

Chapter 11 “Oye Como Va”: Three Generations in the Life of a Classic Latino/American Dance Tune

A journey of Latin Caribbean Dance Music through “Oye Como Va”

- Watch a video of Tito Puente and his band to get a chance to see the instrumentation used, and to see Tito in action!
 - o <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZVK4IYDTyU>

“Oye Como Va” and Latin Dance Music in Context

- A product from the U.S. with a Puerto Rican background.
 - o Just like your teacher! Well at least half; your teacher is half Cuban, half Puerto Rican, all American!
- But the song’s musical identity is Cuban.
 - o Just like your teacher again (kinda)! Your teacher identifies herself culturally more as Cuban than Puerto Rican, due to her upbringing in Miami.
 - o The song comes from the legacy of the cha cha chá Cuban dance music that emerged in 1950s Havana.
 - o Tito Puente insisted his musical identity is Cuban rather than Puerto Rican or American
- The song is also known as a classic rock song by Santana
 - o Also kinda like your teacher because she loves classic rock music! (ok maybe this is a stretch)

What is Latin Dance Music?

- What is Latin America?
 - o Hispanic Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America.
 - o Also I’d say the U.S. because of the diaspora throughout the country, the fact that Mexico was most of the Southwest U.S., and Hispanics are the largest minority group in the U.S. Yeah pretty soon, everyone will speak Spanish in the U.S., it’ll be awesome. We’re taking over!
- The book describes Latin Dance Music as popular dance music that derived from the Caribbean, developed in the U.S. and Caribbean, and have made an impact on the U.S. and international music industry.
 - o I prefer to call the music Latin or Hispanic Caribbean Dance music, because there is dance music throughout all of Latin America.
 - o Remember also that Latin Caribbean dance music also includes music from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.
 - o New York has always been considered the hub, but that has changed to include Miami, which is now considered the gateway to Latin America.

Cuba, Creolization, and the Roots of Latin Dance Music

- Spain colonized Cuba and Puerto Rico, brought Africans to these islands for slavery. Remember that molasses, rum, sugar cane triangular trade you learned in school?

- Columbus “discovered” Cuba in 1492; found the Taíno people (Taínos lived all over the Caribbean, notably Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and Cuba; Taíno culture and language is not completely wiped out and can still be found today in Puerto Rican Spanish dialect) and basically wiped them out (they had to make room for the slaves and sugar cane plantations, you know how business is).
 - Basically Cuba has just gone downhill since Columbus arrived. You can blame Columbus for Castro (maybe).
 - The Africans forced into slavery were either Yoruba (modern-day Nigeria) or Congolese descent.
 - The slaves arrived much later than slaves in British colonies of the Caribbean.
 - According to the text, this can explain why Cuban music sounds much more “African” than other African influenced music of the Americas.
 - Also African slaves were allowed to continue their musical and religious traditions in combination with Catholicism

Santeria!

- Afro-Cuban religion based on West African religious traditions mixed with Catholicism
- Santeros (people who practice Santeria) also consider themselves Catholic
 - This was not the case with African slaves; Catholic saints were used to disguise the worship of their Orishas.
 - Orishas are deities or manifestations of the supreme God in this religion
 - Modern day santeros do pray to the Catholic saints and call the saints by their African Orisha names; they do not distinguish between the Orishas and Catholic saints
 - The largest Santero community outside of Cuba is in Hialeah, FL. The U.S. Supreme Court also ruled in 1993 that laws in Hialeah that outlawed animal sacrifice by Santeros were unconstitutional.
- Ritual drumming is performed on 3 drums called batá
 - Stringed bells are attached to the lowest-pitched lead drum
 - Each drum is a different size and pitch (low, medium, high)
 - Lead drummer’s part is mostly improvised; other drums play recurring patterns
 - Interlocking, complex rhythms
 - Sacred music
 - Santeros worshipping to Bablu Aye or San Lazaro (saint Lazarus)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwINyIRPjUo&feature=related>
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPk6WUBCFCs&feature=related>
 - An example of Bata drums being played
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqVv1P1fUWc&feature=related>

Rumba

- African derived dance music that is secular
- Played on 3 drums, congas! Congas are descendents of the original rumba drums *ngoma*
- The rhythms derive from a single rhythm called clave; played on claves
 - o Four basic clave patterns are the basis of Latin dance music rhythms
 - o Sometimes not played but merely felt by musicians, dancers, and listeners
- Other instruments: palitos (play an embellished clave), lead singer and background singers known as *el coro* (the chorus)
 - o Singers interact in call and response style
- Music accompanies dancing
- An example of rumba and the dance from Cuba in March 2008
 - o <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCeyuybgGO0&feature=related>
 - o An example of the dance rumba guaguanco
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPI6CpQIWWw&feature=related>

