

# JAMAICAN RHUMBA

## QSO LEARNING /2017

EXPLORE  
Dance Inspirations

15 and 16 March 2017  
QSO Studio

70



Queensland Symphony  
Orchestra

Alondra de la Parra | Music Director

## Arthur Benjamin – Composer, Conductor and Pianist

Arthur Benjamin was an Australian, born in Sydney in 1893 his family moved to Brisbane when he was three years old. He learnt piano from George Sampson, the organist of St John's Cathedral in Brisbane and attended Brisbane Grammar School. Arthur Benjamin was very talented musically and he won a scholarship to attend the Royal College of Music in London and this is where he studied composition.



In 1915, during World War One, Benjamin enlisted in the Royal Flying Corp. He was shot down over Germany in 1918 and became a prisoner of war.

In 1919 he returned to Australia and worked as a piano teacher at the State Conservatorium of Music in Sydney and then also in London. He composed for piano and also for orchestra. Benjamin travelled the world as a piano examiner and became very interested in the folk or traditional songs and dances of the countries he visited. He used these in his compositions. Arthur Benjamin also wrote music for films including Alfred Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew too Much* (1934), *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934) and *Fire Down Below* (1957).

Arthur Benjamin also lived and worked in Canada but died in London in 1960 of cancer.

## Two Jamaican Pieces – *Jamaican Rhumba*

Arthur Benjamin became most famous for his composition of *Two Jamaican Pieces*, one of which is the *Jamaican Rhumba*.

Benjamin visited the West Indies and while there discovered a traditional native melody called *Mango Walk*. He used this melody in a composition for piano and then for orchestra making this simple song famous all around the world and sung by children everywhere.

The Jamaican government were so pleased that this song made their country well-known around the world, that it is said that the government gave Arthur Benjamin a free barrel of rum a year as thanks.

Listen to [Jamaican Rhumba](#) by Arthur Benjamin.



## Rhumba – The Dance and the Rhythm

A Rhumba is a Latin rhythmic dance which originated in Cuba. Rhumbas are also found in Spanish and African style dancing and also in Ballroom dancing. The word Rhumba also means party.

The Rhumba rhythm looks simple but accents or pulses on certain notes gives the pattern a syncopated, Rhumba sound.

1. Clap the quaver ti-ti or rhythm.
2. Clap the quaver rhythm but accent the three quavers with the accent signs above.
3. Clap only the accented notes when they appear in the pattern.
4. Count while you clap the rhythm  
1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2. Repeat the pattern and you have the rhumba feel.
5. Stamp your feet on 1 and clap on 2 and 3.
6. Add instruments such as claves and drums.

Accent sign

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2

**Accent:** make the note stronger than the others. This can be done by playing louder or adding other sounds or instruments.

## Mango Walk - The song

*Mango Walk* is the traditional song that Arthur Benjamin heard while visiting the West Indies. He made this song famous all round the world.

1. **Learn** the words and the melody of *Mango Walk*.
2. **Clap** this rhythmic ostinato.
3. **Identify** where in the song this pattern occurs.
4. **Add** the melody of *go mango walk* as a melodic ostinato.
5. Add in the Rhumba rhythms using **body percussion** (using your body, hands and feet) and instruments.
6. **Create your own performance** of *Mango Walk* by choosing a rhythmic ostinato, melodic ostinato and/or rhumba rhythms. Choose body percussion and/or instruments for each part and perform for your class.



Go man - go walk, you

**Ostinato:** is a part of a song or piece of music that is repeated to accompany the melody. A rhythm of a melody can be used as an ostinato.

**Ostinati:** more than one ostinato.

# Mango Walk

**Partner song:** Bars 1 to 8 can be sung at the same time as Bars 9 (with upbeat) to 16.  
 Hear the accented Rhumba rhythms coming through when singing as a partner song.

Jamaica trad.

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). It consists of four staves of music, each with lyrics underneath. Chord markings (F and C7) are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: "My brother did a-tell me that you go man-go walk, you go man-go walk, you go mango walk, my brother did atell me that you go mango walk and steal all the number 'le- ven. now tell me, Joe, do tell me for true, do tell me for true, do tell me, that you don't go to no man-go walk and steal all the num-ber 'le- ven."

My brother did a-tell me that you go man-go walk, you go man-go walk, you

4 go mango walk, my brother did atell me that you go mango walk and steal all the number

8 'le- ven. now tell me, Joe, do tell me for true, do tell me for true, do tell me, that

13 you don't go to no man-go walk and steal all the num-ber 'le- ven.

