

# Samba (jazz)

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A dance of Brazilian and African origin. The word is also used by extension for the accompanying music, and for any music in that style, which is in duple meter, lively in tempo, and characterized by many interlocking, syncopated lines in the melody and accompaniment (ex.1). The samba first became known in the USA in the 1930s and 1940s when Vincent Youmans's *Carioca* (1933), Ary Barroso's *Brazil* (1939), and Zequinha Abreu's *Tico tico* (1943) became hits; the dance itself was introduced to the USA in 1939 at the New York World's Fair, and was popularized by the films of the singer and dancer Carmen Miranda during the next two decades. However, American jazz musicians did not adopt the idiom on a large scale until the release, in the 1950s, of such recordings as Charlie Parker's *Tico tico* (1951, Mer./Clef 11091), Stan Kenton's *Baia* (1953, Cap. T2511), Laurindo Almeida's album *The Laurindo Almeida Quartet, Featuring Bud Shank* (1954, PJ 7, 13), Dizzy Gillespie's *Ungawa*, from his album *The Ebullient Mr. Gillespie* (1959, Verve 8328), Oscar Peterson's *Carioca*, from his LP *Warren and Youmans* (1959, Verve 62059), and Horace Silver's *Swingin' the Samba*, on *Finger Poppin' with the Horace Silver Quintet* (1959, BN 4008). In some cases a percussionist playing Brazilian instruments augmented the conventional jazz rhythm section; otherwise the guitarist, drummer, and double bass player provided the rhythmic impetus (ex.2).

**Ex.1** From Cetulio Marinho: *Caboclo do matto* (1940s, Col. 36504); transcr. T. Owens



The musical score for Ex.1 is written for four instruments: guitar (gui), tambourine, shaken rattle, and small drum. The tempo is marked as 126 bpm. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score shows a syncopated melody on the guitar and a complex, interlocking rhythmic pattern on the percussion instruments.

Ex.1 From Cetulio Marinho: *Caboclo do matto* (1940s, Col. 36504); transcr. T. Owens

**Ex.2** From *Carioca Hills*, on *L.A. Four: The L.A. Four Scores!* (1975, Conc. 8); transcr. T. Owens

The musical score is for a 4-measure excerpt in 2/4 time, marked at 140 bpm. It is transcribed for guitar (gui), snare drum (without snare), hi-hat, and double bass (db). The guitar part features chords G<sup>13</sup>, G<sup>(b5)</sup>, and G<sup>7</sup>. The snare drum and hi-hat play a syncopated pattern. The double bass plays a simple bass line.

Ex.2 From *Carioca Hills*, on *L.A. Four: The L.A. Four Scores!* (1975, Conc. 8); transcr. T. Owens

In the late 1950s Brazilian musicians began to play in a style known as Bossa nova, which was slower and more sedate than the music customarily used to accompany the samba, employing longer themes and more elaborate, jazz-influenced harmonies. In the USA the brief craze for this style, in part instigated by the album *Jazz Samba* (1962, Verve 68432) by Stan Getz and Charlie Byrd, prompted many bop musicians to incorporate Brazilian rhythms and melodies into their music; Getz, Byrd, Peterson, Cannonball Adderley, and others recorded albums devoted entirely or mostly to sambas and bossa novas. It also encouraged many Brazilians to travel to the USA to perform and record. Although sambas and bossa novas became less faddish in the late 1960s, jazz groups regularly include them in their performances and recordings, and such pieces as Luis Bonfá's *The Gentle Rain*, *Manha de carnaval*, and *Samba de orfeu*, Antonio Carlos Jobim's *Chega de saudade*, *Samba de uma nota so*, *Triste*, and *Wave*, Michel Legrand's *Watch What Happens*, Clare Fischer's *Pensativa*, Benny Carter's *South Side Samba*, and Dizzy Gillespie's *Tanga* have become jazz standards. In addition, jazz musicians sometimes transform non-Latin pieces (such as Bronislav Kaper's ballad *Invitation* or John Coltrane's lively *Giant Steps*) into sambas and bossa novas. (See also Latin jazz.)

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