

Guaguanco - Mambo - History And Development Drummers Guide

A folkloric and intimate dance style Guaguanco, is the most popular form of Afro Cuban Rumba. Rumba's roots can be traced back to Africa as well as southern Spain ("Rumba Flamenca"). During the early part of the 20th century, Guaguanco music style has emerged as the most prevalent form of Rumba due to its fast, energetic, and passionate rhythm character.

A distinguishing sound of the Guaguanco is the conga rhythm pattern (the pattern that would be played on the congas in an ensemble without a drum set). As in other drum set patterns, the conga melody is played with the snare hand. The ride hand plays the Cascara pattern while the bass drum emphasizes the Bombo note (plus of beat two on the "3" side of the clave). The hi hat foot can either play beats two and four or beats one and three in both measures of the rhythmic pattern.

For advanced playing technique, the hi hat foot may play the rumba clave pattern simultaneously. (It's a good idea to include a separate pedal to strike a wood block or cowbell mounted on a Gajate bracket). The Guaguanco is a two measure, up tempo pattern based on a 3-2 rumba clave and is usually started on the "3" side of the clave. Quarter note = two hundred bpm.

The Mambo instrumentation, improvisation, and musical voicing of American Swing fused with Cuban son rhythms is arguably the most prominent and recognizable style in Afro Cuban music. Although based on a dance that developed in the early 1940s in Havana, its name comes from an instrument originally used in Bantu rituals.

It first appeared as an "open section" of the Danzon in the late 1930s, featuring improvisation by both dancers and musicians; but as a result of its popularity, the Mambo section started being played and recognized as its own style of music. It reached New York City by the late 1940s and attained its greatest popularity by the mid 1950s. Today, Mambo's influence is found in virtually all Salsa music. While Cuban artists such as Israel "Cachao" Lopez, Arsenio Rodriguez, and Orestes created the Mambo, musicians such as Tito Puente and Dizzy Gillespie (in songs such as "Manteca" translation: "Lard") did much to develop it. The drum set player faces quite a challenge when performing an authentic Mambo, due to the demand for limb independence.

The ride hand covers the common Mambo bell pattern (originally played by either a timbale player or a Bongo bell player), while the snare hand replicates the signature pattern from the congas. The bass drum supports the Tumbao pattern played by the bassist, sometimes in unison, other times broken up. The hi hat foot can either play beats two and four or beats one and three in both measures. For advanced playing, much as when incorporating the clave into the Guaguanco, the hi hat foot may play the son clave pattern simultaneously. The Mambo is a two measure, up tempo pattern based on a 2-3 son clave; it can be started on either the "2" or "3" side of the clave. Quarter note = two hundred bpm.

About the Author

By Eric Starg. Eric is using [Drum Hardware](#) manufactured by [Premier Drums](#) and [Yamaha Drums](#). Eric is an active member of Drum Solo Artist where he is answering drum related questions, and helping drummers with tips and advices.

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