

LCM Exams

Specimen Jazz Aural Tests: Grade 5

Rhythm and Improvisation Exercise No. 5: Latin

When listening to Latin American music, the rhythmic detail is always striking. Apart from the rhythmic patterns, it is the textures and the combination of so many percussive sounds that make this music so vibrant. Examples include:

- Maracas – shakers filled with dried beans or peas
- Claves – two short pieces of hard wood, struck against each other
- Guiro – a length of serrated hollow wood which is combed with another piece of material
- Cabasa – a cylinder with a handle; necklaces of metal beads are strung around the outside of the cylinder, allowing shaking and pushing of the beads
- Timbales – small single-headed drums

Like rock music, the rhythms are played in even, straight quavers, with the accent on the downbeat:



However, syncopation is also a feature of Latin music:



Try tapping this rhythm with one hand, and then combine it with the following rhythm, tapped with your other hand:



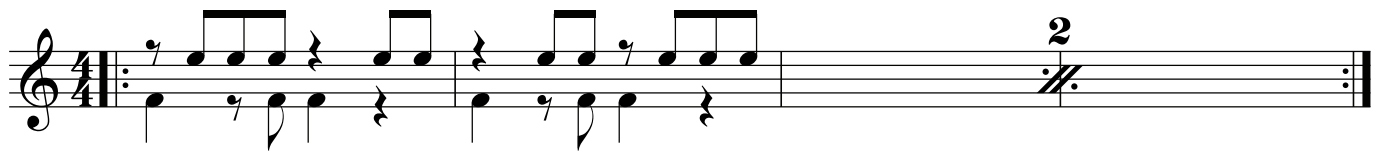
Once you have co-ordinated both parts, imagine the sound colours and textures of numerous Latin percussion instruments combined. Latin American styles are usually related to dances, some with lots of drive (e.g. Samba) and others which rather float along (e.g. Bossa Nova).

It is difficult to produce Latin rhythms on your own. The following exercises reflect just two of the elements, which should help give an insight into the rhythmic structures of each. Try tapping one part with your right hand and the other with your left hand.

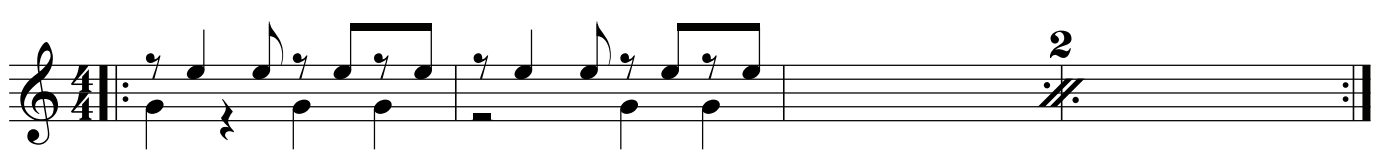
Samba (lively)



Bossa Nova (moderately quick)



Beguine (moderately quick)



Mambo

There are many versions of the Mambo at different tempi, some in $\frac{2}{4}$ and others in $\frac{4}{4}$. This is an example of one of the simplest Mambo rhythms:



Baion (gentle)



Rumba (or Bolero) (moderately quick)



There are many more Latin rhythms and styles. Many jazz musicians have embraced elements of Latin American music and combined them with elements of jazz, for example Stan Getz, Astrud Gilberto, Romero Lubamba and Cal Tjader. A number of the pieces have become standard repertoire, such as *The Girl from Ipanema* and *Desafinado*.

Fortunately, there are many recordings which give you an opportunity to listen to the nuances of this style of music. Although improvising over these melodies and chord changes is complex in parts, they offer an ideal opportunity to develop your melodic phrasing, adding some personal touches.

Rhythm

Refer to *Rhythm and Improvisation Exercise No. 5: Latin* in the Handbook [reproduced above].

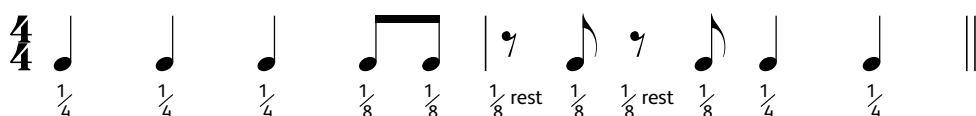
Candidates will be asked to:

- 1(a) tap either the Samba, Bossa Nova or Beguine example, as selected by the examiner. Candidates may refer to the Handbook. Candidates may tap the rhythm on their legs, a table, a chair, etc. One hand should tap the upper pattern, and the other the lower pattern. It is not necessary to repeat the four bars. [2 marks]

The examiner will count in and clap or play on one note the upper pattern of two bars (twice), taken from either the Samba, Bossa Nova, Beguine, Mambo or Rumba (Bolero) examples. Candidates will be asked to:

- 1(b) identify the note and rest time values. Terminology such as half note, quarter note, etc. is equally acceptable. Candidates may not refer to the Handbook. Only the first two bars are used for this test. [2 marks]

Samba



Alternatively, traditional names may be used.

