Your notes

GCSE Music: revision notes

Contemporary Latin music

Contents

1. Salsa
2. Samba and bossa nova
3. Tango and modern Latin music
4. Key terms
5. Quick questions
6. What to do next

Salsa

- Salsa grew from Cuban son music and was developed in New York in the 1960s and 1970s.
- It is built on the **clave**, a two-bar rhythm pattern (3-2 or 2-3) that everything else fits around.
- The piano plays a **montuno**: a repeated, syncopated pattern. Brass sections play punchy riffs.
- Percussion: timbales, congas, bongos, cowbell and maracas. Singing uses call and response between the lead singer and a chorus, usually in Spanish.

Samba and bossa nova

- Samba comes from Brazil and is played at carnival in Rio de Janeiro. A street samba band (a **batucada**) is all percussion.
- Samba instruments: **surdo** (big bass drum), caixa (snare drum), repinique (lead drum), tamborim, agogô (two bells) and chocalho (shaker). The leader uses an **apito** (whistle) to signal breaks.
- Samba is in 2/4 with lots of **syncopation** and layered ostinatos.
- **Bossa nova** (Brazil, late 1950s) mixes samba rhythms with jazz harmony: gentle nylon-string guitar, soft singing and a relaxed tempo.

Tango and modern Latin music

- Tango comes from Argentina: dramatic and passionate, with the **bandoneon** (a kind of concertina), violin and piano, and the habanera rhythm.
- Contemporary Latin pop and reggaeton add drum machines, synthesisers and the dembow rhythm, and mix Spanish and English.
- Common Latin features: **syncopation**, the **clave**, repeated ostinatos, layers of percussion and dance rhythms.

© LycoLearn · lycolearn.co.uk · Free GCSE and KS3 revision

Key terms

Clave	A two-bar rhythm pattern that Latin music is built around.
Montuno	A repeated, syncopated piano pattern in salsa.
Batucada	A Brazilian samba percussion band.
Surdo	The large bass drum in samba.
Apito	The whistle a samba leader uses to signal breaks.
Bossa nova	A gentle Brazilian style mixing samba and jazz.
Bandoneon	A concertina used in tango.
Syncopation	Stressing off-beats or weak beats.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is the clave in Latin music?
2. What does the piano play in salsa?
3. Where was salsa developed?
4. What is a batucada?
5. Which samba instrument is the large bass drum?
6. What does a samba leader use the apito for?
7. What is bossa nova?
8. Which instrument is closely linked with tango?

Answers

1. A two-bar rhythm pattern the music is built around
2. A montuno: a repeated, syncopated pattern
3. New York, from Cuban roots
4. A Brazilian samba percussion band
5. Surdo
6. To signal breaks and changes
7. A gentle Brazilian style mixing samba and jazz
8. Bandoneon

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

Your notes