

Samba is a Brazilian music genre and dance style, with its roots in Africa via the West African slave trade and African religious traditions, particularly of Congo, through the samba de roda genre of the north eastern Brazilian state of Bahia, from which it derived. The origins of samba are linked to African drumming music. When people were transported to Brazil from Africa to work as slaves in the mines and sugar plantations, they brought aspects of their musical culture with them. Samba style developed in the 1950s in the favelas and includes syncopated rhythms on multiple percussion instruments. Samba has many similarities to African drumming music such as polyrhythms and use of call and response.

Samba is the music that has a strong association to Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. The Carnival has been held every year since 1723 and lasts up to six days with over two million people lining the streets to watch. Local communities each have a float to decorate and are accompanied by their local samba school.

Musical Vocabulary

Tempo: The speed of the music—Fast (Allegro) Slow (Largo)
Moderate (moderato)

Dynamics: The volume of the music—Loud (Forte) Quiet (Piano) Gradually getting louder (Crescendo) Gradually getting quieter (Diminuendo).

Timbre: The sound produced i.e. Bright, dull, hollow, wooden, metallic etc.

Instrumentation: What instruments are being used in the piece.

Ensemble: A group of performers

Polyrhythms: More than one rhythm playing at the same time

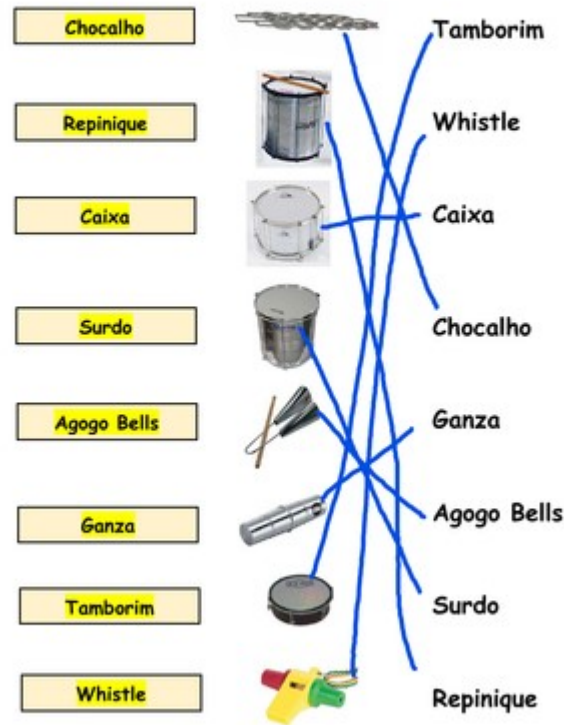
Cross-rhythms or Syncopation: An 'Off the beat' rhythm.

Call and response: Leader starts a chant/rhythm, group responds

Musical Cycle: A piece based on repeating patterns

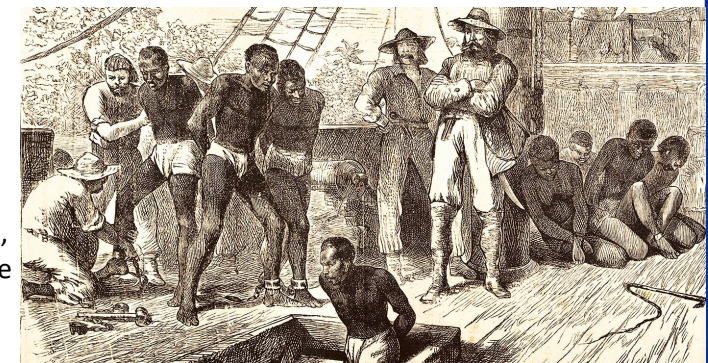
Repetition: To repeat a section of music over and over

Transatlantic Slave Trade: The largest forced **migration** in history involved the transportation by slave traders of enslaved African people, mainly to the Americas.



Carnival in Rio de Janeiro

Picture depicting the slave trade



A samba band normally consists of Tamborims, snare drums (calca), agogo bells, surdo drums, ganzas / chocalho (shakers), cuica drums, timbal drums, pandeiro drum, repinique drum (often played by the leader for calls) whistles-called Apitos (they play at the beginning to give the samba a beat)