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Published by Duke University Press

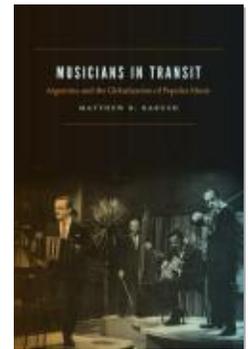
Karush, Matthew B.

Musicians in Transit: Argentina and the Globalization of Popular Music.

Duke University Press, 2016.

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ARGENTINES INTO LATINS

The Jazz Histories of Lalo Schifrin and Gato Barbieri

The Argentine jazz writers who criticized Oscar Alemán for his commercialism and his enthusiasm for Brazilian music found their heroes in the sophisticated, young musicians of the Bop Club Argentino. Among the most celebrated members of the new group were the pianist Lalo Schifrin and the saxophonist Gato Barbieri. Both born in 1932, Schifrin and Barbieri were featured soloists in the Bop Club's jam sessions and appeared together on record as early as 1953.¹ Like the other club members, they were purists who defended modern jazz from contamination with other musical genres.

Their purism would not last. Feeling constrained by the limited horizons of the *porteño* jazz scene, both musicians decided to leave Argentina, first for Europe and then for the United States. The careers and musical output of Schifrin and Barbieri were fundamentally transformed by their encounters with European and North American jazz musicians and audiences. In their travels they traversed a transnational cultural field, with consequences that they could not have foreseen. In particular, both musicians confronted a shifting

category that had very little meaning to them before they left home; they were seen as *Latin*, a term that referred both to an ethnic identity and to certain types of music. Though it clearly imposed limitations, Latin was a label that also opened certain commercial and musical opportunities. Both Schifrin and Barbieri proved adept at making creative use of these opportunities, discarding their purism in favor of various forms of hybridity.

Latin American contributions to jazz have often been minimized by scholars who have been understandably concerned to win a place of respect for the artistic achievements of African Americans.² Recently, scholars have begun to question the American exceptionalism built into most accounts of jazz history. They have explored the transnational origins of the genre and charted the existence of a “Latin tinge” that has affected the music throughout the twentieth century.³ For the most part, though, these efforts have stopped short of interrogating the concepts of Latin music and Latin jazz.⁴ Social constructions that reflected the distribution of cultural and economic power in the mid-twentieth century, these terms have compartmentalized Latin American influences, relegating them to a sort of subplot in jazz history. Since Schifrin and Barbieri were neither Caribbean nor Brazilian, they did not quite fit existing models of Latin musical personae. As a result, their experiences lay bare the ideological dimensions of the overgeneralized ethnic category of Latin and the invented tradition of Latin jazz. More important, the concept of Latin jazz, and the specific associations that attached to it, exerted a profound influence on the actual music produced by these Argentine jazz musicians.

Between Schifrin’s arrival in New York in 1958 and Barbieri’s some seven years later, the jazz world underwent significant transformation. The dominant trends of the late 1950s were hard bop, cool jazz, and the modal experiments of Miles Davis; by the mid-1960s, free jazz had mounted its aesthetic and ideological challenges. At the same time, jazz musicians continued to engage with musical genres and elements from Latin America. Schifrin’s arrival coincided with the explosion of North American interest in Brazilian bossa nova, while Barbieri participated in the birth of jazz fusion, in which music understood as Latin played a central, if underappreciated role. Schifrin broke into the jazz mainstream by presenting himself as an authority on Latin rhythms, parlayed that status into a career as a film and television composer, and then successfully shed his Latin identity. By contrast, Barbieri embraced avant-garde free jazz and revolutionary third worldism before changing course in pursuit of a mainstream audience. Working within the constraints imposed by North American preconceptions and by the economic imperatives of the music business, both Schifrin and Barbieri achieved commercial success and impressive

artistic innovations. While Schifrin injected Latin American musical elements into Hollywood soundtracks and thereby into global popular culture, Barbieri pushed the concept of Latin jazz in new directions through the incorporation of South American rhythms and instruments. Nevertheless, by identifying as Latin in order to seize the opportunities available to them, both musicians also reinforced many of the stereotypes that attached to the term.

