

# Meet the Orchestra:

## ALL-AMERICAN EDITION



## Meet the Clave

### Rhythm Activity

In Schooltime: Meet the Orchestra, you will hear a piece written by George Gershwin that features music inspired by the sounds of Cuba.

### Where is Cuban Music From?

Cuban music comes from **Cuba**, an island country where the **Caribbean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, and Gulf of Mexico** all meet. It is just south of the state of Florida. Here is a map: <https://www.worldatlas.com/maps/cuba>.

Cuban music combines musical traditions from:

- **Spain** (melodies and instruments)
- **West Africa** (drums and rhythms)
- **Taíno Indigenous Population** (percussion instruments)

### What Are Claves?

Claves are **two wooden sticks** you hit together. They make a sharp, clear sound that helps to keep the beat in lots of Cuban music. Claves are part of the **percussion family**.

Musicians use two main patterns musicians with claves:

- **2-3 clave**
- **3-2 clave**

We are going to focus on the "3-2" rhythm. It is called "**3-2**" because of how the beats are grouped: **Three beats**, then **two beats**.

## Listen to the 3-2 Clave

Listen to the 3-2 clave beat [here](#).

Practice clapping along to the 3-2 clave beat [here](#).

## What It Looks Like in Music

This is how the 3-2 clave pattern appears written in musical notation:



## Put It into Practice!

Can you hear the 3-2 clave rhythm in these songs?

Even if you don't hear the **claves**, the rhythm is still there – maybe in the drums, woodwinds, or other instruments. Try clapping along!

1. "[America](#)" from West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein
2. "[Born to Hand Jive](#)" from Grease by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey
3. "[I Just Can't Wait to Be King](#)" from The Lion King by Elton John & Tim Rice
4. [Theme from Bluey](#) by Joff Bush

## Gershwin's Cuban Overture

Now that you know the rhythm, let's try clapping the 3-2 clave while listening to the last two minutes of [Cuban Overture](#) by George Gershwin. This is the piece you will hear in Schooltime: Meet the Orchestra!

Don't worry if you can't hear the clave sound clearly — try to **keep the beat in your head** and **stay steady** with your claps. If you lose the beat, take a little break and try again.

### **Group Discussion:**

1. Which song was the easiest to clap along to the beat?
2. Which song was the hardest to clap along to the beat?
3. How did the practice examples help you find the clave beat in Cuban Overture?