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Rumba Clave

The rumba clave is unique in the fact that it can be phrased a number of ways, depending on the musical situation, of course. Sometimes this clave is played with a "strict four feel" and sometimes with a "six feel." Other times the phrasing falls somewhere between these two (duple and triple) meters. The standard notation system cannot do justice to this rhythm or "feel," as it is impossible to capture this feel in writing, and attempting to do so and then perform the written version would diminish the integrity of the music. However, the following examples can help you to visu-

alize the clave rhythm and obtain a starting place for your studies of combining these two superimposed feels (meters). I suggest that you listen to a variety of Afro-Cuban music and feel how clave is phrased in each instance.

Practice playing the clave rhythm (right hand) on a wood block, or the side (shell) of the floor tom. Play the subdivisions quietly with the left hand on another sound source such as the hihat and listen carefully to the phrasing. Practice each two measure pattern until you feel comfortable with your rhythmic execution and your sound.

Audio Note: On the recording the following examples are played on a woodblock and the snare drum. They can be played on any two distinct sound sources on your set.



1.

2.



3.

4.