The Danzon-Mambo

- Congas, timbales, guiro, and maracas; cowbell added for the timbales player which then leads to the timbales “drum set” of 2 or more timbales, cowbells, woodblock, cymbals, and sometimes other instruments
- Violins, flute, piano, and also bass.
- Its influence led to big band mambo and cha cha chá.
- Various clips of the music and dancing
 - o <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11qPpZAZyMY>

Enrique Jorin and the Cuban Cha Cha Chá

- First cha cha chá ever recorded written by Jorin: “La Enganadora” (the Beguiler)
 - o <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp5tH73YRVE&feature=related>
- Along with his group, Orquesta America, Jorin wanted to create a style that non-Cubans can dance
 - o Inspired to write the song after watching American couples struggling to keep up with Cuban rhythms while dancing
 - o Tempos are comfortable, rhythmically simple (in my opinion super boring)
 - o Simple singing in unison, no call and response (once again boring; seriously look at the picture of the couple in the book, they are 50’s “Leave it to Beaver” boring!)

Mambo (Big Band Mambo)

- Perez Prado is noted as the “inventor” of mambo
 - o Had the first hit Mambo #5 in 1949. (no not that god-awful song by Lou Bega that is probably in your head right now)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOuRWkLP-dA>
- A Cuban style of music that originated outside of Cuba; a fusion of Afro-Cuban percussion, American jazz and pop music

- Features:
 - Big band instrumentation (like Ricky Ricardo and his band on “I Love Lucy”)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAV3bOJaQuY>
 - Musical textures featuring layered ostinatos throughout the band
 - Driving, Afro-Cuban percussion rhythms
 - Jazz influences
 - Fast tempos and highly energetic playing
 - Absence, or at least limited use, of singing

Tito Puente, the Newyorican Connection, and Latino/American Music culture in New York City

- Tito was born in Spanish Harlem (*el barrio*) in 1923 to Puerto Rican parents.
- Trained in big band jazz drumming, Cuban rhythms, western art music (he freaking went to Julliard), and Afro-Cuban music.
- Joined Machito and the Afro-Cubans in 1942, drafted during WW2 (played in the Navy Band), 1945 enrolled in Julliard
- In 1949 formed his first Latin dance band
- “Oye Como Va” (1963) is a cha cha chá with big band mambo elements; slightly faster tempo, it grooves and has organ and bass riffs (it has swagger; no really that is how it is described in the book)

Pan-Latino Identity and Transformations

- Santana’s “Oye Como Va” (Mexican rock guitarist cover)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIYAwd7dtZQ>
- Tito Puente Jr.’s “Oye Como Va” (Puerto Rican, influenced by pan-Latino mix in Miami, creating dance club music with a Latin influence)
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSSG3JpZobo&feature=related>

More Transformations: Popular Latin Caribbean Dance Music

- Salsa
 - Celia Cruz
 - Cuban salsa singer
 - Born in Havana, Cuba on October 21, 1925
 - Died in Fort Lee, NJ on July 16, 2003
 - Pretty much awesome.
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83S-KtvGM2M> “Rie y Llorá”
 - Marc Anthony
 - Born on September 16, 1968 in New York City
 - Puerto Rican-American musician, singer-songwriter, actor and producer
 - Top selling tropical salsa artist of all time
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ns9YYsqLxyI> “Valio la Pena”
- Bacahata, Merengue

- Juan Luis Guerra
 - Born on June 7, 1957 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
 - Dominican singer of popular styles bachata and merengue
- Bachata
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E87B3t9cnY&feature=related> “Bachata en Fukuoka”
- Merengue
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4i7tbqKWp4> “El Niagara en Bicicleta”
- Proyecto Uno
 - Dominican-American merenrap group
 - blend merengue with rap, techno, dancehall reggae, and hip-hop
 - founded in New York City's East Side in 1989
 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgHfT4_IniU&feature=related “El Tiburon”
- Reggaeton
 - Daddy Yankee
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGKrc3A6HHM&feature=related> “Gasolina”
 - Pitbull
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3DlakbinJU&feature=channel> “The Anthem”
 - Ivy Queen
 - Puerto Rican-American reggaeton composer and singer
 - Born on March 4, 1972 in Añasco, Puerto Rico
 - She is among the few female reggaeton artists
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYFzZ0rt-oE> “Yo Queiro Bailar”
 - Shakira
 - Colombian singer- songwriter
 - Born on February 2, 1977 in Barranquilla, Colombia
 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dsp_8Lm1eSk “La Tortura”