

# Lesson 10: Rhythms of the World

Lesson created by: Charlie Apicella



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presents

# BLUES ALIVE

## RHYTHMS OF THE WORLD



Griot playing a Kora

### RHYTHM

A strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.

We can appreciate rhythm all around us in nature and in the way our bodies function and perform. It is important in music, art, design, mechanics, and in all living things.

### GRIOT

A griot's job is to use song to preserve their community's history and traditions.

The griots of West Africa are the historians, musicians, and storytellers of their communities. Their occupation is passed down from father to son over countless generations and is taught through the oral tradition.

### MUSIC TRADITIONS

Question: What are some musical traditions from the Himalayan Mountain region of South Asia? Can you hear how they are similar to Caribbean, Native American, and African forms?



### TABLA DRUMS

(South Asia)

These drums are played in pairs, one large and one small with a combination of finger and hand techniques.



### SINGING BOWLS

(South Asia)

These bowls are used in Buddhist and Taoist religious practices. In the USA they often accompany meditation and relaxation.



### KALIMBA THUMB PIANO

(Africa)

Notes are produced by thin metal bars which are tuned to music notes. They are amplified using a hollowed out gourd.



### CONGAS

(Latin America)

Congas are played as one, two, or three drums. They are most often associated with Cuban and Puerto Rican religious and pop music.

### QUESTION

How does the influence of African drumming impact the music you hear everyday on the radio, in movies, on TV, and at home?

### Did you know?

There is a drum circle you can join every Sunday at Drummers Grove in Prospect Park?



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# South Asian instruments

**Tibetan Singing Bowl**, produces sound by striking with a felt covered wood beater or by friction by rotating the beater around the outer edge of the bowl producing a sustained note.

Singing bowls are often performed in Buddhist meditation and chanting practices as well as Chinese Taoism. In Western music they are used as an instrument in relaxation and music therapy.

<https://youtu.be/PLdrsEz5cTk?t=20>



**Madal Drum**, traditional folk instrument of Nepal, Pakistan, and other Himalayan regions.

The drum is played in a combination of finger and hand techniques almost like a hybrid of Indian tabla and Latin American conga drumming techniques.

YOUNG PERCUSSIONISTS OF GYANODAYA || Promoting Nepali Folk Music:

<https://youtu.be/bvXI4T964w>



# South Asian instruments

**Tabla**, is the backbone of Indian classical music. The two drums are played as a pair with an elaborate series of finger and palm strokes. The meter of the music and syllables used in instruction are highly complex and are taught in the **oral tradition**, as no standard music notation exists.



**Syahi**, is the black circle of “tuning paste” applied to the heads of tabla, madal, and similar drums of South Asian origin. It is applied by highly skilled craftsmen and consists of multiple layers of flour, water, iron shavings, and other secret ingredients.



# the griots

The **griots** of West Africa are the historians, musicians, and storytellers of their communities. Their occupation is passed down from father to son over countless generations and is taught through the **oral tradition**.

This vital profession originated with the **Mande** empire, one of the most influential and advanced civilizations of the ancient world. It peaked in the 14th century and included parts of all of the West African countries we have been discussing.

Typical griot instruments include the **balafon** (marimba/xylophone), **kora** (lute/harp), **djembe** (drum), **kalimba** or **mbira** (thumb piano), and **voice**. Each has several variations, and serve different roles in different countries.

A griot's job is to use song to preserve their community's history and traditions. They are essential in preserving traditional African identity as teachers, historians, advisors, and entertainers.



# syncretism

**Syncretism** is the combining of two practices to form a third, separate practice. It has happened everywhere in the world throughout history and continues to happen today.

This simple diagram shows how the red rectangle mixes with the blue to create a third, purple rectangle. We start with two and combine to end with three. The process occurs often in music. One example is African singing techniques and drum rhythms being used with European classical chord progressions in jazz music.

video definition:

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-cultural-syncretism-definition-examples-quiz.html>

## Religious Syncretism in the New World



# mirliton

Mirliton is an effect which produces a second voice similar to a call-and-response. It is a form of self-accompaniment which is an essential element of West African music.

One familiar example is the metal snares on the bottom head of a snare drum. As the stick strikes the top head, the bottom head resonates and rattles against the snares. This sympathetic vibration creates a pleasing distortion and augmentation of the drum's voice.



# mirliton



Mirliton has been utilized to great effect by modern masters such as Miles Davis and Jimi Hendrix.

Miles would achieve a buzzing, intimate sound with the Harmon trumpet mute. Jimi was an innovator of the electric guitar and made effects pedals a foundation of his technique.





# is rhythm only in music?

Rhythm can be heard or seen in patterns. It's the relationships between notes, colors and shapes, and in repetitions of lines and forms.

There are three main types of rhythm:

- **Regular rhythm** – elements are repeated exactly in an evenly spaced arrangement.
- **Flowing rhythm** – movement is suggested through repeating organic shapes or through irregular repetition of repeating elements.
- **Progressive rhythm** – a sequence is created in which the elements are changed slightly every time they are repeated.





## Glossary 4

### Rhythms of the World

- Blues** African American music that combined call and response with folk melodies and lyrics often about suffering or hardship, or romantic relationships. Often expresses joy in the face of adversity. Innovations in the early 20th century merged the folk vocal tradition with chord progressions which helped the blues to develop as the backbone of most subsequent music styles.
- Clave** The heartbeat of much of the music played in Latin America, clave' (clah-vay) is the word for "key" in Spanish. Characterized by a two-bar rhythm pattern which was brought to the New World from West Africa.
- Diaspora** The dispersion or scattering of any people from their original homeland.
- Griot** The bard, poet, story teller, historian of a community. They are both male and female and the keepers of the oral tradition of their community. Griots are especially important in West African cultures and are still prolific today.
- Indigenous** The original human inhabitants of a land. For example, Native Americans are the indigenous people of the United States.
- Mirliton** Musical instrument or device in which sound waves produced by the player's voice or by an instrument vibrate a membrane, thereby imparting a buzzing quality to the vocal or instrumental sound. Such examples are the kazoo, snare drum, electric guitar distortion, and low-fi sampling techniques in hip hop.
- Oral Tradition** The cultural knowledge and information that has been passed down through speech from one generation to the next. With music in particular it includes demonstration, imitation, and repetition between the teacher and the student.

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| <b>Rhythm</b>      | <p>A strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.</p> <p>We can appreciate rhythm all around us in nature and in the way our bodies function and perform.</p> <p>Rhythm can be heard or seen in patterns. It's the relationships between notes, colors and shapes, and in repetitions of lines and forms.</p> |
| <b>Senegambia</b>  | <p>The western most land of the African continent, collectively the Republic of Senegal and Republic of The Gambia. The region has a rich musical culture and was geographically important to the slave trade.</p>   |
| <b>South Asian</b> | <p>Refers to people from the following countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.</p>   |
| <b>Syncretism</b>  | <p>Involves the merging or assimilation of several originally discrete traditions into a unified new practice. Many styles of music from Africa have merged with Western music to form new styles such as ragtime, blues, and jazz.</p>  |