

Tambooo Bamboo

Tambooo Bamboo was the predecessor to the steel drum. Trinidadians would gather pieces of bamboo, which is abundant in the tropical climate of the island. These bamboo poles, as well as other found items, were used as musical instruments to perform complex rhythms. Many of the Caribbean rhythms, such as calypso and soca, grew from the experimental rhythm of the early Tambooo Bamboo ensembles.

Performance Notes

To perform the following piece, you will need wooden poles (dowels) varying from 3' to 5' lengths. Thicker dowels are preferable. The poles are to be played with a drum stick, rhythm stick, or 6" piece of wooden dowel. You will need at least four poles, but to create the feeling of a full Tambooo Bamboo band, one for each student is preferable. These poles are fairly inexpensive and come pre-cut at most hardware stores. Students should stand while performing this piece unless they are physically unable to do so.

Tambooo Bamboo can be performed many different ways. The rhythmic ostinati are meant to be performed many times in a row. The length of your piece is completely determined by you and how many times you would like to repeat the ostinati. All performers can come in at the same time, or try staggering the entrance of each part.

Claves, tic-toc blocks, and body percussion are not traditionally found in a Tambooo Bamboo band. They have been included to offer varying timbres and to provide additional playing parts when enough wooden poles are not available.

All Tambooo Bamboo rhythms above the line are to be played on the side of each pole. Tambooo Bamboo rhythms below the line indicate tapping the pole on the ground.

Body percussion rhythms above the line indicate clapping. The rhythms below the line indicate stomping.

Clave and tic-toc block parts are played in their usual manner. If a tic-toc block is not available, you can substitute temple blocks or a wood block playing the rhythm on one pitch.

The musical score is written for a 4/4 time signature and consists of eight staves. The first four staves are labeled 'Tambooo Bamboo 1' through '4'. Each staff begins with a 4/4 time signature and a square box containing a vertical line. The notes are as follows:
- Tambooo Bamboo 1: Four groups of four eighth notes beamed together, followed by a quarter note, then another group of four eighth notes beamed together, and a final quarter note.
- Tambooo Bamboo 2: A quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note.
- Tambooo Bamboo 3: A quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note.
- Tambooo Bamboo 4: Four groups of four eighth notes beamed together, followed by a quarter note, then another group of four eighth notes beamed together, and a final quarter note.
The fifth staff is labeled 'Body Percussion' and begins with a 4/4 time signature and a square box containing a vertical line. It features a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by four 'x' marks (representing clapping or stomping), then a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by two 'x' marks.
The sixth staff is labeled 'Claves' and begins with a 4/4 time signature and a square box containing a vertical line. It features a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note.
The seventh staff is labeled 'Tic- Toc Block' and begins with a 4/4 time signature and a square box containing a vertical line. It features a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note, then a quarter note, followed by a half note.