The concept of Latin jazz that would shape the reception of Schifrin and Barbieri in the United States was forged over decades of musical exchange. As early as the 1910s, the Argentine tango and, to a lesser extent, the Brazilian maxixe acquired prominence on New York (and Parisian) dance floors and among the offerings of music publishers. Unsurprisingly, the dance instructors, composers, and musicians who introduced the new rhythms were more interested in commercial success than they were in producing faithful copies of South American originals. Moreover, these dances were marketed not as Brazilian or Argentine, but as fun exotics of generically Latin origins.⁵ This pattern would persist, even as the dominant source of Latin American musical exports to the United States shifted from South America to Cuba. In 1930, Don Azpiazu's hit recording of "The Peanut Vendor" ignited a popular fascination with Cuban rhythms and dance steps that would last for three decades. The Spanish-born, Cuban musician Xavier Cugat, who led the house band at New York's Waldorf Astoria throughout the 1930s and 1940s and enjoyed a successful career on film and television, helped win an enduring place for Cuban-influenced dance music in the U.S. mainstream. Cugat avoided any attempt at authenticity, introducing exotic rhythmic elements within a familiar musical style reminiscent of the "sweet" big bands of the period. The fad for the Cuban *son*, or the rumba as it was mislabeled in the United States, led to the composition of hundreds of pop tunes with English lyrics and Cuban, or Cuban-inspired, rhythms. Featured in Broadway musicals and Hollywood films, as well as on hit records, these songs delivered exoticism in accessible packages. And like tango and maxixe, Cuban-influenced pop tunes were packaged in a way that blurred geography. As Gustavo Pérez Firmat puts it, Latin America emerges in the lyrics of these songs "as a singular atmosphere into which national differences evaporate."⁶ For the most part, that atmosphere was characterized as tropical, languid, romantic, sexy, and fun. By the time Carmen Miranda made her Hollywood debut in 1940, this basic Latin stereotype was well established and capacious enough to include a Brazilian performer.

The popularity of Cuban rhythms inevitably affected jazz, given its status as popular dance music in the 1930s and 1940s. Many of the major swing bands included "The Peanut Vendor" and other Cuban and Cuban-inspired

tunes in their repertoire, just as their predecessors had played tangos earlier in the century. However, the idea of a separate subgenre of Latin jazz only emerged in the mid-1940s. Although multiple origins could be identified, three are particularly important. First, the Cuban trumpeter, Mario Bauzá and his brother-in-law Frank “Machito” Grillo, two of a growing number of Cuban and Puerto Rican musicians in New York City, formed Machito and his Afro-Cubans in order to provide employment for black Caribbean musicians and to develop a Cuban-jazz hybrid that would foreground more authentic Cuban rhythms. Second, bebop trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and Cuban conga drummer Chano Pozo collaborated between 1946 and 1948 to produce a hybrid form known as Cubop. Third, the California-based bandleader, Stan Kenton, inspired by the Machito band among others, began to incorporate Cuban drummers and rhythms as a key part of his effort to develop what he called “progressive jazz.”⁷

The imprimatur of jazz luminaries like Gillespie and Kenton gave this new music a prestige that separated it from Latin novelty tunes. Moreover, by foregrounding Cuba and, in the cases of Gillespie and Bauzá, by emphasizing the blackness of Cuban rhythm, these musicians broke to some extent from the tendency to dissolve Latin America’s national and ethnic heterogeneity into a vague Latin-ness. However, there were forces pushing in the other direction. The prominence of Puerto Rican musicians in New York made Latin a useful category, and Kenton’s Latin turn included the incorporation not only of Cuban-style drummers, but also of the Brazilian guitarist Laurindo Almeida. More important, the concept of Latin jazz reified the differences between the two styles that it claimed to mix. Central to the development of Latin jazz was an international division of labor in which Latin America would serve as a source of exotic and exciting rhythm, while North American jazz would provide melody, harmony, and sophisticated orchestration.⁸ As Kenton put it in 1947, “Rhythmically, the Cubans play the most exciting stuff. . . . And while we keep moving toward the Cubans rhythmically, they’re moving toward us melodically. We both have a lot to learn.”⁹ This view of Latin jazz as a mixture of two previously unrelated forms entailed the erasure of a long transnational history in which ideas about rhythm, melody, and harmony were passed back and forth among musicians throughout the Americas and beyond.¹⁰ And while the seriousness with which jazz musicians approached Cuban music was clearly a step above the hoary clichés of Latin pop tunes, stereotypes persisted. In particular, Latin music retained its connection to passion, as the title of Kenton’s 1956 album *Cuban Fire* suggested. In any case, by the late 1950s, Latin jazz was a well-established subgenre that involved mixing Cuban rhythms with

