

**Lesson/Rehearsal Plan**  
***Synonymic Bossa Nova***

Reference recording: <https://www.armyfieldband.com/images/uploads/education/SynonymicBossa.mp3>

**Warm-up/Skill-building suggestions**

**Objective:** Establish groove in the rhythm section.

In all Latin music including Bossa Nova, the eighth notes are played straight, not swung.

- Create a *Bossa Nova* groove by having the drummer play straight eighth notes on a closed hi-hat at 120 bpm.



- Using the butt end of the stick, have drummer add the cross-stick part on the snare drum rim with the following Brazilian Clave pattern.



- Have drummer add the following bass drum pattern.



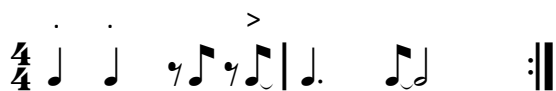
Click [here](#) for a pdf version of the basic Bossa Nova groove.

Have *all* students emulate this beat by assigning the three elements of the groove.

- hi-hat part could be rubbing hands together
- snare drum cross-stick (clave) could be clapping hands
- bass drum part could be tapping heel or clapping on thighs

**Keep repeating the groove until it *feels* good. Switch parts.**

**Objective:** Apply articulations to rhythms from Synonymic Bossa.



Click [here](#) for a pdf version of the above rhythm/articulation examples.

**Objective:** Increase students' technical skill.

- Have drummer play Bossa Nova groove.
  - have students play and repeat a concert Eb major scale to the ninth degree in straight eighth notes. Start at a slower tempo and gradually increase tempo as students gain more technical facility. Add various articulations. I.e. slur two, tongue two, etc.
  - Have students find the relative minor key of Concert Eb Major by starting on the root and moving diatonically (in the key signature) two notes (three semi-tones) down to Concert C. Start on Concert C and play with the same key signature as Concert Eb Major. Play and repeat this scale to the ninth degree gradually increasing tempo as students gain more technical facility. Vary the articulations.

<b>Rehearsal/Teaching Suggestions</b>
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Have students listen to the reference recording.

- Direct students to *actively* listen to certain things.
  - “Listen” to: the articulations, the drummer, the bass line, the releases, the phrase length and shape, the piano, the dynamic differences, etc.
  - Don’t be afraid to listen to a recording (or parts of a recording) multiple times to really *hear* what is happening.

Learn mm. 1-8 (Introduction)

- Have rhythm section (except guitar/vibes) play their parts and a medium volume. Adding a shaker playing straight eighth notes with slight accent on beats 1 and 3 will help the groove. Loop it until it *feels* good.  
*Note that the written drum part is modified from the traditional Bossa Nova groove to complement the ensemble figures.*
- Add the brass players and bari sax to bass/drums/piano paying careful attention to the articulations. Think ‘light’ on staccato notes and slight ‘push’ on the notes with agogic accents (>) Unify articulations of horns and bass/piano.
- Have entire rhythm section play with alto and tenor parts. Have students play very smooth, lyrical lines and shape them dynamically with the contour of the line. I.e. When the line goes up, crescendo, when it descends, decrescendo. Written tenuto articulations ( – ) have two meanings: very connected, full-value and “stressed or intensified”.
- Think crescendo means “start softer” on measure 7 to get more of the effect of crescendo.

Learn mm 9-25 (the melody)

- Melody is played in unison by tenor saxes, trumpet, guitar and vibes.
- Listen for good blend and balance between instruments.
- If you use vibes, choose mallets that are a bit harder to make the articulations more defined.

