

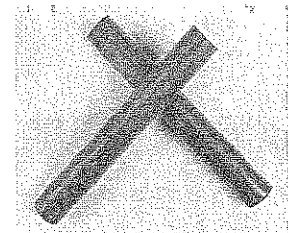


What would happen if you took a little bit of Africa, mixed it with a lot of Spain and spiced it up with bits of European and American folk music styles? The result would be Cuban music.

Some of the most popular forms of World Music come from Cuba and its surrounding areas, home to many of the Latin American styles which have become so popular in the Western world. In the dance halls of the 1930s and 40s people discovered the infectious rhythms that made this music so popular and 'danceable', and that is true today, with Cuban music forming the basis of many dance forms.

While regular Spanish guitars are used extensively in Cuban music, one interesting instrument found in Cuban music is the **Tres**, or Cuban guitar. While this may look like a normal guitar with six strings, it actually has three groups of two strings that are tuned together. The major difference between the tres and the guitar is the playing style: you almost never play chords on a Tres. It is played like a drum, playing repeated rhythmic patterns between the three strings.

One of the most important percussion instruments to be found in Cuban music is the **Clave**. The clave is two short and fat sticks, made from rosewood or other hardwood. One is held in the hand and hit with the other. They are used to play a simple five-stroke pattern that is the core of many Cuban rhythms.

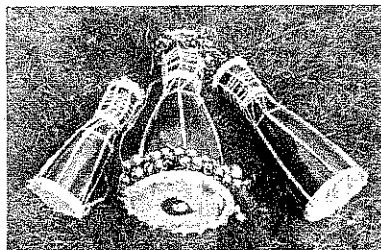


Claves

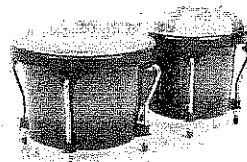
Bongos are another important percussion instrument, which came from Cuban music. There are two drums of different sizes: the larger being called in Spanish "hembra" (female) and the smaller "macho" (male). Played with the fingertips, the bongos traditionally would be held between the knees.

The **Conga drums** are tall and narrow drums with African roots, however they are most commonly associated with Cuban music.

One less well known percussion instrument used in Cuban music is the **Batá drum**. This drum is a double headed drum with an hourglass shape, with one skin larger than the other. It is primarily used for traditional and religious ceremonies.



Batá Drums



Bongo Drums



Conga Drums

One of the most popular and important styles in Cuban music is **Son**, which is the foundation for many of the other styles. It can be said that the Son is to Cuba what the tango is to Spain, and the samba is to Brazil.

Other musical styles which are generally attributed to Cuban origins include Conga, Rumba, Bolero, Cha-Cha-Cha, Mambo and Salsa. Mixing in other musical styles such as Hip-hop, Jazz and Rock is also not uncommon in Cuban Music. Cuba's musical climate, based in its African and European roots, continues to influence other musical styles throughout the world today.