jazz orchestration and improvisation. The existence of this subgenre would definitively shape the North American reception of Schifrin and Barbieri, Argentina's most famous jazz exports.

Marketing Latin Expertise

Boris "Lalo" Schifrin was the son of the concertmaster of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic orchestra. As a boy, he received extensive training in classical music, but after discovering bebop at the age of sixteen, he turned his attention to jazz. Schifrin quickly gained prominence within the small community of modern jazz aficionados in Buenos Aires. Leading a trio of piano, bass, and drums, he was named best pianist in the Bop Club's annual poll in 1951, at the age of only nineteen.¹¹ Schifrin emerged as the intellectual of the Bop Club musicians, writing opinion pieces for local jazz magazines in which he argued that Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Lennie Tristano, and others had transformed jazz into a quintessential modern art form, as sophisticated and as worthy of study as any other: "Sobriety, good taste, subtlety, equilibrium and formal harmony characterize a Lee Konitz solo as much as they do a Braque painting, a Bela Bartok quartet or a Fritz Lang film."¹² By situating modern jazz among European avant-garde art forms, Schifrin sought to legitimize his musical choices as well as to remove jazz from the geographical and social context of its origins: one did not have to be black or even North American to play this music. As a convert to a foreign music, Schifrin policed the boundaries of the genre with particular vehemence. He opposed any effort to mix jazz with elements adopted from other genres, and he was especially dismissive of Latin jazz. In a review of one of Stan Kenton's recordings, he denigrated the inclusion of Cuban percussion in a jazz band: "The bongos really have nothing to do with swing."¹³ Although he cited Dizzy Gillespie as his favorite trumpeter, he celebrated Gillespie's contribution to the invention of bebop, not his Afro-Cuban jazz experiments.

In 1954, Schifrin received a scholarship to attend France's prestigious Conservatoire de Paris. Over the next two years, he studied with avant-garde composer Olivier Messiaen during the day, while performing jazz with a host of European and North American musicians at night. In addition to frequent nightclub gigs, he represented Argentina in the Second International Jazz Salon at the Salle Pleyel.¹⁴ Although there was little that was specifically Argentine about Schifrin's musical background or interests, his national identity was clearly visible abroad. He played on a tango recording by Astor Piazzolla because, as he put it, "I was the only Argentine pianist in Paris." Describing this

experience later, Schifrin remarked that it had been “a pleasure to discover the tango,” thereby revealing that it wasn’t until he left Argentina that he derived any enjoyment from the national music of his homeland.¹⁵

More important for his future musical development, Schifrin began to develop an interest in Afro-Cuban music. At first, this interest was purely pragmatic. As a student, Schifrin needed a source of income, and one of his first paying jobs in France was a stint writing arrangements for what he later called a “Latin dance music band.” Mambo, the up-tempo dance made internationally famous by Cuban bandleader Dámaso Pérez Prado, was extremely popular in Paris in the early 1950s, and a steady stream of Cuban musicians visited the French capital. No doubt, Schifrin had already been exposed to Cuban dance music in Buenos Aires, which was hardly immune to the mambo craze. In particular, two Cuban performers, Amelita Vargas and Blanquita Amaro, had relocated to the Argentine capital in the late 1940s, where they brought the mambo, cha-cha-cha, and other Cuban genres to prominence on stage, in the movies, and on the radio. But Schifrin does not seem to have paid any attention to Cuban music until he went to Paris. As he later put it, he “learned Cuban music through the Latin jazz door.”¹⁶ Schifrin was drawn to the Cuban musicians he met in Paris because he knew that Dizzy Gillespie had worked with Chano Pozo and that Charlie Parker had played with the Machito band. Schifrin’s association with Cuban musicians, as well as his fluency in Spanish and French, opened doors for him; he now found steady work as an arranger on albums by French groups interested in incorporating Cuban rhythm sections.¹⁷