- Piano player may “comp” here using the chord voicings that are presented in the introduction. Comp or comping is short for complementing. By using a combination of sustained and shorter notes, make sure that what is being played doesn’t conflict with the other members of the rhythm section. Encourage members of the rhythm section to listen to one another and play as though they are having a conversation within their section. *Tendency is always to try and play too much. Less is more.*

Learn mm 25-32 (melody repeated, now harmonized and with different melodic material added)

- With the rhythm section, practice the melody in the saxes listening for good balance and unified articulations and releases.
- With the rhythm section, practice the trombone accompaniment part listening for balance and unified articulations and releases. Think light on the staccato eighth notes and contrast (stress) on the tenuto marks on beat one of measures 27 and 31.
- Have saxes, bones and rhythm section play together. It should be balanced such that the melody predominates.
- Add the trumpet line as though they are adding to the conversation, think light.
- Listen for unified articulations when the horns players are rhythmically unison.
- On measure 31, bring out the bari sax and bass line’s forward motion.

Learn mm 33-38 (continued melody harmonized, now rhythmically unison)

- Listen for evenness of crescendo into this section.
- Trumpet parts may be performed 8vB based on skill level.
- Instead of thinking loud through this section, encourage students to play with full sound and care given to hearing the melody come through.
- On the sustained dotted half notes, increase the volume slightly so that it feels as though the phrase is moving forward. Careful not to “mushroom” the notes.

Learn mm 39-46 (transition into the solo section using melodic material from the introduction)

- Bring the overall dynamic level of the band down to medium volume.
- Unify articulations.
- mm. 40 allow the motion in the alto and tenor saxophone lines to be heard.
  - It may be a matter of trombones and bari sax playing less as opposed to having saxes bring out the moving line. Have these students reduce volume on the sustained notes.
- In mm. 45 aim for a strong crescendo into the solo break.
- Having auxiliary percussion play on mm. 46 is optional.

Learn mm. 47-62 (Solo Section)

- Have the rhythm section first work without a soloist.
  - listen to one another and try not to play too much that the sound becomes cluttered.
  - Have the drummer play the more traditional Bossa Nova groove from the warm-up.

- Bass player could play roots and fifths of the chords mimicking the bass drum rhythm.
- If piano and guitar are both playing one should be playing more sustained notes while the other is playing notes of shorter duration.
- Piano, guitar and/or vibes could take turns “comping” behind a soloist.

**Click here for a backing track for students to practice improvising.**

Learn mm. 63-78 (recap of the melody with reduced instrumentation playing in unison)

- Aim for balance, blend and unified approach.

Learn mm. 79-86 (harmonized melody, with different instrumental roles than before)

- This section should be approached the same way as mm. 25-32 with the roles now reversed between trumpet and saxophones.

Learn mm. 87-92 (melody continued, harmonized and rhythmically unison)

- Approach this section the same as mm.33-38
- Aim for good balance, blend and shape of line.
- With horns only, practice the decrescendos and releases on 90 and 92. Listen so no instrument(s) sticks out.

Learn mm. 93-Fine (Ending which is essentially the material from the introduction)

- Rehearse brass and bari sax with the rhythm section listening for unified articulations, releases and balance.
- On sustained notes in alto and tenor saxes, crescendo slightly to keep the momentum moving forward.
- mm. 98 start softer and crescendo to a full sound for the last measure.

<b>Additional Musical Considerations</b>
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Bossa Nova which translates to “new trend” or “new wave”.

Bossa Nova music is generally lyrical, light, sparse and restrained.

Consider adding additional auxiliary percussion instruments including claves, congas, bongos, guiro, etc.

<b>Historical Considerations</b>
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Bossa Nova is a Latin music style that originated in Brazil in the 1950’s and 60’s. Pioneers of the style include Joao Gilberto and Antonio Carlos Jobim. Saxophonist Stan Getz popularized it in America.

<b>Suggested Listening</b>
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<i>Desifinado</i>	Stan Getz and Joao Gilberto	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=So718wk426c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=So718wk426c</a>
<i>Corcovado</i>	Astrud Gilberto and Stan Getz	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9srw5FRm5eA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9srw5FRm5eA</a>
<i>Girl from Ipanema</i>	Stan Getz and Antonio Carlos Jobim	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8VPntyLqSY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8VPntyLqSY</a>

