

INTRODUCTION

This book is intended for intermediate and advanced keyboard players interested in improving their ability to play Brazilian music. It is assumed that you can read music and have a basic understanding of chord construction and common chord symbols. Even without this background, you can incorporate some of the fundamentals by studying the text and working with the accompanying CD. Parts of the book will be useful for non-pianists interested in developing a better understanding and feel.

Just as Brazil has a rich diversity in plant and animal life in its rain forests, so too is it home to a wide variety of musical styles. The musical culture of Brazil, spread over a large geographical area, has many roots and manifestations. A thorough description of it would require a series of books. Our goal for this book is to present elements of the branch that is most appealing to keyboard players and familiar to audiences outside of Brazil. In keeping with this goal, this book features *choro*, *samba*, and *bossa nova*, which form a line that runs through the core of the Brazilian national style of music. For additional information on Brazilian music, you are encouraged to check out the Bibliography, as well as this author's website, brazilianpiano.com.

We start with rhythmic training in order to develop the fundamental groove of Brazilian music. Next, a variety of examples build up a rhythmic and harmonic vocabulary that can be used when playing the original songs that follow, or other songs you may already know, or encounter in the future. It is my hope that this book will help you develop your feel for the music, and thereby contribute to an increased appreciation and understanding of the culture.

– Robert Willey

My idea for this book was to translate my experience playing Brazilian music into music notation, and to expose the student to some styles of music related to the samba rhythm. I recommend that you begin your study by playing *ganzá* or some other shaker along with CD **Track 5**. Once you can play sixteenth notes evenly, the next step is to count out loud two beats in each bar. The count on the second beat should be emphasized, with each beat divided into four straight (un-swung) sixteenth notes. Work on this until playing in 2/4 is comfortable for you. It's very important to internalize this rhythm before you move on to study the syncopated patterns in the second and fourth chapters.

The next step when I teach piano lessons is to work on tunes. We took the same approach in this book, by first learning them as piano solos in order to develop a solid harmonic and rhythmic foundation. After mastering the chord progressions, melodic phrasing, and form of a song in a solo setting, you will be ready to move on to playing arrangements for trio or quartet. As the size of the group grows, you can turn over the role of playing chord roots and some of the rhythm to the other players. We have included lead sheets of the songs at the end of the book in case you would like to play the tunes with other musicians.

– Alfredo Cardim

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