

Building Clave-based Latin Patterns on the Drum Set  
James Dreier, IDOP Clinic, March 27, 2009

5 Five steps to create clave-based drum set patterns that work:

1. Assess and understand your role assess
2. Play “in” clave
3. Incorporate the Cuban - counterpoint concept
4. Use a functional, authentic Latin vocabulary
5. Apply new ideas to established Afro/Cuban patterns  
(See the four examples given in the following pages)

**Example 1, Cascara, p 2:** This pattern is often played on the sides (shells) of the timbales. The pattern itself is from the rumba tradition, but is now most associated with mambo, son montuno, and other related “salsa” styles.

**Example 2, Snare part for Conga de Comparsa, p 3:** The conga style is similar to samba from Brazil in function (both for Carnival celebrations) and sound (both feature a parade of hand drums, bells and low bass drums played with mallets). The snare part has a strong “swing” to it, with crushed and stretched notes.

**Example 3, Timba-Go, p 4:** This is a pattern that was featured in my article of the same name for the July 09 issue of *Modern Drummer*. Copies of this article are available after the clinic to anyone who is interested.

**Example 4, José Amat Rumba Pattern, p 5:** A recent trip to Cuba (Jan. 09) gave me and fellow OAM drummer Paul Cunliffe a chance to study with legendary percussionist José Eladio Amat, known as “the Teacher.” He is the head of percussion instruction at Escuela Nacional de Artes de La Habana and has had an illustrious career of touring, performing and recording. The pattern presented here is a variation of one that he showed us.

**Drum Key**