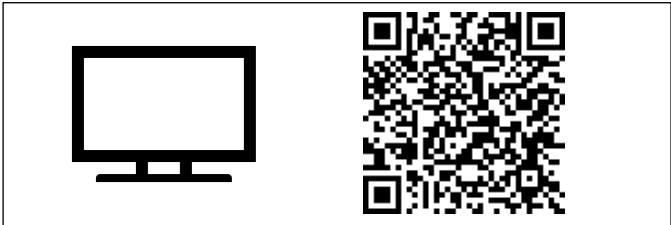




The Musical Contexts World Music Guide to

Salsa





The Salsa in Action



We're going to introduce you to Salsa by watching two short videos which shows the Salsa in action.

Salsa is a type of **DANCE MUSIC**, so it's important

that you both see and hear the music in context. Scan the QR code above which shows two examples of the Salsa being danced and the accompanying music. As you watch and listen, make some notes about the **DANCE STEPS** that you see being performed and the **RHYTHM OF THE MUSIC** as you listen.

SALSA DANCE STEPS	SALSA RHYTHMS
 <p><i>How would you describe how the dancers are moving?</i></p> <p><i>How many dancers are dancing the Salsa?</i></p> <p><i>Is there any relationship between the dance steps and the beat/pulse of the music?</i></p> <p><i>How do the dance steps reflect/compliment the music?</i></p> <p><i>My own notes and ideas.....</i></p> 	 <p><i>Can you detect how many beats there are in a bar (the time signature)?</i></p> <p><i>How would you describe the speed of the beat/pulse?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any patterns in the rhythms of the music?</i></p> <p><i>My own notes and ideas.....</i></p> 

Learning about Salsa



Salsa is a type of lively Latin-American dance music which blends the Son style of music from Cuba with elements of American Big Band Jazz.

The Spanish colonised Cuba and brought African Slaves to work on the sugar plantations. Over the years, the music from the two cultures combined to make a dance style called Son. Son is the main ingredient of Salsa.

Salsa is a dance-style from the Caribbean island of Cuba. Cuban musicians emigrating to the USA have made salsa an important element of the dance scene in Miami and New York.

The dance is marked by its sizzling, syncopated rhythms and energetic movements. Its origins lie in the earlier Cuban national dance-song called son. As with other Caribbean dances son is a mixture of African and European (in this case Spanish) musical influences. The guitar, prominent in son bands, was an import from Spain.

Traditional Son music has:

A basic repeated rhythm pattern called a **CLAVE** (pronounced "clah-vey") played by hitting two sticks called Claves together.

More **REPEATED RHYTHM PATTERNS** played on **PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS** like the maracas and bongos. These are often **SYNCOPATED** and form complicated cross-rhythms against the clave part.

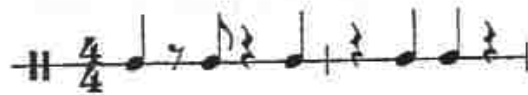
CALL AND RESPONSE between the lead singer and the chorus.

Mainly **PRIMARY CHORDS** in the harmony.

The last note of the **BASS LINE** often sets up the harmony for the following bar.

The African influence can be heard in the percussion rhythms of many son. Many of the percussion instruments used, including bongo drums, claves, guiro and maracas, developed from African musical instruments.

Cuban dance music is structured around a crucial repeated rhythm called clave. This rhythm is often, but not always, played on the claves. Every other musical element is designed to fit around the clave pattern. Typically, it consists of five notes, spread out over two 4/4 bars.



Notice that there are three notes in bar 1 and two in bar 2. This arrangement of notes is called the 3:2 son clave. The pattern forms the basis of the rhythmic structure of salsa.

The new son-rumba mix was not called salsa until the late 1960's. Many salsa musicians were strongly influenced by ideas from jazz. As a result, jazz instruments and performance styles were incorporated into salsa during the 1970's.

1. Where does Salsa music come from?
2. Which two cultures were combined to make the Son dance style?
3. Who brought the African slaves to Cuba and what did they make them do when they got there?
4. What is the main ingredient of Salsa music?
5. What is a Clave and how is it played?
6. Make a list of all the musical instruments that are mentioned in the above passage.



Listening to Cuban Son

Scan the QR code to the right and listen to an example of Cuban Son music. Answer the following questions as you listen and feel free to listen to the extract more than once if you need to.



1. What instruments can you hear playing in this extract?
2. How would you describe the way the lead singer and other singers/instruments 'interact' with each other?
3. Try counting each of the following rhythm patterns along with the bass line – "123, 123, 12" and "12, 123, 123" – which of the rhythm patterns "fits" best?
4. How would you describe the **HARMONIC RHYTHM** of this piece? The Harmonic Rhythm is the pace or speed at which the harmonies and chords change.



