhythmix.org

