

Riff - Ostinato

A **Riff** is a short repeated phrase in popular music and jazz, typically used as an introduction or refrain in a song. The following example is a riff in II-V-I progression in Latin American Salsa style.



Musical notation for a riff in II-V-I progression. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The riff consists of a sequence of chords: Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. The notation shows the melody in the treble clef and the bass line in the bass clef. The bass line features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, with accents on the first and third notes of each measure.

In music, an **ostinato** is a motif or phrase that persistently repeats in the same musical voice, frequently in the same pitch. Example: Pachelbel Canon with Bass Ostinato.



Musical notation for Pachelbel Canon with Bass Ostinato. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The notation shows the melody in the treble clef and the bass line in the bass clef. The bass line features a repeating sequence of notes, highlighted by a red box, which is labeled "bass ostinato sequence". The sequence consists of the notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3. The notation includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and a measure number 10.

Ostinato plays an important part in improvised music (rock and jazz), in which it is often referred to as a **riff** or a **vamp**. A "favorite technique of contemporary jazz writers", ostinati (Italian plural of ostinato) are often used in modal and Latin jazz and traditional African music.