Danzón No. 2

SLSO Learning Lab

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

For Music Educators

This lesson is adaptable for students in grades 1–5. Its intentional flexibility allows teachers to modify the content to best suit their students' needs.

Objectives

Students will:

- Identify and perform a *son clave* pattern.
- Recognize the impact that immigration from Latin America has had on popular music in the United States.

Standards

Missouri Social Studies Learning Standards

- 5.RI.6.A

Missouri Music Learning Standards

- MU: Re7b.1-8
- MU: Cn11A.1-8

Illinois Music Learning Standards

- MU: Re7.1.1-8
- MU: Cn11.1.1-8

Materials

- A device to play internet video
- Clave, rhythm sticks, or other non-pitched percussion (optional)

Assessment (2-point rubric)

Student successfully:

- Demonstrates recognition of *son clave* in examples of popular music (1 point)
- Performs *son clave* along with recorded music examples (1 point)

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Danzón is a music and dance style that originated in **Cuba** (an island in the Caribbean) in the 1850s. At one time the danzón was the island's official dance. Danzón combines the rhythmic music and dance traditions of Africa with the melodic phrasing and instruments of Western Europe. The danzón is a slow partner dance. The music is organized around a **clave rhythm**. Although the danzón isn't very popular in Cuba anymore, it has been popular in **Mexico** since the 1990s. Watch a traditional Cuban danzón.

Map It

Find a world atlas, a map of the world, or a globe, or use an online map like Google maps. See if you can find:

- Africa – the continent whose rhythms and dance styles influenced danzón
- Cuba – the island in the Caribbean where danzón was created
- Mexico – the country in Central America where danzón is popular

Danzón has traveled a long way from its early influences in Africa, through Cuba and Mexico, to your ears today!

Clave



Clave has two meanings.

Clave is a non-pitched wooden percussion instrument. It consists of two wooden sticks that you strike against each other, like the rhythm sticks that you may have used in your music classroom. This instrument is used in danzón.

Clave is also a specific rhythmic pattern. It can be heard in *either* a pattern of three notes then two notes, or in a pattern of two notes then three notes.

Listen to the 3-then-2 pattern!



Listen to the 2-then-3 pattern!



Examples of Clave Rhythm in Popular Music

Clave originated in Africa. This tradition was brought from Africa to Cuba and eventually to the United States. Today we can hear the influence of clave rhythms in popular music in the US.

Listen to some music that incorporates the clave rhythmic pattern. Try clapping the rhythm along with these songs. Or if you have clave (instruments), rhythm sticks, or some other percussion instrument, play the clave rhythm while you listen.

You can hear the clave rhythm in these songs:

- Susie Hansen, "La Salsa Nunca Se Acaba"
- Bo Diddley, "Hey, Bo Diddley"
- Buena Vista Social Club, "Compositor Confundido"
- Aaron Carter, "I Want Candy"
- Lady Gaga, "The Cure"

Márquez's Danzón No. 2

Listen to Arturo Márquez's piece for orchestra called Danzón No. 2.

Listen for the clave rhythmic pattern. Whenever you hear it, stand up and clap or play your percussion instrument along with the rhythm.



Mexican composer **Arturo Márquez** was born in Alamos, Sonora. Márquez's family immigrated to a suburb of Los Angeles, California, when Márquez was about twelve years old. Growing up, Márquez was around a lot of traditional folk music from Mexico. His father was a mariachi and his grandfather was a folk musician in northern Mexico. In school, Márquez played the trombone in his school band, and he started composing when he was 16. He attended college in Mexico but also studied in Paris and in the United States. Currently, Márquez lives in Mexico City and works at the National University of Mexico.

Danzón No. 2 is one of the most popular and frequently performed Mexican contemporary classical orchestral pieces. Inspiration for the piece came from Márquez's travels to the town of Malinalco, Mexico in 1993. It pays homage to the traditional sounds of the Cuban danzón, but with Márquez's unique style and influences. Danzón No. 2 is an example of the merging of cultures to create a beautiful work of art!