## Jamaican Rhumba – Arthur Benjamin

Form: Introduction – A – B – A – B – C – Coda

Key: C Major

Time Signature:  $\frac{2}{4}$  2 beats per bar

Tempo: **Tempo Guisto alla Rhumba:** Keep at the Exact speed as for a Rhumba

1. **The Introduction** sets up the Rhumba rhythms.

2. Play the timpani part on a drum or stamp your feet. Note the rhythm is the same as we have practiced but this is written  $\frac{2}{4}$  in time so to fit 8 sounds in each bar semi-quavers are used.

3. Play the maracas part. Use one hand for the notes pointing down and the other hand for the notes pointing up and tap the pattern on an instrument or a desk/table. Again it is the same as the even quaver pattern but written in  $\frac{2}{4}$  time.

4. Play on maracas accenting the  $\downarrow$  notes.

## Jamaican Rhumba – Arthur Benjamin

**Section A** The oboe and bassoon play the first melody while the other instruments continue the Rhumba rhythms. Then the violins take their turn at the melody.

Sing the words of *Mango Walk* while listening to the orchestra.

**My Brother did a tell me that you go mango walk  
You go mango walk, you go mango walk.  
My Brother did a tell me that you go mango walk  
And steel all the number 'leven.**

This is the oboe part that  
Arthur Benjamin wrote:

### The story behind the words:

Someone is caught sneaking out to the mango plantation to steal a mango. Just like the saying that the seventh wave at the beach is always bigger than the other waves, the saying goes that the eleventh mango you pick is always the biggest and the best.

## Jamaican Rhumba – Arthur Benjamin

**Section B:** The clarinet and bassoon play the second part of the song to make a contrasting section. Arthur Benjamin’s version of this melody is slightly different to the song.

Sing the words of *Mango Walk* while listening to the orchestra. Do the words fit perfectly?

Now tell me Joe, do tell me for true  
 Do tell me for true , do tell me  
 That you don’t go to no mango walk  
 and steal all the number ‘leven

This is the clarinet part that Arthur Benjamin wrote:



### The story behind the words:

Joe’s brother is asking him if he has been out stealing the biggest and best mangos and to tell the truth.



# Australian Curriculum – Music

Elements of Music	Foundation to Year 2	Years 3 and 4	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Years 9 and 10
Rhythm	<b>Beat and rhythm</b> Fast/slow Long/short	Tempo changes <b>ostinato</b>	Compound metre	<b>Time signature</b> <b>Rhythmic devices</b> - anacrusis, <b>syncopation</b> , ties and pause	Regular and irregular time subdivision Triplet, duplet Motif, Augmentation/ diminution
Pitch	High/low Pitch direction Pitch matching Unison	Pentatonic patterns Melodic shape Intervals Treble clef and staff	Major scales Pitch sequences, arpeggio, riff, Bass clef	Minor scales Key and key signatures Major/minor chords Ledger lines	Tonal centres, Modulation Consonance/dissonance Chromaticism
Dynamics & Expression	Forte, piano	Dynamic gradations <i>pp</i> to <i>ff</i> Legato & staccato	Staccato, legato <b>accent</b>	Dynamic gradations Articulations relevant to style	Rubato, vibrato, ornamentation,
Form and Structure	<b>Introduction</b> <b>Same/different</b> , echo patterns, repetition <b>Verse, chorus</b> , round	<b>Question &amp; answer</b> <b>Repeat signs</b> Binary (AB) form Ternary (ABA) form	<b>Theme, motif</b> <b>Phrase</b> <b>Rondo (ABACA) form</b> <b>ostinato</b>	<b>Repetition and contrast</b> Theme and Variation <b>Verse chorus</b> , bridge	Motivic development Sonata form, Symphony, Interlude, Improvisation
Timbre	<b>How sound is produced</b> <b>Every voice and instrument has its own sound</b>	<b>Recognise orchestral instruments by sound</b> <b>In isolations and in combination</b>	Acoustic and electronic sounds Voice and instrument types	<b>Recognise instrumental groups</b>	<b>Identify instruments by name and sound production.</b>
Texture	<b>Melody</b> <b>Accompaniment</b> Drone	<b>Patterns occurring simultaneously</b>	<b>Contrast within layers of sound</b>	Layers of sound and their role. Unison, homo/ polyphonic	<b>Horizontal/vertical layers</b> countermelody
Creating	Creating sounds using voice and instruments				
Performing	<b>Playing instruments in groups.</b>	<b>Rhythms</b>	<b>Playing and reading melodic and rhythmic excerpts</b>		<b>Sing and play in two or more parts</b>
Responding	<b>Moving to beat and rhythms</b>	<b>Respond to the stories.</b>	<b>Historical context</b>		<b>Awareness of ensemble</b>

# Lifelong learning through music

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*Principal  
Partner*

