Latin Style for String Orchestra

Clinicians:
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Featuring:

District 203 Junior High School String Ensemble

Naperville, Illinois
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Rebecca Rudy and Jerry Zitko, Directors

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The Rhythm Section

Save Rehearsal Time and Frustration

- Rehearse the tune with the rhythm section **first**
- Do a little research on the proper rhythmic patterns
- Put the rhythmic "jigsaw puzzle" together in **"layers"**
- If any element causes instability, try changing the layering order and bring the troublesome element in only when other components are synchronized

For All Styles: General Rhythm Sectional Hints

- Players must avoid overfilling and know **their role** in this rhythmic "jigsaw puzzle"
- Be very conscious of how each rhythm section part fits into the whole
- Work to get all elements **tight**
- Fills should not interfere with one another; keep it **simple**
- Tutti fills (to setup major entrances, etc.) are very effective

Remember the Clave!

- Decide 2/3 or 3/2 right away (Son, Rumba, etc.). It does not change.
- Look for hints in the music (drum parts) if you cannot tell right away
- Look for hints in the melodic line or comping patterns. The Clave remains fixed, and the phrases revolve around it. An even number of measures constitutes no change in the direction of the clave, whereas, an odd number of measures creates a change in direction.
- Have an auxiliary percussion player either clap or play clave on a wood block
- If the tune is written in 6/8, decide between either the 2/3 or 3/2 Afro-Cuban 6/8 clave
- Remember that using the wrong clave pattern will make the whole tune "feel" wrong!

The String Section

Technique

- Energize the bow: faster bows for melodic lines, careful bow choreography
- Short notes are light: subtle short note rather than classical staccato
- Expressive vibrato: often subdued, speed up for emphasis

Musical Issues

- Written and unwritten accents: listen to clave
- Rhythmic factors: forward drive, importance of right hand
- Quick dynamic changes

