

SAMBA

Samba is a musical genre and dance style with its roots in Africa via the West African slave trade and African religious traditions. Samba is an expression of Brazilian cultural expression and is a symbol of carnival. Samba schools formed and compete bringing people together.



A. Key Words and Terms in Samba Music

- CALL AND RESPONSE** – one person plays or sings a musical phrase, then another person/group responds with a different phrase or copies the first one.
- CYCLIC RHYTHM** – a rhythm that is repeated over and over again.
- IMPROVISATION** – making up music as you go along, without preparation.
- OSTINATO** – a repeated pattern. Can be rhythmic or melodic; usually short.
- PERCUSSION** – Instruments that are mostly hit, scraped or shaken to produce sound. Samba uses many percussion instruments which together are called a **BATERIA**.
- POLYRHYTHM** – the use of several rhythms performed simultaneously, often overlapping each other to create a thick texture.
- PULSE** – a regular beat that is felt throughout music
- RHYTHM** – a series of notes of different lengths that create a pattern. Usually fits with a regular beat or pulse.
- SYNCOPIATION** – accenting or emphasising the weaker beats of the bar (often a half beat (quaver) followed by a full beat (crotchet)) giving the rhythm an **OFFBEAT** feel.
- SAMBISTA** – the leader of a Samba band or ensemble, often signalling cues to the rest of the band of when to change sections within the music with an **APITO** (Samba whistle)

B. Form and Structure of Samba

Samba music often starts with an **INTRODUCTION** often featuring **CALL AND RESPONSE RHYTHMS** between the Samba Leader and ensemble. The main Ostinato rhythm of Samba is called the **GROOVE** when all the instruments of the Samba Band play their respective rhythms over and over again (**CYCLIC RHYTHMS**) forming the main body of the piece. The **GROOVE** is broken up by **BREAKS** - 4 or 8 beat rhythms providing contrast and **MID SECTIONS** – one or two instruments change the rhythm of their ostinato and the others stay the same or stop. Sometimes **BREAKS** and **MID SECTIONS** feature a **SOLOIST** who “shows off” their rhythms. The **SAMBISTA** must signal to the group when to change to a different section which is normally done with an **APITO** (Samba Whistle – loud!). A piece of Samba can end (this section is called the **CODA**) with either a **CALL AND RESPONSE** pattern or a pre-rehearsed ending phrase of rhythm. The **FORM AND STRUCTURE** of a piece of Samba may look like the following:



C. Texture of Samba Music

Texture varies in Samba music, often **MONOPHONIC** where a single rhythm is heard as in **CALL AND RESPONSE** sections, sometimes **POLYPHONIC** where sections of the Samba band play different rhythms (**OSTINATOS**) creating **CROSS-RHYTHMS** (when two rhythmic patterns that “conflict” with each other occur simultaneously) creating a thick texture of interweaving and interlocking rhythms – a **POLYRHYHM** or a **POLYRHYTHMIC TEXTURE**.

D. Dynamics of Samba Music

The dynamics of Samba music are normally **VERY LOUD** – it is music designed to be performed outdoors at carnivals and is played by large numbers of instrumentalists and to accompany dancers and processions with large audiences watching and listening. Sometimes, a **CRESCENDO** is used at the end of a piece of Samba music for dramatic effect.

E. Tempo of Samba Music

Samba music is generally **FAST** at around 104 bpm and keeps a constant tempo to assist the dancers or processional nature of the music. Sometimes the **SAMBISTA** (Samba leader) uses **(TEMPO) RUBATO** – tiny fluctuations in tempo for expressive effect.

SURDO



TAMBOURIN



AGOGO



GANZA



APITO



REPENIQUE



CAIXA

