

INTRODUCING SAMBA

5 MINUTES READING #1





Samba is Mardi Gras or carnival music from Brazil that features a large percussion ensemble. It is music to dance to and had its own characteristic rhythms that distinguish it from other Latin-American music. It originates in Rio de Janeiro, the result of a unique musical fusion of Angolan, African, Portuguese and Spanish/Cuban cultures. Today, different types of samba have evolved, but by far the loudest, and most brash, is *Samba Batacuda*.



Samba Batacuda is a purely percussion form of samba and is very popular in Rio de Janeiro where a large number of samba schools exist. Competition between them is fierce, and year the Mardi Gras celebrations include a huge street procession in which every Samba school is represented, each competing for the prize of best performance of the year.



Samba is used as a backing to a song especially composed for the carnival on a theme such as the environment. The singers and the tuned percussion instruments ride on the decorated float and the percussionists walk, or rather dance, behind. Here in the UK, the style is catching on fast and most cities now have samba schools which regularly perform in carnival processions.



Questions to think about:

1. *Where does Samba music come from?*
2. *What is* Samba Batacuda?
3. *Describe the influences on Samba music.*
4. *Why do you think Samba music is particularly suited to the occasion of a carnival?*

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