Pitch

An interval will be played twice, with the pitches sounded together. The interval may be any major, minor or perfect interval within the octave, as well as the augmented 4th / diminished 5th. Candidates will be asked to:

- 2(a) identify the interval, by type and numerical value. [1 mark]

The test will be repeated, using a different interval. [1 mark]

Major 3rd Perfect 4th Augmented 4th / Diminished 5th Minor 6th Major 7th

Minor 2nd Octave Augmented 4th / Diminished 5th Major 7th Minor 7th

The key-chord of a major key will be sounded. A short melody in the same key, of approximately 2 bars in length, will be played, finishing with a harmonised cadence (perfect, imperfect, plagal, or interrupted) in the home key. Candidates will be asked to:

- 2(b) identify the cadence, either by its conventional name, or as 'finished' (perfect and plagal) or 'unfinished' (imperfect or interrupted). [1 mark]

The test will be repeated, using a different example. [1 mark]

A 'cadence' may also be referred to as a 'close'. They appear at the ends of phrases and work rather like full stops and commas in sentences.

Before playing the examples below, play the tonic note and/or the tonic chord. You will then be aware of phrases closing in the home key and sounding 'finished', or 'unfinished' if the closing chord does not relate to the sound you were expecting.

The **PERFECT CADENCE** (or 'full close') works as a full stop. It brings phrases (or sentences) to a conclusion. It moves from Chord V (dominant) to Chord I (tonic).

Three musical examples of the Perfect Cadence (V to I) in different keys. Each example shows a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Above the treble clef, the Roman numeral and chord name are indicated. The bass clef shows the tonic note.

- Example 1: C major. V: G, I: C. Tonic: C.
- Example 2: G major. V: D, I: G. Tonic: G.
- Example 3: F major. V: C, I: F. Tonic: F.

Dominant chords often have the flattened 7th added, to add a richer and increasingly more convincing quality to the chord movements.

Two musical examples of the Perfect Cadence (V7 to I) in C and F major. Each example shows a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Above the treble clef, the Roman numeral and chord name are indicated. The bass clef shows the tonic note.

- Example 1: C major. V7: G7, I: C. Tonic: C.
- Example 2: F major. V7: C7, I: F. Tonic: F.

The **PLAGAL CADENCE** also brings a phrase to a conclusion, and works as a full stop at the end of a sentence. Its distinctive sound quality has resulted in it sometimes being referred to as sounding like the 'Amen' at the end of a hymn. It moves from Chord IV (subdominant) to Chord I (tonic).

Three musical examples of the Plagal Cadence (IV to I) in different keys. Each example shows a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Above the treble clef, the Roman numeral and chord name are indicated. The bass clef shows the tonic note.

- Example 1: C major. IV: F, I: C. Tonic: C.
- Example 2: G major. IV: C, I: G. Tonic: G.
- Example 3: F major. IV: Bb, I: F. Tonic: F.

The **IMPERFECT CADENCE** (or 'half close') works like a comma in a sentence. The phrase (or sentence) breathes, but there is a feeling of wanting to move on. Therefore, the phrase is 'unfinished'. The progression can be from Chord I (tonic) or other chords, but always to Chord V (dominant).

Three musical examples of the Imperfect Cadence (I to V) in different keys. Each example shows a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Above the treble clef, the Roman numeral and chord name are indicated. The bass clef shows the tonic note.

- Example 1: Bb major. I: Bb, V: F. Tonic: Bb.
- Example 2: G major. I: G, V: D. Tonic: G.
- Example 3: C major. II: Dm, V: G. Tonic: C.


The **INTERRUPTED CADENCE** also works like a comma in a sentence and sounds 'unfinished'. It moves from Chord V (dominant) to Chord VI (submediant). The chord movement is that of a rising step, and it changes tonality - ie. from a major chord (V) to a minor chord (VI).

Three musical examples of the Interrupted Cadence (V to VI) in different keys. Each example shows a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Above the treble clef, the Roman numeral and chord name are indicated. The bass clef shows the tonic note.

