

Bongo Rhythms

BONGO KEY



This is the notation key for the following bongo rhythms. Unlike the congas, the bongos are played mainly with the fingers. As with the conga studies it is very important to master each sound and make them as distinctive as possible. The **HEMBRA** is the larger drum and is on the right. The **MACHO** is the smaller and is on the left. Below is a very common bongo pattern called the **MARTILLO**. It is similar to the conga mambo pattern in that it contains the building block sounds and strokes for many bongo rhythms. Master it before moving on to the other patterns.

The Martillo



Sometimes the bongo player will also play cowbell, shekere or other percussion instruments as they are needed in the ensemble. Below is a typical cowbell pattern which the bongo player might play.

The dash (-) is the mouth of the Bell (louder) while the dot (.) is the top of the bell (softer).

Bongo Cowbell Pattern



The following patterns are examples of traditional bongo rhythms. After you learn them try creating your own. Then get a conga playing friend and try playing the conga and bongo worksheet rhythms together. Use the tempo markings from the Conga Groove Section.