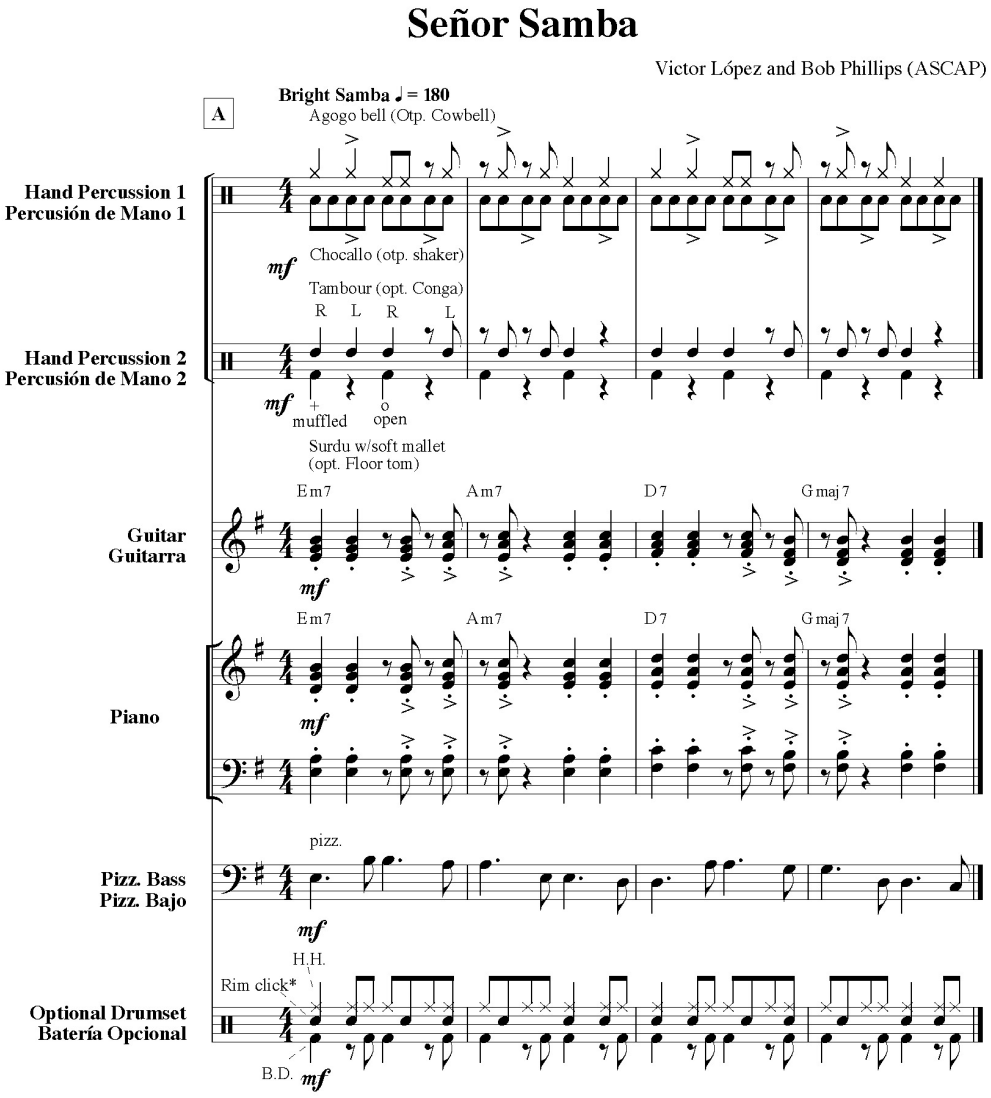
Orchestral Setting

- Flexible arrangements
- Listen to recordings and even learn the dances
- Move while playing: learn to internalize rhythms
- Use community and student experts to increase authenticity

Suggested Rhythm Section Patterns

Samba

- Usually played at a faster tempo
- Should have the feeling of a 2/4 pulsation
- The syncopation does not alter the basic two-measure phraseology
- If there is a clave-like rhthmic pattern, it is usually played on the snare drum by the left stick



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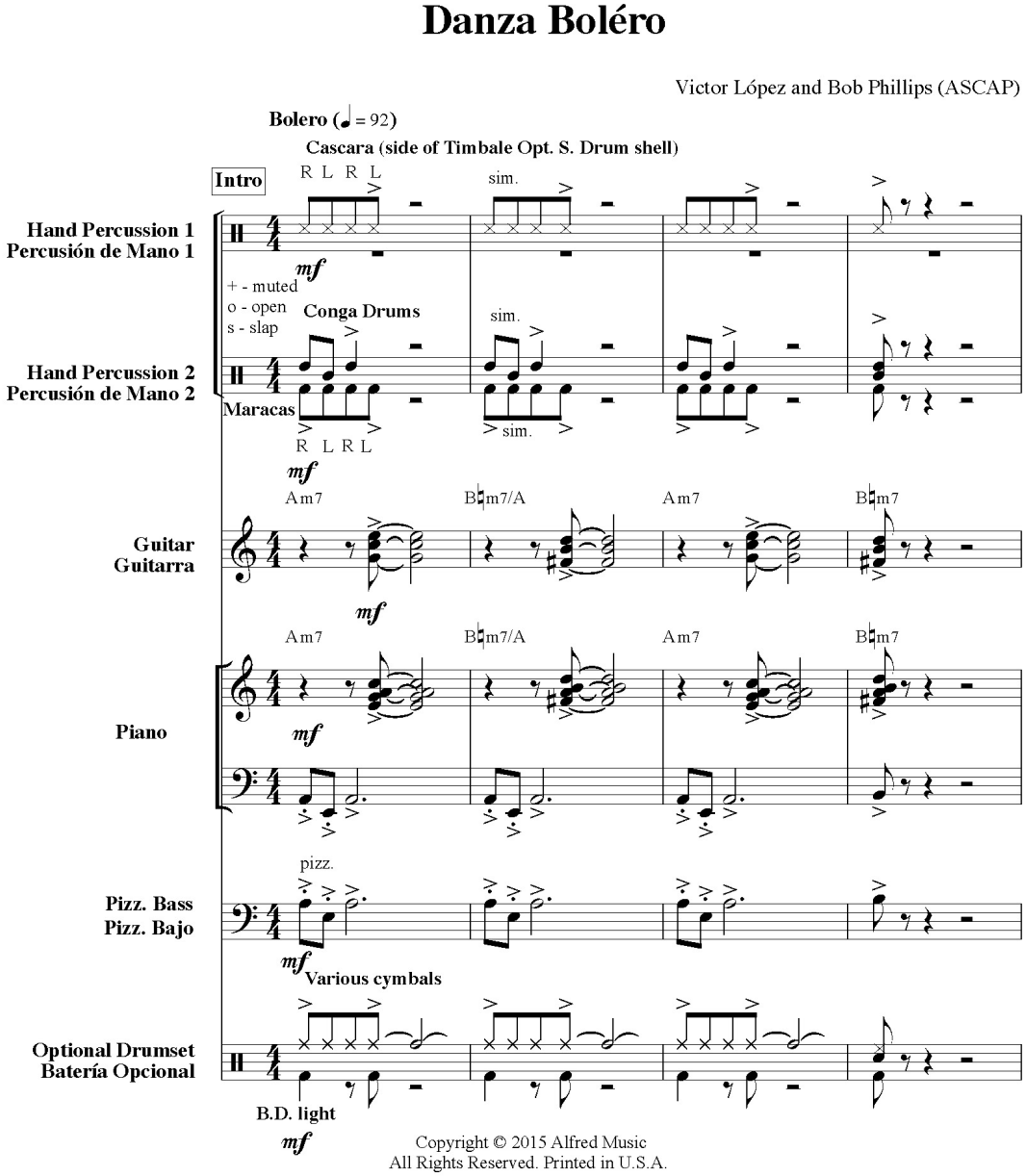
Bolero

