

## 1. Styles Series Part 1/8 – Latin Jazz

a. Latin music is a great style to be able to play and it can help us get different kinds of gigs! In this section, I'll go over the more important concepts for you to understand in Latin music so that, if called upon to play, you can be confident. There are many different forms of Latin jazz that have various influences. Some of these influences include Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian. The Afro-Brazilian music will be bossa nova and samba styles which has a slightly different foundational pattern than the Cuban clave.

- i. Clave - The clave in Latin music is a strong rhythmic pulse that emphasizes certain beats and holds the music together. In Latin bands you will hear this figure played distinctly by one person alone to hold everything together. There are different types of rhythmic claves depending upon the song. I will explain two of the more important ones to you.
- ii. 3/2 Clave – The 3/2 clave is a two measure rhythmic phrase that emphasizes three particular beats in the first measure and two in the second. Below you can see this rhythm written out. (see below)



When you are you comping or soloing you do not have to always emphasize these beats but rather try and feel this pulse

inside of you or listen to the band member playing the clave.  
Think of it as the rhythmic engine that is running the train.

- iii. 2/3 Clave – The 2/3 clave is similar to the 3/2 clave but flipped. We have two beats emphasized in the first measure and three beats in the second measure. (see below)



- b. Bossa Nova - The bossa nova originated from Brazil and took on a more harmonic based "cool" style as to the more percussive based samba that was happening. Such influences as Antonio Carlos Jobim, Johnny Alf and Joao Gilberto helped to progress this style forward. Probably the most popular bossa ever played to this day is *The Girl from Ipanema*.

The bossa clave, played by the drummer's snare, is very similar to that of the son clave, the more Cuban based clave. The only difference is the last beat in the pattern is delayed. (See the figure below).



c. Playing the music – Knowing these foundation rhythmic patterns when playing Latin music is always helpful when contributing your part. There will not be any harmonic difference in your style. The only difference will be the rhythms. Your comping and solo lines will all be straight eights. You will not be swinging your lines anymore. As I mentioned previously, you should listen to the clave and try and feel it as you are playing. The drummer will be playing some sort of variation of this so it will help to listen as you play. A lot of people over think the playing of Latin pieces. It's actually very easy and doesn't require much effort as long as you know the Latin feel. You can still use all of your swing licks and chops over Latin pieces in the same manner but without the swing feel. Don't feel like you need comp the claves either. You can comp any kind of rhythmic patterns you like as long as they are straight eighth comps. Basing your comping around the rhythms of the clave will definitely help strengthen the rhythmic feel of the tune as well.