It was by way of another international music fad that Schifrin came to try his hand at performing Latin jazz. During this period, a number of Latin American musicians performed Andean folk music for enthusiastic Parisian audiences. The Argentine folk singer and guitarist Atahualpa Yupanqui had become an international star during a two-month stay in the French capital in 1949.¹⁸ Some six years later, Paris would emerge as the center of a new boom in South American folk music when Ricardo Galeazzi, an Argentine jazz bassist who accompanied Schifrin at the Salle Pleyel and elsewhere, exchanged his bass for the *charango*, a small Andean lute. Galeazzi joined with another Argentine and two Venezuelans to found Los Incas, who would remain the leading exponents of Andean music in France over the next decade.¹⁹ Although Schifrin did not follow his musical partner into folk, his interests were affected by the trend. In 1955, the Peruvian singer Yma Sumac performed in Paris. Famous for her impressive vocal range and for her self-presentation as an Inca princess, Sumac had made a series of recordings in Argentina in the 1940s before being signed by Capitol records in 1950 and paired with composer and producer Les Baxter,

the exotica music pioneer. Although her first few albums had emphasized her Andean roots, in 1954 she tried to capitalize on the Cuban music boom by releasing the album *Mambo*. As a result, the band that accompanied Sumac in Paris included a New York-based, Puerto Rican conga drummer named Dave Rivera. After seeing Rivera play with Sumac, Schifrin invited him to join an ad hoc quartet, featuring piano, bass, drums, and congas. Together, they played a one-week stint at the jazz club Ringside.²⁰ Thus the international popularity of mambo, exotica, and Andean folk music overlapped in Paris, affording Schifrin the opportunity to experiment with incorporating Cuban rhythms into jazz.

Just three years earlier, Schifrin had rejected Stan Kenton's experiments with Cuban percussion in the name of jazz purism. But relocating to Paris had transformed his relationship to his Latin American roots. It was not only that many musical genres from the Americas shared performance space in the French capital, but also that from this distant vantage point, geographical and ethnic distinctions blurred. In his Paris concerts, Yupanqui performed Caribbean songs alongside Argentine ones, but French reviewers heard only "Indian sounds, Indian silence, Indian sweat."²¹ Similarly, the introduction of Cuban conga drums did not undermine Yma Sumac's Peruvian authenticity, nor did Ricardo Galeazzi's Argentine origins and jazz background threaten his ability to represent indigenous Andean culture. In Buenos Aires, Schifrin was a jazz musician, with no ethnic or cultural connection to the music of the Andes or the Caribbean, but in Paris he was a Latin American. Just as blackness had opened Parisian doors for Oscar Alemán, Latin identity did much the same for Schifrin. No doubt the Cubop experiments of Gillespie and Parker legitimized the notion of Latin jazz for Schifrin, but it was the Parisian context that created the opportunity and the commercial incentive to experiment with hybrid musical forms.

Upon his return to Buenos Aires in 1956, Schifrin reverted to jazz purism. He organized a big band featuring sixteen of the best modern jazz musicians the city had to offer. The band quickly became a fixture on the radio and in clubs, performing music that ranged from swing standards like "Take the A Train" and "In the Mood" to more contemporary numbers like Horace Silver's "Doodlin" and Dizzy Gillespie's "Hey Pete."²² That same year, the Dizzy Gillespie band, on a South American tour sponsored by the U.S. State Department, performed a series of concerts in Buenos Aires. In a city unaccustomed to hosting jazz royalty, the Gillespie shows made a dramatic impression. At the invitation of tango bandleader Osvaldo Fresedo, the trumpeter made a late-night visit to one of the city's clubs, where Fresedo had arranged for Schifrin's big band to perform. Gillespie encouraged Schifrin to come to the United States, a step that the ambitious Argentine was in fact already considering.²³

