

Chapter 1

The Clave

In order to understand how all of the examples presented in this book relate to Afro-Cuban drumming, we will start with the clave. The clave is a binary rhythmic pattern that serves as a foundation for the polyrhythms that are played over it. In this two-bar pattern there is one measure of three beats (known as the 3 side), and one measure of two beats (known as the 2 side). The clave can start on either side as shown in these two examples of son clave.



1. 3-2 Son Clave



2. 2-3 Son Clave



These next two variations of the clave are called rumba clave. In rumba clave there is a beat displacement of an eighth-note on the 3rd beat of the 3 side.



3. 3-2 Rumba Clave



4. 2-3 Rumba Clave

