

How to expand your rhythm vocabulary using Choro, Brazil's first independent music

Choro is the music style that was born in Rio de Janeiro in the mid 1800's as an unwritten style. It converges influences of classical music and African music, and it is the foundation for samba and bossa nova, containing all the rhythmic elements that it appears in those styles later in Brazilian music.

What you need to know about Choro:

- it is an instrumental music style;
- considered Brazil's first independent music;
- main influences are the dance and music Lundu from Africa (possibly Angola), and classical music Polka/Waltzes/Modinha;
- happens in Rio de Janeiro after the Portuguese royal family moves to Brazil in 1808;
- full development in the 1920's with Pixinguinha;
- gave place to a simpler vocal style - the "samba"
- revival in the 1940's with Jacob do Bandolim;

Main early composers:

- Joaquim da Silva Callado
- Ernesto Nazareth
- Chiquinha Gonzaga
- Pixinguinha

Steps to expand rhythm vocabulary using Choro

1. transcribe short melodies, rhythmic phrases from Choro compositions;
2. Learn how to sing and clap with no articulation
3. Learn the articulation, using the accents according to what you hear from the recording (understanding that there is a predominance of accents on the upbeats coming from the influence of African music)
4. Sing and clap those rhythms with articulation while tapping your foot on 1 and 2;

Phrases used for the exercise:

1. From the piece *Lundu* by Mario de Andrade - the percussion instrument at the very beginning of the piece;
2. Also from *Lundu*, the rhythm pattern played by the harpsichord almost like a 'bass' line at the beginning of the piece;
3. From the Ernesto Nazareth composition, the bass line played by the left hand of the pianist, that when played with the accents, and subtracting the non accented note, becomes the iconic bass line pattern of samba groove, appeared much later;
4. Also from *Brejeiro* the first phrase of the melody;
5. From *Atraente* by Chiquinha Gonzaga, the first part of the melody, a sequence of sixteenth notes, with an interesting articulation that comes directly from the dance/music *Lundu*;
6. Beginning of the melody of the first choro composition *Flor Amorosa* by Joaquim da Silva Callado;
7. From *Lamentos* by Pixinguinha, the background phrase under the melody;

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