Although it took Schifrin two years to secure a green card, he finally moved to New York in 1958. Unlike in Paris, where he found quick acceptance as a jazz musician, Schifrin was initially unable to break into the local jazz scene. According to his own account, the main obstacle was the musicians union, which would only grant work permits to foreigners after a period of residence. Forced to support himself by playing Latin standards like “Bésame Mucho” in a Mexican restaurant, he considered returning home. His fortunes turned when he got a call from Xavier Cugat, who offered him a job as an arranger. It is not clear how Cugat had heard of Schifrin, but since the bandleader was hardly a stickler for authenticity, it is not surprising that he would be willing to hire an Argentine with no background or expertise in Cuban music. For his part, Schifrin took the job because “the money was incredible.” The commercial dance music he played in this context was a long way away from the modern jazz he had championed in Argentina, but it was an opportunity he could not afford to pass up. For the next year, he worked as the Cugat band’s arranger and pianist, performing on television and on tour throughout the United States.²⁴ Once again, leaving Argentina seemed to make Schifrin more Latin American. The same geographic blurring that he had encountered in Paris operated in New York, where despite having never set foot in Cuba nor specialized in Caribbean music, Schifrin was a natural fit in Cugat’s “Latin” band.

After about a year with Cugat, Schifrin crossed paths once more with Dizzy Gillespie and thereby moved much closer to fulfilling his musical ambitions. Gillespie asked him to compose some music for his group, and Schifrin responded in 1960 with a five-movement concerto called “Gillespiana.” Impressed, Gillespie invited Schifrin to fill the vacant piano chair in his quintet, a position he would hold for the next two years. “Gillespiana,” loosely modeled on the recent orchestral collaborations of Miles Davis and Gil Evans, was largely a tribute to the trumpeter’s past accomplishments.²⁵ Certain sections of the work allude directly to Gillespie’s 1940s experiments with Afro-Cuban rhythm, while the movements called “Panamericana” and “Africana” rely heavily on an expanded percussion section of congas, bongos, and timbales. The band recorded the piece with a full orchestra and performed it on a European tour in 1960 and at Carnegie Hall and the Monterrey Jazz Festival in 1961. Schifrin followed it up with “New Continent,” another orchestral piece infused with Latin American rhythms and percussion. While these works do not enjoy anything like the canonical status that the Davis/Evans pieces have today, they were critically acclaimed at the time. Reviewing the recorded version of “Gillespiana” in the British jazz magazine *Melody Maker*, Bob Dawbarn argued that Schifrin’s compositional gifts followed from his national identity: “Schifrin hails from

Argentina, and much of his writing has a natural Latin feel.”²⁶ Similarly, Ralph Gleason argued that Schifrin’s aptitude for Latin rhythms made him an excellent partner for Gillespie: “[Gillespie] was the first to realize the potential in the use of the congo [sic] and bongo drums in jazz. Schifrin’s familiarity with these rhythms, which has already resulted in ‘Gillespiana’ . . . is one of the most promising aspects of their relationship.”²⁷ Despite Schifrin’s background in bebop and in classical music, jazz critics assumed that any Latin American composer would have a deep familiarity with musical genres they thought of as “Latin.” In Schifrin’s case, this assumption was no doubt reinforced by his brief but visible stint with Cugat. “Gillespiana” was conceived as a summing up of Gillespie’s innovative career, and the Cuban elements in this piece and in “New Continent” reflected the trumpeter’s influence on the young composer. Yet critics attributed these elements to Schifrin’s ethnic and cultural inheritance.