- Example 1: C major. V: G, VI: Am. Tonic: C.
- Example 2: G major. V: D, VI: Em. Tonic: G.
- Example 3: F major. V: C, VI: Dm. Tonic: F.

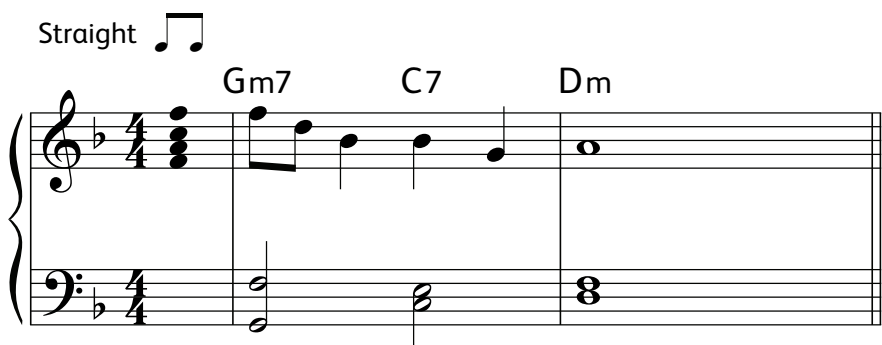
Following are examples of cadences:

♩ = ♩₃ (swing)

(a)  Plagal (Finished)

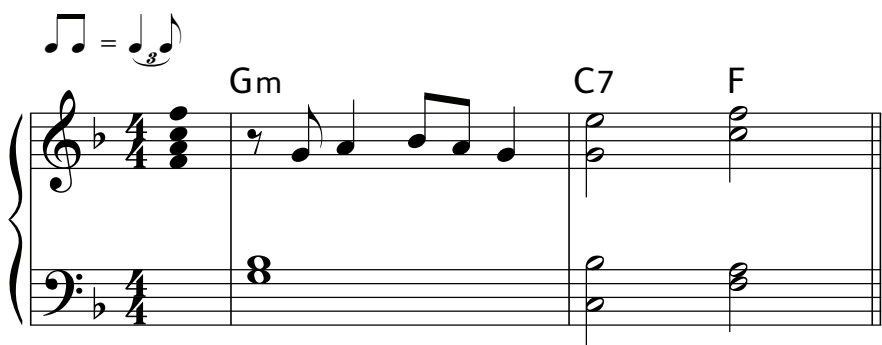
Key: C major

Straight ♩

(b)  Interrupted (Unfinished)

Key: F major

♩ = ♩₃


(c)  Perfect (Finished)

Key: F major

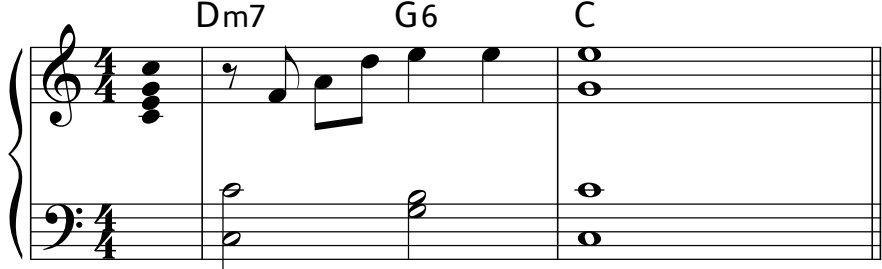
♩ = ♩₃

(d)  Imperfect (Unfinished)

Key: B \flat major

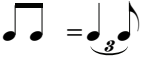

Straight 

(e)

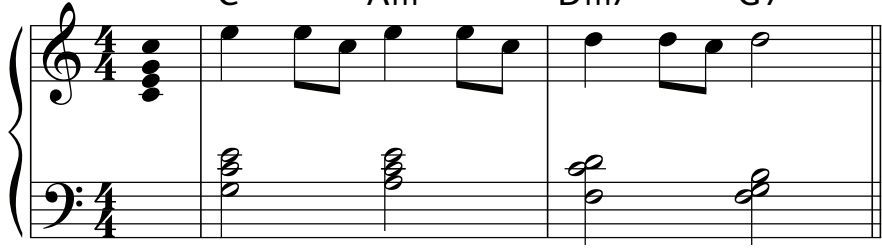


Key: C major

Perfect (Finished)


 = 

(f)




Key: C major

Imperfect (Unfinished)

Straight 


(g)



Key: A major

Interrupted (Unfinished)

(h)



Key: C major

Plagal (Finished)