



African Adventure

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The history of the guitar in Africa can be traced back to the 16th century, when the instrument was introduced by Portuguese sailors. In a continent of over 50 countries there are inevitably many different musical traditions and styles of playing. A common theme, however, of much African music, is the interweaving of various melodic phrases repeated over and over in a cycle, as in the following piece.

Suggested structure (as played on the CD): Each guitar is introduced in turn after one four-bar cycle – Gt. 1, Gt. 2, Gt. 3, Gt. 4 plays two cycles, Gt. 5 – as the texture builds up until all the guitarists are playing together. At this stage everyone plays their sequences together two times, before dropping out one by one at the end of each two-cycle repetition, in the following order: Gt. 5, Gt. 4, Gt. 2. Guitars 1 and 3 bring the piece to a close with a final two-cycle sequence, ending on a chord of C. There is also an optional part for guitar percussion.

Guitar 1 This is a variation on a *Maringa* riff, a Sierra Leonean dance rhythm that originated in the 1930s. Note that African finger-style technique is based largely on a dialogue between the thumb and index-finger, which produces a stronger, more accurate rhythm.

Guitar 2

Guitar 3 – Bass Highly syncopated bass lines such as this are very common in African guitar styles.