If Schifrin’s Argentineness translated into expertise in Cuban rhythms, it also gave him instant credibility as a performer of another Latin American musical genre, the Brazilian bossa nova. Although few remember his role today, Schifrin was actually a key figure in the introduction of this modern hybrid of samba and cool jazz aesthetics to North American audiences. Just as Schifrin was joining Gillespie’s quintet, bossa nova was becoming an international sensation thanks to the popularity of the film *Black Orpheus* (dir. Marcel Camus, 1959), which featured the new music on its soundtrack. Gillespie himself had a long-standing interest in Brazil, having jammed with samba musicians during his stopover in Rio on the 1956 State Department tour. He later returned to Brazil with Schifrin, who introduced him to bossa nova pioneers Antonio Carlos Jobim, Luiz Bonfá, João Gilberto, and others.²⁸ As early as 1961, the Dizzy Gillespie Quintet, with Schifrin on piano, began to feature many of the most popular bossa novas—“Desafinado,” “Chega de saudade,” “Manhe de carnaval”—in their live sets.²⁹ In 1962, Philips recorded one such performance as well as a bossa nova studio album by the quintet.³⁰ That same year, Schifrin released three albums under his own name. The first, *Lalo = Brilliance*, included a version of Jobim’s “Desafinado,” while the next two, *Bossa Nova: New Brazilian Jazz* and *Piano, Strings and Bossa Nova* were entirely given over to the new genre. He also played the piano on Quincy Jones’s *Big Band Bossa Nova* album and served as arranger on Luiz Bonfá’s new album for Verve. These recordings came very early in the bossa nova fad; *Jazz Samba* by Stan Getz and Charlie Byrd, the first bossa nova album to achieve broad commercial success in the United States, was released in April 1962, less than a month before Dizzy’s first effort. On November 17, the Gillespie Quintet played a set at

New York's Lincoln Center that included several bossa nova numbers.³¹ Just four days later, Schifrin performed alongside Stan Getz and two dozen Brazilian musicians at the historic concert at Carnegie Hall that is often credited with launching the bossa nova craze in the United States. By the end of the year, bossa nova was, in one scholar's words, "literally everywhere in popular culture,"³² and within the North American jazz scene, Lalo Schifrin was at the forefront of the craze.

Schifrin's bossa nova expertise was recognized and reinforced by the critics. When Leonard Feather dedicated one of his famous "blindfold tests" to the new genre, he picked Schifrin for his status "in the vanguard of the new samba movement." Although Schifrin acknowledged that he was not Brazilian, he did claim to speak from authority, mentioning that he had been to Brazil many times and commenting that with the exception of Quincy Jones and Dizzy Gillespie, most North American musicians did not fully understand the subtle harmonies of composers like Jobim.³³ As an Argentine, Schifrin was well positioned to serve as a guide to the nuances of Latin music. In this sense, Schifrin's role was different from that of Chano Pozo, Gillespie's earlier Latin American musical partner. Whereas Pozo was as an authentic, black embodiment of Afro-Cuban culture, Schifrin was white and neither Cuban nor Brazilian.³⁴ In photographs, he typically appeared wearing a sweater and smoking a pipe, emulating the pose of a European intellectual. As Gene Lees put it, "He is a thoroughly cultivated young man of polished tastes, who may be found in intense conversations about Goethe or quoting the poetry of Paul Valéry in French."³⁵ As bossa nova became a mainstream phenomenon, even inspiring a popular dance fad, some jazz critics denounced what they heard as commercial "hotel music."³⁶ In this context, Schifrin's endorsement was reassuring. His Argentineness made him a more European type of Latin, one who could support bossa nova's claim to cosmopolitan sophistication.

In general, critics responded to Schifrin's bossa nova performances the same way they had to his Cuban-flavored compositions for Gillespie. They praised his ability and associated it with his supposed Latin roots. According to one review of Schifrin's *New Brazilian Jazz* album, "His piano playing epitomises the percussive Latin-American keyboard technique at its best."³⁷ Or, as Lees put it in *Down Beat*, "He applies Latin American methods to jazz, in a highly personal way. Sometimes he can be heard repeating a left-handed chord in rhythmic unity with the running Latin chords (octaves with fifths, or sometimes fifths and sixths in between) while he is playing at surprising speed with his right. But the ideas are jazz ideas. As often as not, a solo will start with a single line and gradually develop into a powerful and exciting excursion into