In the Cuban and Puerto Rican communities in New York, Son was combined with a variety of musical styles - the most popular of which

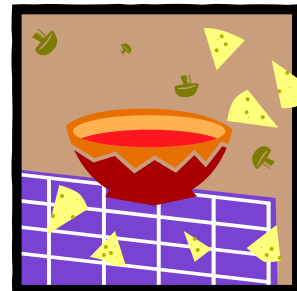


was "American Big Band Jazz", but also elements of Rock, Pop, Puerto Rican music and other Cuban dances - to create Salsa. Scan the QR code and listen to an example of "American Big Band Jazz" and answer the questions below as you listen:

1. What instrument is playing the bass line and how would you describe the **MOVEMENT** of this bass line?
2. How would you describe the rhythm of the piano part?
3. Do you think the solo pianist is "playing from a written score"? Why?
4. American Big Band Jazz such as this is often based on short repeated rhythmic and melodic patterns. What is the musical name for these?
5. What types of instruments are added later in the extract?
6. How does the **HARMONIC RHYTHM** of this extract compare with that of Son?



How Salsa Developed



Salsa quickly became very popular and spread to Latin American countries such as Columbia, Mexico and Venezuela. Did you know that the name Salsa literally means "sauce"? It is thought that the word was first used by the Cuban musician and band leader Ignacio Piñero, who would shout it out to his own band, asking them to play faster and with more heat, to spice up the music. (Latin American sauce is nearly always very spicy!) Find out the name of 3 famous performers of Salsa music and add these to the table below. Include the instrument which they are most famous for.

FAMOUS SALSA MUSICIANS AND PERFORMERS



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From your learning above, see if you can pick out some musical features of Son Music and American Big Band Jazz and add these to the boxes below to show how Salsa developed.



Features of Son Music

Son Music
Cuban music

Big Band
New York



Combined creates....

Salsa

Features of American Big Band Jazz

Scan the QR code above and listen to this while you are working. It's a performance of a piece of Salsa music by the famous Salsa performer Celia Cruz. Try and pick out some musical features in the music that you've been learning about.

Learning about Latin-American Percussion



Salsa, like much Caribbean music, uses a considerable amount of Latin-American Percussion instruments. Below are the names, pictures and descriptions of some of the most used ones. See if you can match the correct name to the correct picture and description in the table on the next page.



A pair of shallow single-headed drums with metal casing played with a variety of beaters.



Small "slit-drum" made from a single piece of wood struck by a beater producing a sharp clacking sonority.



Hand held hollow shakers filled with beads, seeds or dried beans mounted on wooden handles and played in pairs



A pair of short thick dowels made of wood played by striking them together producing a clicking sonority.

Small, open-bottomed drums played in pairs by the hands often on the players lap.



A metal instrument, originally hung around the animals neck, producing a metallic sonority.

An open-ended gourd with notches which are rubbed by a stick producing a ratchet-like sonority.

Tall, narrow, single-headed drums from Cuba, mounted on a stand and often played in pairs by the hands.



Latin-American Percussion Instruments

Name	Description	Picture
Cowbell		
Maracas		
Conga Drums		
Bongo Drums		
Güiro		
Claves		
Woodblock		
Timbales		

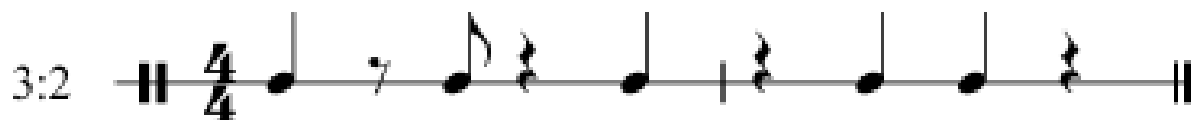


Scan the QR code and listen to eight short extracts featuring the solo sound of each of the Latin-American percussion instruments you have been learning about. As you listen to each extract, try and identify which percussion instrument you think is playing. You'll hear each of the 8 instruments from pages 8 and 9 played only once.

Extract	Instrument	Extract	Instrument
Extract 1		Extract 5	
Extract 2		Extract 6	
Extract 3		Extract 7	
Extract 4		Extract 8	

Learning about Rhythm in Salsa

Rhythm is a very important part of Salsa music. The rhythm fundamental to Salsa music is known as **SON CLAVE** (this rhythm came from **SON** music and is played by the **CLAVES**). There are two main variants, known as 2:3 and 3:2 shown below in staff notation and rhythm grid notation.