- A slow, lyrical ballad – not to be confused with the Maurice Ravel composition of the same name
- Usually placed at a slow tempo
- Different than the Cha-cha-cha but rhythmically incorporates the same parts, especially in an open vamp section
- Typical Bass line rhythmic pattern is a half note followed by two quarter notes



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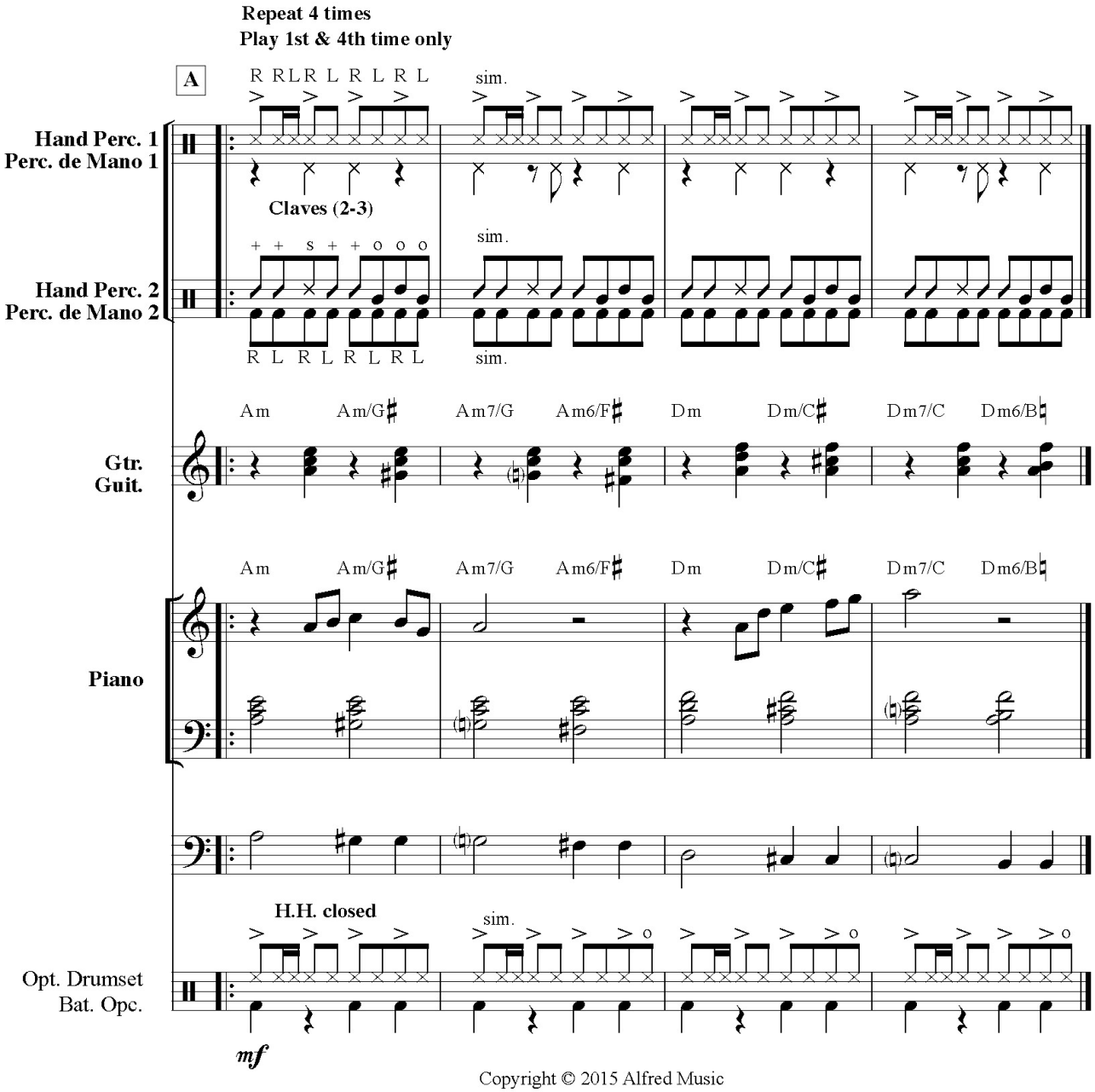
Danza Boléro