FIGURE 2.1 • Lalo Schifrin. *Gente* (March 1, 1973), 28.

the Latin toward the end.”³⁸ In these appraisals, percussive playing, rhythmic intensity, speed, and excitement constitute Latin qualities, while implicitly melodic or harmonic “ideas” belong to jazz. Notwithstanding his insistence on the harmonic subtlety of Jobim, Schifrin generally agreed with the critics: “The important thing is that all over the world musicians are applying the harmonic ideas of Dizzy, Bird, and Monk to their own countries and cultures.”³⁹ Of course, he could hardly have had himself in mind when he made this comment, given that he had never sought to apply bebop harmonies to the tango or to any other recognizably Argentine musical form. But as an interpreter of Latin American musical genres, Schifrin accepted the basic division between jazz harmony and Latin rhythm.

Schifrin’s version of bossa nova had more in common with that of North American jazz musicians like Getz and Byrd than it did with João Gilberto’s. Like his North American counterparts, Schifrin did without Gilberto’s trademark rhythm guitar pattern, moving the samba rhythm to the drums. This approach treated the bossa nova as just another new Latin rhythm to improvise over; it made bossa easily digestible for North American jazz musicians with no previous exposure to Brazilian music. Schifrin’s style is hardly surprising given his musical background. His connection to bossa nova pioneers like Jobim and Gilberto was not a shared cultural inheritance but a common fascination with jazz in general and cool jazz in particular. Just as Jobim and Gilberto claimed to have modeled their approach to samba on the relaxed style

and tight arrangements of baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, Schifrin too had long been a fan of cool jazz. In 1951, he identified Miles Davis's "Israel," one of the recordings of the so-called Birth of the Cool sessions, as among the great works of modern jazz, featuring a "play of tonalities" every bit as sophisticated as Stravinsky or Hindemith.⁴⁰ For North American audiences, Schifrin's national origins gave him a claim to an insider's knowledge of all Latin American musical forms, but his aesthetic commitment to jazz meant that he tended to translate these forms into a familiar musical language.

Being Latin had opened doors for Schifrin in the United States, paving the way to a lucrative gig with Cugat and a prestigious one with Gillespie. He had emerged as a prominent interpreter and explicator of Latin rhythms for the North American audience, yet he moved rapidly to escape the limits of this role. His long-form compositions for Gillespie earned widespread critical acclaim, creating opportunities for Schifrin that were not defined by his newly forged Latin identity. Schifrin left the Gillespie Quintet in 1963 and embarked on a series of new and varied projects: an album of Asian exoticism with the vibraphonist Cal Tjader, a jazz mass composed for the flutist Paul Horn, a fugue written for Stan Kenton's Neophonic Orchestra, and several "third stream" compositions that combined jazz with twelve-tone music and nontraditional instrumentation.⁴¹

While Schifrin was burnishing his reputation as an avant-garde composer, his career took a definitive turn: in November 1963 he was hired to compose the music for a film called *Rhino!* (dir. Ivan Tors, 1964). He moved to Hollywood and began a long and prolific career as a composer for film and television. Schifrin's most famous television work is the theme song for *Mission Impossible* (1966), but he also composed the music for *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (1965), *Planet of the Apes* (1974), *Starsky and Hutch* (1975), and many other programs, as well as for dozens of films, including *The Cincinnati Kid* (dir. Norman Jewison, 1965) and four of the five films in Clint Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* series (1971, 1973, 1983, 1988).

Schifrin's association with Latin music helped him enter the world of film and television soundtracks. As David Butler has demonstrated, jazz, and particularly the jazz style associated with Stan Kenton's big band, was central to the film noir of the 1950s. Kenton's sound, which the young Lalo Schifrin had criticized, featured dissonance, loud brass, and a generous dose of Cuban percussion. For Orson Welles's 1958 film *Touch of Evil*, the composer Henry Mancini drew inspiration from Kenton's recent *Cuban Fire* album. Despite the location of the film on the Mexican border, Mancini assembled a Cuban-tinged big band that included several musicians who had worked with Kenton. The

resulting soundtrack, as well as the subsequent film work of Kenton arrangers Pete Rugolo and Shorty Rogers, helped cement an association between crime film and a jazz style infused with Cuban percussion if not authentic Cuban rhythms.⁴² Given his experience with Cugat, Gillespie, and bossa nova, Schifrin was a logical choice for filmmakers seeking a composer who could work in this vaguely Latin idiom. In fact, it was one of his bossa nova albums that first sparked the interest of Arnold Maxim, the MGM board member who recommended him for *Rhino!*⁴³