Based on Clave rhythm	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	5	+	6	+	7	+	8	+
3 – 2 clave rhythm																
2 – 3 clave rhythm.																



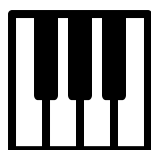
Scan the QR codes above to hear the 3:2 and 2:3 Son Clave rhythms being performed over a regular pulse. Try to focus on the **RHYTHM** rather than the regular beat and try and perform this on whatever instruments you have – even tapping it out on a table or desk. Perform “along with” the audio tracks at first and then try performing the different Son Clave rhythms without.

All other instruments in a Salsa band fit around this rhythm, which is commonly played for the duration of the chorus although often throughout the whole piece. A piece of Salsa music doesn't use the same **SON CLAVE** all the time – it may switch between the two. Salsa is normally in 4/4.

Another characteristic Salsa rhythm is often played by the piano. This is a highly **SYNCOATED** four-bar rhythm, which the pianist will repeat as an **OSTINATO** or **RIFF** throughout the chorus of the piece. Here is an example of this rhythm based on the chord of F major.



Scan the QR code and listen to the characteristic piano rhythm used in much Salsa music. You'll also hear the Clave rhythm being performed, in this case a 2:3 Son Clave rhythm.



If you have a keyboard available, try and learn the characteristic Salsa piano rhythm shown above. If you don't you may be able to use online "virtual pianos" or free music software or online sites or you may even be able to programme this into a music sequencing programme.

Scan the QR code and listen to a piece of Salsa focusing on the characteristic Salsa piano rhythm and the Son Clave rhythm.





Learning about Instruments of Salsa

A Salsa band is made up of three sections: **VOCALS** consisting of a soloist or lead singer (called the **SONERO**) and backing singers or chorus (called the **CHORO**) which often feature some of the instrumentalists provide backing vocals; **FRONT LINE** featuring instruments such as **TRUMPETS**, **TROMBONES** and **SAXAPHONES** who normally perform the **MELODY** and **RHYTHM AND PERCUSSION** section featuring instruments such as bass guitar, double bass, Spanish/acoustic guitar, piano or keyboards and a range of Latin-American drums and percussion instruments who provide a rhythmic **ACCOMPANIMENT** to the Front Line, based on one of the **SYNCOATED** rhythms above forming a **POLYRHYTHMIC TEXTURE** which drives the music forward.



Look at the image above showing a Salsa band and see if you can identify the instruments which make up the **FRONT LINE** and **RHYTHM AND PERCUSSION SECTIONS** (there's a couple of percussion instruments *between* the two drummers not being played to identify too!)

<p>FRONTLINE INSTRUMENTS</p> 	<p>RHYTHM AND PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS</p> 
Empty space for student notes	Empty space for student notes

Learning about Form and Structure in Salsa

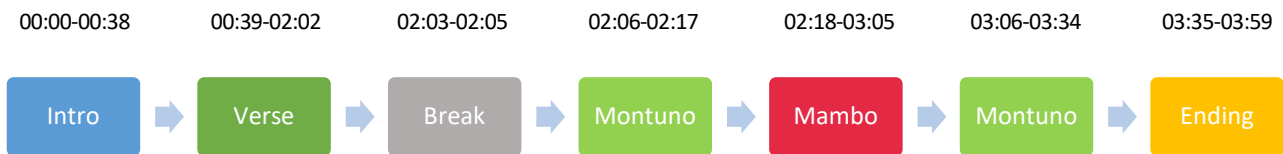


A Salsa band is made up of three sections: **VOCALS** consisting of a soloist or lead singer (called the **SONERO**) and backing singers or chorus (called the **CHORO**) which often feature some of the

A piece of Salsa has three main sections which can appear in any order and can be used more than once. In the **VERSE**, you hear the main melody, usually sung by the **SONERO** or played by an instrumentalist. The **MONTUNO** is a kind of **CHORUS** where the **SONERO** or lead instrumentalist **IMPROVISES** and the **CHORO** or others instrumentalists answer. There’s also a break between the choruses, called the **MAMBO** with new musical material, often played by the Front Line section. Pieces often begin with an introduction and end with a Coda and could feature a **BREAK** where the main melody stops and just the rhythm section plays or a series of repeated chords.



Scan the QR code and listen to Grupo Niche performing “La Negra no Quiere” following the form and structure of the piece below and listening out for the different sections and their roles within the Salsa band.



