Building Your Bateria

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Building Your Bateria: Effective Teaching Methods for Rio-Style Samba *Batucada*

National Conference on Percussion Pedagogy, May 21, 2019
Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX

Samba In Your Percussion Curriculum

- Cultural education through global music
- Builds a culture of community among students
- Prepares students for other musical opportunities (i.e. jazz ensemble, outside gigs, etc.)
- Audiences love it! (students do, too)
- Gigging opportunities for your program (exposure, revenue, etc.)
- Depending on your ensembles, teaching loads, etc. it will be up to you to balance appropriately in your curriculum

Before moving on…

- Concepts today can be applied to any world music ensemble
- Hopefully, you'll find that "World Music" concepts can apply to nearly any ensemble experience

Outline

- Instructor responsibilities
- Teaching techniques and sequencing material
- Broad concepts addressed at every level of instruction
- Issues and solutions

Instructor Responsibilities

- Know the technique and function of each instrument
    - Big task, but necessary for ensembles like this
- Knowledge/vocabulary of repertoire
    - Breaks, calls, songs, improvisations, etc.
    - Hand signals and “conducting” skills
- Proper student placement on instruments
    - What are your goals?
    - What is your timeframe?
- Provide cultural knowledge throughout course of learning

Instrument Placement Guide

Instrument	Technique	Rhythm	“Chops” required
Repinique	Medium difficult	Easy	Conga slap, endurance
Caixa	Medium difficult	Medium	Stick chops, endurance
Surdo 1 & 2	Easy	“Easy,” though fundamentally crucial	Timing, strength and endurance!
Surdo 3	Medium difficult	Advanced	Rhythm, phrasing… ENDURANCE!
Tamborim	Difficult	Advanced	Lots of rote learning/ memorization

Instrument Placement Guide

Instrument	Technique	Rhythm	"Chops" required
Chocalho	Difficult	"Easy" in relative terms	Endurance!!! Needs to fully understand "Swing"
Agogô	Easy	Medium/Easy	Ensemble balance
Cuica	Medium	Medium	Specialty instrument, not required for small ensembles
Timbal	Medium difficult	Medium	Not always used in Rio style bateria.

Pedagogical Approaches - Rehearsals

- Rote/aural learning from the start
    - Transcriptions are ok, though should mainly be used for the director's memory
- Play as much as possible
    - Rehearsing by rote and practicing the style - lots of repetition! More playing = more fluency
    - Balance history/cultural information with playing when students need a break
- Balance sectional time when necessary
    - Tamborims need it the most!

Teaching a Beginning Bateria

- Teaching Sequence #1 - Each instrument individually, layering in together

    1. Caixa - Provides the swing/feel of the bateria. Everyone can learn this part together (2 sticks + practice pad)
    2. Repinique - Basic tones, grip and feel
    3. 3rd surdo - Basic part and feel

Beginning Bateria Part 2

- Teaching Sequence #2 (Previous instruments continue)

    1. Add Surdo 1 and 2
    2. Add Tamborim
    3. Add Agogô and Chocalho

Agogo

Chocalho

Etc.

Tamborim

X=Rimshot, LH="Slap" tone

Repinique

R R R L R R R L R R R L R R R L

Caixa

R L L R R L R L R L R L R L R L

(Mute)

Surdo 3

(Mute)

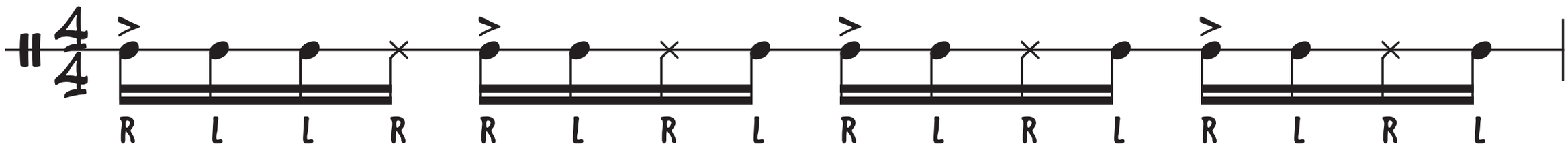
Surdo 2

(Mute)

