

## Regarding the Salsa and Latin Jazz tunes...

### Some Notes on Rhythmic Style

From the outset it is important to state that all of the songs in this collection represent a small part of the many rhythmic styles within the general "Latin Music" family. There are, of course, hundreds of other styles and interpretations. It is also pertinent to mention that, in many cases, these tunes are very specific arrangements or versions of traditional songs, and may not always be presented in their original form.

Many of the "Salsa" and Latin Jazz charts in this collection come from the "traditional" school, meaning that their rhythmic styles are quite specific. Keep in mind that "Salsa" is not a rhythm or a specific style. Rather, it is a term as broad as "Jazz", "Brazilian" or "Rock", and contains numerous styles from various cultures. Within the "Salsa" family, there are several rhythmic styles which are frequently used. Also, one might distinguish the labels of "Salsa" and "Latin Jazz" as dance music versus music for listening, respectively, although these divisions certainly are not consistent. Regardless, there are several rhythmic styles which are most common within both genres, including Guaracha, Mambo, Cha-cha-chá, Bolero, Bomba, Merengue, Son and many others. (See the "Basic Vocabulary" below for descriptions of the rhythms and other terminology, as well as the "Rhythm Section Appendix" for transcriptions). In addition to the traditional rhythms, there are some examples of hybrid rhythms (such as "Guaracha-Mambo", "Afro-Son", "Son-Montuno", "Bolero-Son", etc...) which are the result of innovations and combinations of both styles; these appear hyphenated. It goes without saying that, while these hybrids may or may not be considered "standard", they seem to work well within their respective arrangements. In order to fully understand the concept, one must obviously be familiar with each of the styles which form part of these hybrid rhythms.

Also in this collection are several charts which feature or alternate between two different styles. These are indicated with a slash separating each term, such as "Bomba / Guaracha", "Danzón / Descarga", "Guaguancó / Guajira-Son", "Songo / Gaita", etc... Each particular arrangement might alternate several times between styles, or may feature each style one time only. Note that there are several charts where the tempo is also affected by these style changes, sometimes moving to double time or half time. When this occurs, there will be a new tempo marking as well.

In some of the charts where there is a 6/8 section, there may be a basic transcription of the percussion patterns. Often, these sections are played by *batá* drums, or they might be *batá* rhythms played on congas. *Batá* drumming is extremely complex and demands life-long study, but some basic understanding is well worth any drummer or percussionist's time.

Another style consideration has to do with the more "gray area" of contemporary interpretation, where there are elements present that are obviously "traditional", but played within a more Funk or Jazz-oriented concept. Here we have opted to be somewhat flexible, utilizing terms such as "Jazz-Son" or "Funk Salsa". In other cases, the style may be more traditional rhythmically, but the recorded arrangement may have more of a Latin Jazz flavor. Here we opt for such categories as "Songo (Latin Jazz style)", indicating perhaps a slightly freer approach (not so dance-oriented, for example). Still other tunes come from the *Charanga* tradition, and vary stylistically from the interpretation (of similar styles) by a "Salsa Band" approach. For example, while the style of Guaracha is the most prevalent throughout the "Salsa" repertoire, a Guaracha as interpreted by a *Charanga* orchestra would be somewhat different rhythmically (see "Rhythm Section Appendix"). Therefore, these tunes will be identified as "Charanga style" in order to differentiate them from the *Conjunto*-style tunes.

### Some Important Clave Information

As stated in the Publisher's forward, this is not music which can be easily sight-read. Furthermore, anyone who knows anything about the wonders of Latin music knows of the importance of the *clave* rhythm, and of its effects on the rhythmic as well as melodic and harmonic aspects of the music. The *clave* is as elementary to Latin music as "swing feel" is to jazz. You must truly know it in order to interpret the music faithfully (and correctly). So, with this in mind, here is some basic information about *clave* indications in this book:

1. Unless indicated *rumba clave*: | ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ |

the type of *clave* used will be *son clave*: | ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ |

2. Anything in 6/8 meter would use the 6/8 *clave* pattern: | ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ |

3. Clave direction will be stated either at the beginning of a tune, or following a pick-up, and indicated as "3-2" or "2-3". 3-2 *clave* means that the bar with 3 accents is followed by the bar with 2 accents. 2-3 *clave* would be the opposite. Note that Brazilian music also has its own *clave* pattern ( | ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ | ), and also follows the concept of forward and reverse direction, although perhaps not as rigidly as in Cuban-based music.

4. Any changes in *clave* direction will be indicated within a tune. These changes may be the result of either the presence of an odd number of measures in a phrase, or of a "jump" in the *clave* (an undesirable but often unavoidable condition in some arrangements). Changes in the type of *clave* pattern may also result, such as in a style change from a rhythm in 4/4 to another rhythm in 6/8, as well as the change to a double time feel or a half time feel.

5. The *clave* pattern may not actually be played literally in a particular arrangement. Rather, it may be implied within the song and among the various rhythmic patterns played by the ensemble.