Drums (32 Syncopation, Guiro)

Rhythm (Tempo, Repetition, Ostinato, Latin American, Woodblock, Cowbell)

Son (Improvisation, Line, Claves, Riff, Polyrhythmic, Harmonic, Montuno)

Clave (Texture, Timbales, Mambo, Big Choro, Cuban Maracas, Response, Band, Sonero, Conga, Call, Bongo, Percussion)

Performing Salsa Rhythms



The following rhythms are characteristic of those played by the different instruments in a piece of Salsa music. Using whatever instruments you have available either at school

or at home (pots and pans work well as cowbells, cardboard boxes or plastic bowls work well for drums, a grater works well as a guiro and anything wooden works well as Claves), learn to perform some of the following rhythms given in rhythm grid notation. You could teach your parents or anyone you live with some of the rhythms and combine these together to form a piece of **POLYRHYTHMIC GROUP SALSA**.

Alternatively, you could try inputting them into a music sequencing programme on different tracks – be creative and have fun – Salsa is supposed to be a fun and energetic type of music and dance! All QR codes next to each rhythm demonstrate the rhythms and this is how it sounds all together!



Claves



1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	

Have a cup of tea



Cow Bell



1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	



Guiro



The guiro makes a scraping sound.
Like the cow bell, the guiro accents beats 1, 3, 5, and 7 with long notes.
Between these long notes it plays two short notes.

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	



Timbale



1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	

We like chick en we don't like sa lad oh



Conga



1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	

Teacher’s Notes, Discussion and Answers

The Salsa in Action

Dance Steps - The Salsa is a **PAIRED DANCE** danced by male and female partners. The basic position is an embrace, similar to that used in the waltz or tango, but usually with the bodies not quite so close together – often the dancers will just hold hands. The basic steps consist of four-beat patterns. Dancers step forward and backwards together, or out to the side and back. There are also turns, spins and holds. The dance is energetic and this is reflected in the energetic **FAST TEMPO** of the music. The upper body is normally held upright while the rhythm of the music is seen in the dancer’s legs. The **RHYTHM** of the music which accompanies the Salsa is often based on a 1 2 3 _ 4 5 6 _ rhythm pattern layered with shorter **SYNCOPATED** rhythms at a **FAST TEMPO** and features **REPETITION**.

Listening to Cuban Son

1. There are a variety of instruments playing a lead singer/soloist (called the **SONERO** in Salsa), and backing singers/chorus (called the **CHORO** in Salsa); There’s a **FRONT LINE** of instruments such as trumpets and saxophones and a rhythm and percussion section featuring bass guitar, Spanish/acoustic guitar, piano, conga/bongo drums, claves, guiro, maracas and cowbell
2. The soloist and other instruments/backing singers interact with **CALL AND RESPONSE** phrases
3. The 123, 123, 12 rhythm fits best with this piece
4. The **HARMONIC RHYTHM** is slow – mainly uses **PRIMARY CHORDS (I, IV & V)**.

Listening to American Big Band Jazz

1. Double Bass is playing a **WALKING BASS LINE**
2. The rhythm of the Piano part is **SYNCOPATED**
3. The pianist isn’t playing from a “written score” and is **IMPROVISING**
4. **RIFFS/OSTINATO**
5. Brass instruments – trumpets, trombones and Woodwind instruments – Clarinets and Saxophones
6. The **HARMONIC RHYTHM** of American Big Band Jazz is much **FASTER** than Cuban SON changing chords more frequently and making more use of **JAZZ CHORDS** e.g. **SEVENTH AND NINTH CHORDS** to enrich the harmony

Features of Son and American Big Band Jazz

Son	American Big Band Jazz
Percussive sound/timbre/sonority Repeated (clave) rhythms – 3-2 or 2-3 Syncopated Percussion Rhythms creating Cross-Rhythms Call and Response Slow Harmonic Rhythm using mainly Primary Chords	“Jazzy” sound/timbre/sonority Syncopation Jazz Chords – 7ths & 9ths Riffs Imitation Improvising/Vamping Brass Instruments Double Bass performing Walking Bass Line Fast Harmonic Rhythm.

Listening to Solo Latin-American Percussion Instruments

1. Woodblock
2. Timbale(s)
3. Guiro
4. Claves
5. Bongo Drums
6. Maracas
7. Cowbell
8. Conga Drums

Instruments of Salsa

Frontline Instruments	Rhythm and Percussion Instruments
2 x Trumpets 2 x Trombones Saxophone	Keyboard Bass (electric double bass) Bongo Drums Cowbell and Guiro (not being played but between the two drummers) Conga Drums and Timbales (to the right of the Sonero female vocalist)