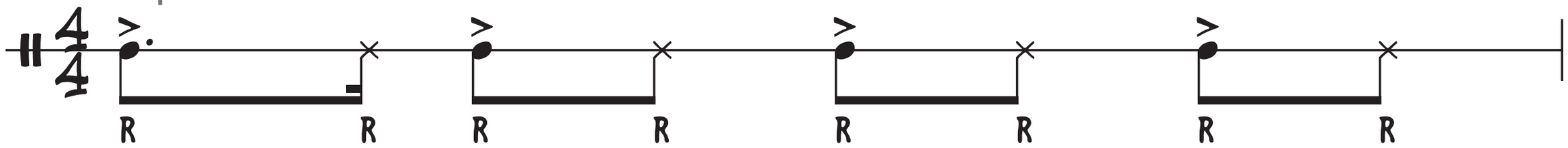
Surdo 1

“Breaking Down” each instrument

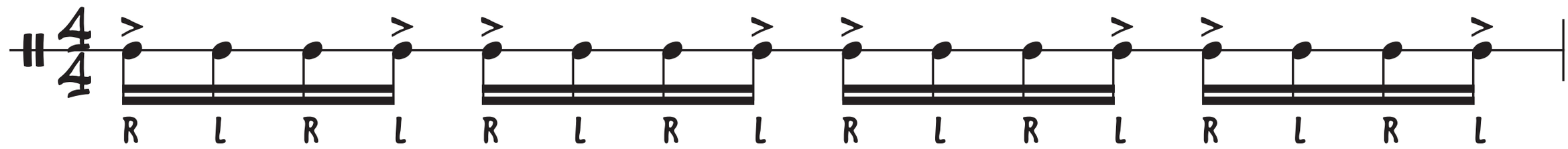
- Caixa



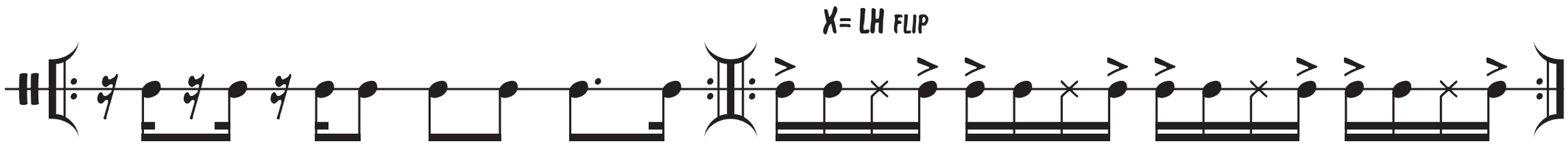
- Simplified



- Alternate pattern

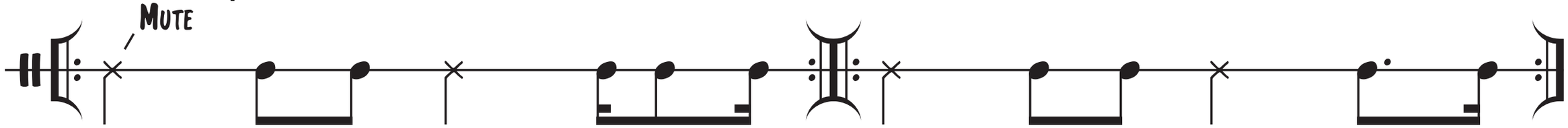


- Each instrument should have its own sequence
    - Each rhythm in the sequence can be used as a functional part in the ensemble
- Ex: Tamborim