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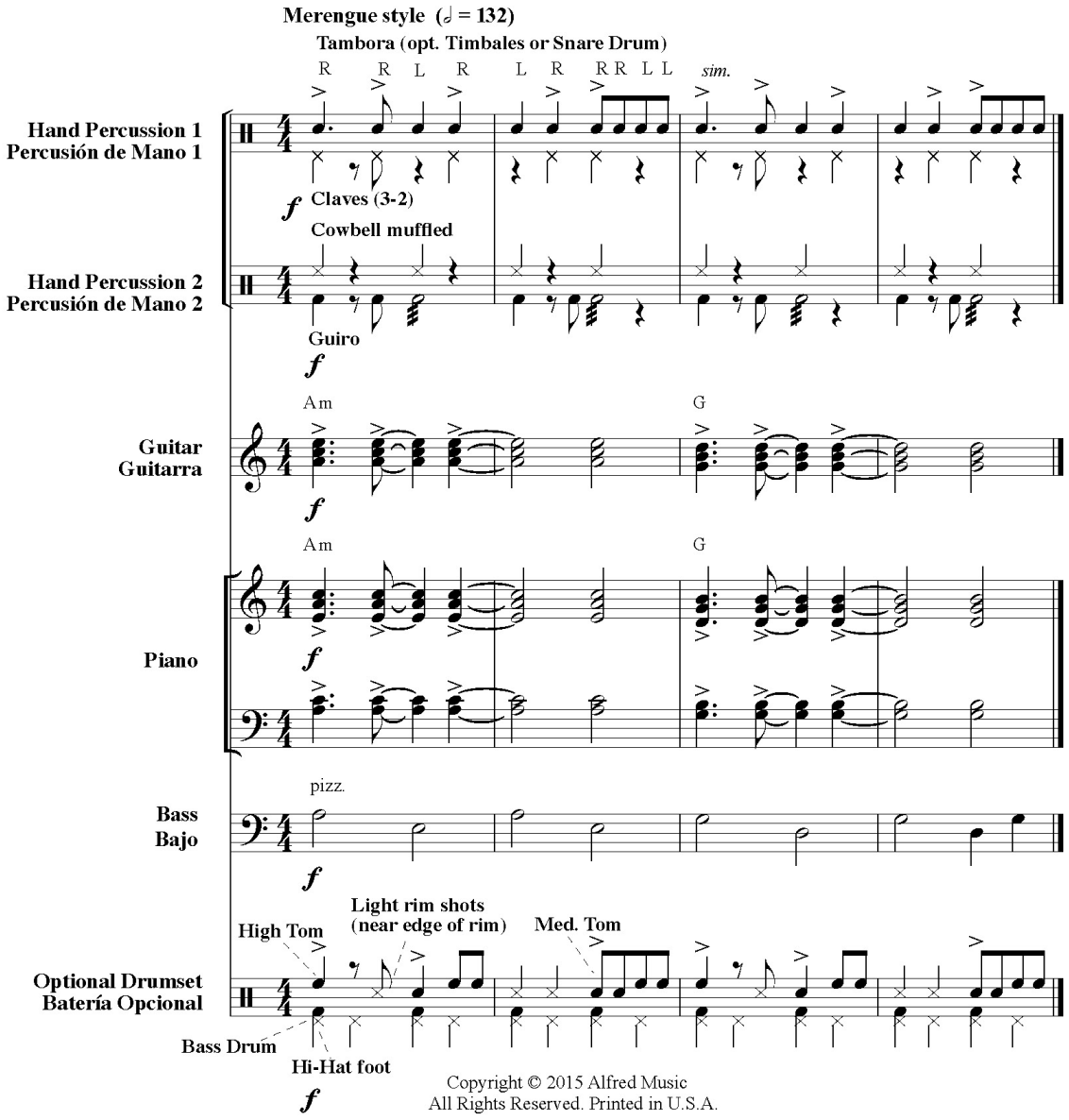
Merengue

