

Latin Jazz Glossary

Agogo	(AH-goh-goh)	Set of single, double or triple bells believed to be of Nigerian origin. Is used heavily in Brazilian music.
Baião		Of Northeast Brazil, the baião was first an instrumental interlude between vocal parts of a musical contest.
Bembe	(Bem-BEH)	A dance rhythm of West Africa involving singing and drumming which is most commonly associated with religious gatherings.
Bolero	(boh-LEH-roh)	A music which is most commonly paired with lyrics of romantic nature.
Bongo	(bohn-GOH)	A small set of two drums which was used in early guitar and rhythm groups in the West Indies. The bongos are used as a solo instrument in salsa.
Bongocero	(Bohn-go-SEH-ro)	One who plays the bongos.
Bossa Nova		Popular Style of Brazil. Uses a variation of the clave in the percussion accompaniment.
Carnival	(Kar-nah-VAHL)	Carnival is the celebration throughout the Carribean islands which is the week prior to the Christian Lent season. This is the week that Mardi Gras occurs in the United States.
Cascara	(KAHS-kah-rah)	Translated to “shell” in Spanish. This refers to the rhythm that is played on the shell of the timbale.
CHA CHA CHA		A type of music that was developed by the European style orchestras of Cuba and influenced by the danzon.
Clave	(KLAH-vay)	The underlying rhythm found in most of the music that is typically considered to be Afro-Cuban. Variations are on 2-3 or 3-2 and are generally played by small wooden sticks.
Conga	(KOHN-ga)	A dance in which numerous partners participate that boasts roots to Africa. The conga was first a dance of Cuba, however it is practiced throughout Latin-America.
Congas	(KOHN-gas)	These are drums of Congolese origin. Originally used in religious function, congas are widely used in the music of Latin-America.
Conguero	(Kohn-GAY-roh)	One who plays the congas.
Ganza	(Gahn-ZAH)	Brazilian shaker constructed of a small metal tube filled with brads.
GUA-GUA	(GWAH-gwah)	Piece of bamboo on which the palito is played.
Guaguanco	(gwa-whan-KOH)	Rhumba rhythm of Cuba which is based on African roots.
Guiro	(GWEE-roh)	An oblong, notched gourd by which the player scrapes with a stick or small piece to create rhythms.

Latin/Jazz		The fusion of a traditional Cuban rhythm section with brass and woodwind sections of a typical jazz orchestra.
Mambo	(MAHM-boh)	Repetitive rhythmic section of a song usually under a soloist. It has also become known as the montuno.
Maracas	(mah-RAH-cas)	A pair small gourds filled with beads. A typical instrument of Afro-Cuban music.
Marengue	(meh-REHN-geh)	Quick dance rhythm associated with music of the Dominican Republic.
Mozambique	(moh-zahm-BEE-kay)	A dance rhythm that was influenced by the Conga rhythm. First made popular in Cuba then in New York City.
Palito	(pah-LEE-toh)	Spanish for “little sticks”, palito refers to the rhythm played on the side of the drum to accompany the clave pattern in the rumba.
Rumba	(ROOM-bah)	Cuban music of secular classification. Guaguanco is one of the variations of this musical form. Typically, the rumba is the fusion of African drumming traditions with Spanish vocals.
Salsa	(SAHL-sah)	A term that is commonly used to classify music with strong roots to the West Indies, vocals and elements of jazz harmony.
Samba	(SAHM-bah)	Music of Brazil which boasts strong roots to the African drumming tradition. Originally played by samba bands marching in the streets, however, has become a popular commercial style throughout Brazil and the United States.
Son	(Sohn)	Mixture of the music of Spanish farmers and African slaves. Believed to have originated near the beginning of the 19 th century in the Eastern portion of Cuba.
Surdo	(SOOR-doe)	In English it means “deaf”; the surdo is a double headed bass drum of Brazilian origin. It serves as the heartbeat of the samba rhythm section called the bateria.
Tamborim	(Tam-bore-EEM)	A small frame drum used as the soprano voice in the Brazilian rhythm section called the bateria. The drum is played with a splintered stick called a baqueta.
Timbales	(Teem-BAH-less)	One of the main instruments associated with salsa. These are two metal drums typically used with a cowbell and often a cymbal. They are derivatives of the European tympani.
Tres	(Trayss)	Spanish guitar-like instrument with three sets of strings. This was used in the earliest form of the son in Cuba.
Tumbadora	(Toom-bah-Dor-ah)	Authentic name for the large single headed drum from Africa usually referred to as the conga.