



CLASSROOM CARNIVAL

Even if you can't stand the football world cup, Andy Gleadhill explains how you can join in the Brazil mania with a beginner's guide to samba

We all know samba as the national music of Brazil, powering its spectacular carnival parades. Samba music is typified by walking-pace beats (sometimes compared to the heart beat), by accentuated offbeats and by the use of the 'clave' rhythm, though there's much more to it than that as we shall see.

WORLD FUSION

The music and rhythms of samba are in fact an early example of world music fusion as they're a blend of the percussion (or 'batacuda') of the military band instruments brought over by the Portuguese colonists, the African musical heritage of slaves shipped over to man the colonial plantations and indigenous South American folk music. Samba music gave the Afro-Brazilian people a way to celebrate their culture and to build

a sense of community, and it's now perhaps most famous for the integral part it plays in the carnivals of Brazil that take place once a year between February and March.

THE BAND

The range of percussion instruments used in a samba band can be likened to the voices in a choir:

- » Surdo: large or bass drum (bass)
- » Repinique: medium size drum or tom-tom (tenor)
- » Caixa: snare drum, ie, a shallower drum with wire snares strung along one of the two drum heads, giving the drum its characteristic rattle (alto)
- » Tamborim: small, single-headed drum or tambour that is held in one hand and played with a thin stick (soprano)

A range of additional instruments completes the distinctive samba sound: the ganzá (a cylindrical tube filled with beads), agogô Bells (two differently pitched funnel-shaped metal bells, one high, one low, played with a wooden stick), pandeiro, (a large, tambourine-like, hand-held drum or frame with metal jingles that is sometimes struck and sometimes shaken) and an apito (a three toned whistle with a pea in the chamber and tone holes at the side to control the pitch).

If you don't have access to the authentic Brazilian instruments, you can build your own samba band using the alternatives suggested above, most of which can be drawn from a disassembled drumkit. But if you're lucky enough to have the budget, you should be able to source a good quality 30-player class samba pack for around £1,000.

YOUR VERY FIRST SAMBA

Now you're ready to experience samba from the inside out by putting together a simple texture from its elements. Using words to teach the rhythms, I'll show you how to build up a simple samba and I'll end with some tips on arranging it ready for a performance. It's a good idea to start the class by chanting the words and then to switch to playing it once the rhythm is established.

As with most types of ensemble music it's best to build up your samba from the bottom, starting with the surdo drums to establish a steady beat. You can do this by playing the large drum on beat 1 with the stick, resting on beat 2, damping the drum head with the other hand on beat 3 and resting again on beat 4, repeating this for each group of four beats. If you have two surdos, tune the other drum to a slightly higher pitch and play this with the hand on beat 1 to damp the drum head and with the stick on beat 3 (the opposite way round to the other surdo), as in the grid music score opposite. This will set a steady walking pace on which you can build.

Next we'll add in the part for the repinique. This will be a simple repeated pattern of the words 'South America', played on the beats indicated in the grid score. The caixa

will repeat the word 'Brazil' – but be sure to start with the 'zil' part of the word as shown in the score. The last part to add is the tamborim, which will play a traditional clave rhythm on beats 1, 4, 7, 11 and 13 and which can easily be taught by asking the players to chant the words 'We can play Samba' on these beat numbers. It is best to always start to learn the rhythms slowly and gradually build up speed as the players become more confident, until you reach a good fast walking tempo.

Call-and-response patterns (sometimes referred to as 'questions and answers') are an integral characteristic of samba music, just as they are in African drumming. They can be seen as a rhythmic dialogue between the leader and the rest of the group and they often mark transitions in the piece. Included in the score below is an example of a call-and-response pattern that can be incorporated into the tune. The call part should be played by a leader or by one section of the band and the response should be played in unison by all the players.



The Bristol Plays Music Samba Kit – from back to front: surdos, repiniques, caixas, pandeiros, agogôs, tamborims

Surdo 1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
X	O	H	O	X	O	H	O	X	O	H	O	X	O	H	O
stick	hand			stick	hand			stick	hand			stick	hand		

Surdo 2

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
H	O	X	O	H	O	X	O	H	O	X	O	H	O	X	O
hand	stick			hand	stick			hand	stick			hand	stick		

Repinique

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
X	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	O
South			A	me	ri	ca		South			A	me	ri	ca	

Caixa

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
X	O	O	X	X	O	O	X	X	O	O	X	X	O	O	X
zil			Bra.....zil				Bra.....zil				Bra.....zil				Bra

Tamborim

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
X	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	O
We			can				play				sam.....ba				

X = Play with the stick, H = Damp with the hand, O = Beat's rest

FORM AND TEXTURE

The beginning or opening section of a samba is known as the 'arrival'. This also usually takes the form of a call-and-response pattern and has the function of introducing the samba band to the public, as if to say, 'we are here!' The call and response patterns in samba music are also known as 'breaks' and can be used to link different samba tunes together as well as for the beginnings and endings of performances. The ideal call and response should slip seamlessly in and out of the samba tune that is being played. Do experiment by adding your own call and response patterns.

Experiment too with adding in the other instruments that make up the full band and by all means have fun adding in any others you may have available, always remembering that samba is fusion music and a joyful celebration, made to be shared with everyone. **MT**

Andy Gleadhill is a musician, educator, teacher trainer and author of the ground-breaking World Class Teaching Guides, available from drumsforschools.co.uk. www.andyleadhill.com