- Popular dance rhythm native to the Dominican Republic
- If there is no güira (metal scraper) or güiro, the drummer plays this crucial part on the Hi-Hat
- Along with Salsa, it is the most commercialized Latin song style
- The primary Bass pattern has been and continues to play the root and fifth on down beats

Merengue Dance

Victor López and Bob Phillips (ASCAP)



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Additional Common Latin Styles

Son/Son Montuno, Mambo, Salsa, Cha-Cha-Cha, Bossa Nova, Afro-Cuban, Rhumba, Tango

Suggested Resources

Bardfeld, Sam. *Latin Violin: How to Play Charanga, Salsa and Latin Jazz Violin*. New York, Music Sales Corporation, 2002.

Berroa, Ignacio. *Mastering the Art of Afro-Cuban Drumming* – VH0215 (Instruction on Important Afro-Cuban rhythms, traditional Latin instruments, and Drum Set), Alfred Publishing Company, 2000.

Gerard, Charley, and Marty Sheller. *Salsa, The Rhythm of Latin Music.* Crown Point, White Cliffs Media Company, 1989.

Hernandez, Horacio "El Negro". Festival: Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez – VH0357 (Performance and insights into playing Drum Set in this style), Alfred Publishing Company, 2011.

Roberts, John Storm. *The Latin Tinge, The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1979.

Uribe, Ed. *The Essence of Afro-Cuban Percussion & Drum Set*. Van Nuys, Alfred Publishing Company, 1996.

Uribe, Ed. *The Essence of Brazilian Percussion & Drum Set*. Van Nuys, Alfred Publishing Company, 1996.

Recommended Listening

Irakere
Irakere en Vivo
Bailando Asi
Irakere

Eddie Palmieri
Azucar Pa Ti
Sentido

Paquito de Rivera
40 years of Cuban Jam Session
Manhattan Burn

Tito Puente
El Rey
Para Los Rumberos

Celia Cruz
Exitos
Canta Celia Cruz

Ray Barretto
Que Viva la Musica
Ritmo de la Vida

Stan Getz
Girl from Ipanema

Oscar de Leon
La Salsa Yo Soy
Con Bajo y Todo

Los Van Van
Songo

Arturo Sandoval
El Tren Latino

Arsenio Rodriguez
Sabroso y Caliente

Israel "Cachao" Lopez
Maestro de Maestros
Descargas con el Ritmo de Cachao

String Artists:
Alfredo de la Fe, Violin
Federico Britos, Violin
Jesús Florido, Violin
Ali Bello, Violin
James Sanders, Violin
Anthony Blea, Violin
Carlitos del Puerto, Bass