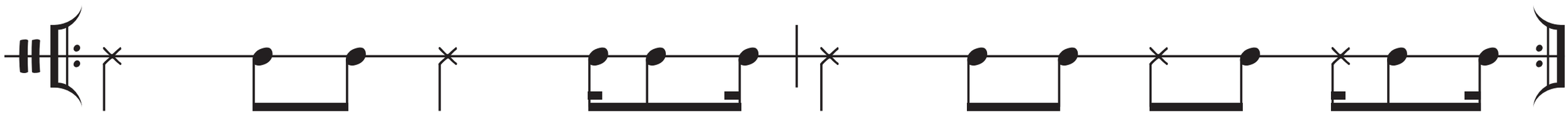


- 3rd Surdo Sequence

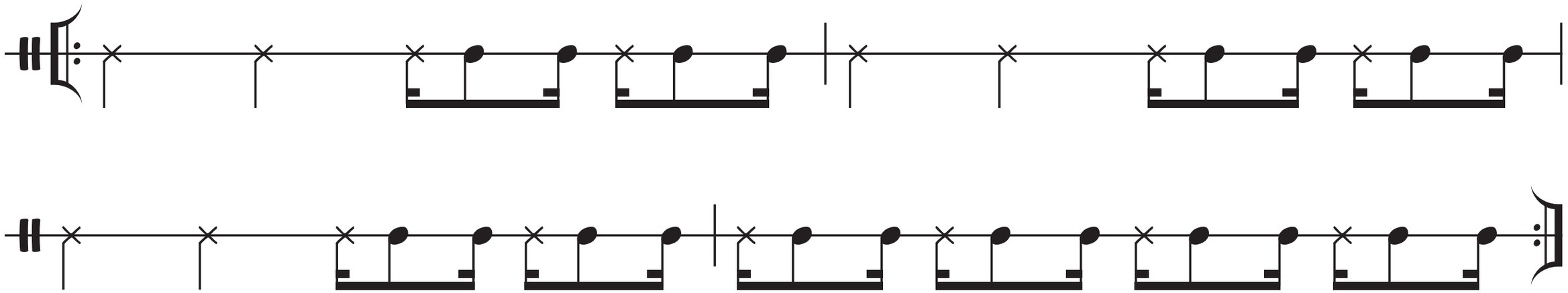
1. Basic parts



2. First Variation



3. Long Variation (feeling off-beats)



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ETERNIZANDO A BATUCADA
RITMISTA

After everyone knows their basic part…

- Parada - Stop
- Chamada - Call in
- Enredo “#1” - Break that occurs at the top of a samba enredo
- Then introduce more complicated breaks like these…

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General Thoughts

- As your ensemble progresses, take each instrument through the proper steps so the students are advancing. No one should be bored!

- Teaching breaks, calls, etc. should be introduced as early as possible. Teach these by rote. Use vocalizations (singing) to help remember and review

- Add choreography when necessary - adds another element of interest, especially if playing without singing

Broad Teaching Thought #1

- What actually is Samba Batucada?
    - A drumming focused ensemble that can stand alone without dancers, singers, string players, etc.
    - Most musical material comes from samba *enredo* (theme songs) played during Carnaval
    - Explore the relationship - learn breaks from new *enredo* each year, or if you're able, learn an *enredo* as well (more instruments and singers required)

Broad Teaching Thought #2

- Technique
    - Revisit when needed. I believe there can be such thing as “too much” talk about technique
- Groove and “Swing”
    - Revisit this almost every rehearsal. Can be taught throughout the year
    - Assign recording play along assignments outside of class
- Articulation
    - Make sure to tune instruments properly so specific sounds are easy for the students
    - Listening carefully to recordings, watching videos for articulation nuances

Broad Teaching Thought #3

- Practicing Physical Endurance
    - Intentionally spending longer periods of time in rehearsal to build chops and endurance
    - Proper instrument straps or stands (depending on group) make all the difference

Issues

- How do I learn to play all those instruments?
- My ensemble is too large/small for the instruments we have
- This music won’t fit into my curriculum

Solutions

- Immersion. It’s also okay to be vulnerable as a teacher
- Instrument substitutions, creative arrangements
- More concerts? Concert themes, extra ensembles?

Concluding thoughts

- Similar techniques to running a Western Percussion Ensemble

- Rehearsals: Play as much as possible!

- Educate with cultural knowledge throughout course of learning

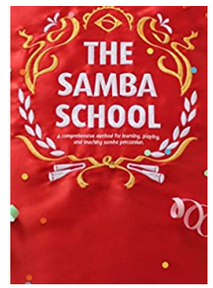
- Each individual part should have its own sequence - you can introduce new parts of this throughout the semester/year

- Balance is key - musical material, technique, culture/history, choreography, sectionals, etc. can all be balanced to avoid rehearsal “fatigue”

Resources

- “The Samba School,” by Dana Monteiro

  - Method book with techniques, instrumentation, breaks, very well organized resource



- www.sambamasterclass.com, featuring Jorge Alabê and Michael Spiro

  - Online subscription website, lots of individual instrument technique videos

- www.viradadrums.com

  - Brazilian instrument store with some video resources

Thank you!

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