

# The history and influence of latin music



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The history and influences of Latin American music started in the 1550 by the Moorish and African slaves. Latin America's style of music has a mix of European, African, and Indigenous influences. Latin music today is played to celebrate events and many other happy happenings this is where in my essay I will focus in the early times of Latin America, the indigenous civilizations of Aztec, Maya, and Inca had their style of music for rituals and ceremonies, but when the Europeans came in the colonial period, they brought their Roman Catholic religious and also changed the views of many indigenous people including their style of music. At the time European was conquering Latin America, the Europeans brought African slaves for labour, but because they were not allowed to believe in their believes, the African slaves used their own instruments that were brought with them when they were forced into slave trade to create rhythms to communicate, tell stories, and share unspeakable joy which all created the beat of Latin Music. Lastly I will talk about present Latin music itself and what influences was kept.

Oldest musical traditions in Latin America were based on the three great civilizations of Maya, Inca, and Aztec. The three great civilizations played three types of music. The first one was played for pleasure that inspired group singings and dances. The second type was functional music for instance, work songs and martial music. The last type of music was the largest category, it was religious music used for rituals and communication. For the largest category of music, their religion was extremely important to the indigenous people. They had their unique kind of music to please the evil gods to bring good lucky, another to bring good harvest and most importantly the rain god to bring water for drinking and farming. Many of

these type of music was played when a ritual was happening, sacrifices would be done at the same time. There were centuries where the music that were heard by authors and music scholars and they would say it was barbaric and frightful. Though many disagreed with the music of sacrifice, many were impressed by the large variety of detailed instruments ranging from flutes made out of clay, conch shells used like a trumpet, rattles, and drums ranging from different sizes. Music was always played in festivals, and a particular song was played for each big event. Even small villages of Amerindians musicians produce music that is diverse and unique to each village. As the European came in the colonial period, their influenced evolved indigenious style of music to more detailed pieces.

When Spain and Portugal started to settle on American land in the colonial period, the Spanish and Portuguese brought their culture along with them especially their Roman Catholic religious believes, where the indigenious people began the use their influence of arts. In this period the indigenious people were beginning to be influenced by their arts and many Europeans played many kinds of their famous music in churches to convert Indians into Catholicism. Their music however did not play a major role in the development in Latin American and especially Brazil's popular music. When the Christmas season came, autos were introduced to the Indians and they were highly influenced by the later music of Latin America. At this time, the colonist of Europe brought European instruments and the natives quickly adopted these, but because the Indians tried not to copy the exact instrument, they would construct similar ones but with better quality items. For example the guitar, the Indians would change the tuning of the strings or

change the guitar box with an armadillo shell. But not till the twenty-first century, the Maya still played their old songs but with European instruments where they shared Mayan roots with both Aztec and Spanish borrowings. Latin America gained independence during the early nineteenth century. With the independence, music shifted its status in leadership. In the nineteenth century the musical life of Latin American started using the piano to produce salon music. Many different kinds of Latin American music were produced but not all kinds were so popular. Italian lyricism, German and French romanticism were the three biggest influences to Latin American composers of the nineteenth century. By the end of nineteenth century, Latin America started to not lean so much towards the European traditions and started to create national music. As this new development of nationalism music, composers started to focus more into folk and popular themes. In this new development, Brazil began to use native melodies to compose their music. The most important development of Latin American music during the Colonial Period was in the sixteenth century when African slaves were sent to the Caribbean Islands and Brazil, and this is where the base of contemporary Latin American music started.

Latin American music is highly influenced by European colonization and by the African slaves. The African slaves brought the following characteristics for their style of music: multiple percussive lines, polyrhythms, polymeric vocal polyphony, choreographic features, mystical-religious references, the use of a stanza-refrain form, and specific instrumentation as they were forced into labour on unfamiliar land from slave trades, which created vibrant rhythms and melodies to Latin America from their homeland. The

music they play associates with work, play and spiritual purposes because they were not allowed to practise their beliefs so they create rhythms to communicate, tell stories, and share unspeakable joy. Their music comes in a range for every occasion from lullabies to punishments and because of their diversity, each group of African slaves produce different musical styles with a wide variety of instruments from rattles, to woodwinds, to drums, to stringed instruments. One of the larger groups known as the Moorish people also known as Afro-Caribbean brought their culture up front and it came forth. In 1776 Moorish people were prohibited to play drums and the Caribbean slaves were allowed, which were just for recreation, entertainment, and the most important, communication. All of these played the traditional Moorish and African rhythms on a drum and the basic beat for Latin American music. The African slaves were always interested in coming up with new rhythms that they liked to play in ensembles of different percussion instruments but because they are rich in rhythmic form, their melodic variation is extremely poor. African beats highly influenced the creation of samba, where ancient drumming and circular dance ritual called the bataque are included. Although the bataque was originally a religious dance, slaves disguised it as a secular celebration because the Portuguese forbade the Africans to practice their sacred beliefs. The word "samba" first appeared in 1838 where it originally originated from an African dance known as the mesemba but the actual samba dance and music was created in 1917. History has said that the African-Brazilian people in the working class of Rio de Janeiro probably invented the samba. The rhythms of the samba had three roles: to sing, dance, and to parade at carnivals. Ernesto does Santos; a black musician recorded the first samba song in 1916. When

Manuel Diniz opened a maxixe academy in Paris, the samba dance gained much popularity in Europe in 1921. Samba's name was for its rhythm, but there were different kinds of samba. The most fast paced and extreme was the batucada. The batucada is both the name for a large samba percussion group and a drumming style with two rhythms mixed together.

Latin music is a combination of influences from Africa, Europe, and the indigenous people of Latin America. Latin music is influenced by Spanish songs, African and indigenous rhythms, European classical and popular music from the Catholic Church. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, ballad, rhythm, blues, jazz, rocks, reggae, Afro-pop, and hip-hop were created. Rhythms and harmonies are the two elements that help differ Latin music from European and North American music. Many European classical and church influences were incorporated into Afro-Cuban music. The rhythmic structure or the beat is the most distinctive elements in Afro-Cuban music. Latin music is a five-beat pattern called the clave. There are two wooden clave sticks which are used by musicians to tap out the underlying rhythms of a song. Contemporary Latin music shows three main trends. The first are the ones who follow the footsteps in expressing their love for their country in the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century. The second most influential group are composers who seek to accommodate their cultures myths and express their own individuality at the same time. Lastly they are the ones who ignore both the love of their country and cultural myth. Their music is developed along experimental lines.

In conclusion Latin American music is a popular music that has a history of cultural mixes. Without the conquest of the Spanish and Europeans, they

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would never have given influences to the style and also the bring African slaves over for the beat of today's Latin music From Africa to the Aztec and the Inca, the forebears of Latin music have circled the globe for hundreds of years. The unique melodies and instruments played important roles in ancient societies, and they continue to influence millions of musicians in the 21st century