

## **Workshop: Dancing beyond the count**

### **Target Audience**

Primary audience will be those absolutely new to direct interaction with rhythms as interpreted by Afro-Cuban instruments.

Secondary audience is anticipated to comprise those who are aware of salsa's common musical features, but are not musician-practitioners.

### **Duration**

Fifty-five to ninety minutes including practice, depending on the extent of thematic exploration. Attendee interaction is encouraged throughout.

### **Prerequisites / Constraints**

None.

### **Learning outcomes**

At the end of the workshop, the attendees should:

- understand of the role of key Afro-Cuban rhythmic components;
- be able to identify the tones and rhythms of individual instrumental layers;
- appreciate of the polyrhythmic nature of salsa; and hence
- be able to engage more interactively with salsa's music.

(with the optional section)

- understand the structure of a salsa song and what it means as a dancer; and
- appreciate the importance of perception in dance phrasing.

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### **Materials**

Required:

- A compact disc player suitable to address the size of room.

Recommended:

- A hard copy of this schedule.

Extended learning support, before and after the workshop, may be obtained from the author's website, specifically:

<http://www.salsa-merengue.co.uk/VidTutor/donline.html>

### **Schedule information**

- The emphasis on content is on its relevance to the dancer (those who would like a musician's perspective should contact the author separately).
- This workshop, delivered as the course of four sessions, is a component of the first part of Loo Yeo's 'Teaching and Salsa' dance development programme.
- The following schedule is indicative; content may be rearranged or omitted as necessary for emphasis.
- The 'Prelude to Moving Deeper ' and sections thereafter are optional; these may be explored should time permit.

## Workshop: Dancing beyond the count

**Opening:** The symptoms of learned dance

**Opening:** The count as abstraction

**Opening:** Gender differences in the perception of music

- *Tumbadoras*: the time-keepers of salsa

**Theme:** *A Yoruban voice* – salsa's backbeat rhythm

Context: *Tumbao moderno*

Learning points: open tones, slap strokes, anchor-points for the dancer

- An Afro-Cuban heartbeat

**Theme:** *Answering the call*

Context: *Tumbao moderno*

Learning points: the 'and' cue, open tones, complementary rhythms

- Our movement has a rhythm

**Theme:** *Two become one* – dance makes a polyrhythm

Context: *Tumbao moderno* with piano and *clave* (CD track)

Learning points: call-and-response, internal metronome

- Pulse: an European response

**Theme:** *The downbeat rhythm*

Context: *Bongó* bell, *güiro*, *maracas*

Learning points: open tones, high tones, phrasing

**Theme:** *A feeling for the pulse*

Context: *Bongó* bell with piano and *clave* (CD track)

Learning points: agreement, internal metronome, kinesthetics

- Listening to the conversation - agreement and complementary synchrony
- The sound of hardwood: a very Cuban device

**Theme:** *The Rhythmic Positioning System*

Context: *Son clave*

Learning points: orientation, direction, non-super imposable

**Theme:** *Facing forward, stepping back* – orientating through *clave*

Context: *Son clave* with piano and *tumbao moderno* (CD track)

Learning points: implicit expression, *clave* phrasing

- Deeper than time – the relationship of wood and bell

## Workshop: Dancing beyond the count

**Theme:** *A rhythm under tension*

Context: *Clave*-pulse interaction

Learning points: 'regular', syncopated, anticipation, binary phrase

**Theme:** *The Essence of Salsa*

Context: *Son clave* and pulse with piano (CD track)

Learning points: pull and release, a rhythm dynamic, triangulation

### Optional Section

- Prelude to Moving Deeper
- The River – thinking different, feeling different

**Theme:** *The Course of a song* – Contrasting Activity I

Context: A piano *montuno*

Learning points: Arsenio Rodríguez, upbeat pattern, moving against the flow

- Structures of a salsa song – why, how and what it means to a dancer

**Theme:** *Cues and breaks* – Contrasting Activity II

Context: Example salsa music

Learning points: *abanico*, *cierre*, sections, *montuno*

- Chasing tails: the pursuit of African and European timelines in Cuba

**Theme:** *A phrasing-perception exercise* – Contrasting Activity III

Context: Example salsa music

Learning points: African, European, polyrhythm, Creole