Though Schifrin's film and television music never sounds particularly Cuban or Brazilian, a "penchant for Latin percussion" became an identifiable element of his style.⁴⁴ Several of Schifrin's soundtracks incorporate Cuban elements within musical compositions that are structurally quite distant from any recognizable Cuban form. Nowhere is this tactic more evident than in the "Mission Impossible" theme song. Not only are bongo drum rolls featured prominently throughout, but the song's central theme contains a clear allusion to Cuban music. Although the unconventional 5/4 time signature recalls the jazz modernism of the Dave Brubeck Quartet's "Take Five" (Desmond, 1959), Schifrin navigates the rhythm quite differently. The bass line is composed of two four-note phrases, of which the first two notes are dotted quarter notes. This simple syncopation makes each phrase sound as if it were the first measure of the *clave*, the rhythmic cell that is so central to Afro-Cuban dance music. Schifrin marks these notes with hits of the Cuban percussion instrument also known as the *claves*, thereby doubling the allusion: in both meter and timbre, the familiar bass line of "Mission Impossible" refers to Cuban music. Of course, by resolving the phrase within a five-beat measure, Schifrin short-circuits the *clave*, producing something very different: an extremely original, off-kilter, yet propulsive theme.

In addition to percussion instruments and rhythmic allusions, many of Schifrin's compositions for film and television contain other elements that seem drawn from Cuban music. For example, his theme song for the detective series *Mannix* (1967) is built on a repetitive, percussive piano figure reminiscent of the *güajeros* played by the pianists in *son* and salsa bands. Yet by using this piano style in a piece in 3/4 time, he achieves a unique effect. Having come to Cuban music as an outsider, Schifrin was able to push techniques like these in directions that likely never would have occurred to a Cuban musician. Cut free from their structural roles in Cuban music, these elements gave his music a Latin flavor that fit perfectly in the Hollywood crime film soundscape.

Nevertheless, Schifrin soon moved beyond this formula, achieving an impressive stylistic range. Recognizably Latin sounds grew less common in his

work for television and film, and he became at least as well known for his use of electric jazz and funk in soundtracks like the one he composed for the crime thriller *Bullitt* (dir. Peter Yates, 1968). For the film *Cool Hand Luke* (dir. Stuart Rosenberg, 1967), Schifrin drew inspiration from Aaron Copland, composing a symphonic work that used banjos and harmonicas to evoke a backwoods, rural North American landscape. For the Bruce Lee vehicle, *Enter the Dragon* (dir. Robert Clouse, 1973), he combined a funk bass line and wah-wah guitar scratching with musical references to Asia.⁴⁵ Thanks to his ability to compose in such a wide variety of styles, Schifrin managed to shed the Latin label. Schifrin was one of a handful of jazz composers working in film, including most famously Quincy Jones and Henry Mancini, and his music was not seen as any more Latin American than theirs.⁴⁶ By the late 1960s, articles about Schifrin tended not to associate him with Latin music or ethnicity.

At the same time, Schifrin's move to Hollywood had the effect of reducing his prominence in the jazz world. He continued to play, compose, and arrange jazz music, conducting a series of experiments in which he blended jazz with other genres. His 1976 jazz disco album, *Black Widow*, as well as his multiple efforts in the 1990s to mix jazz and symphonic music were the work of a restless musician who refused to limit himself stylistically. Nevertheless, despite or perhaps because of his commercial success, he was no longer on the cutting edge of jazz. As early as 1965, Schifrin expressed doubts about the latest trend in the genre, namely the free jazz movement: "The instinctive talent of people like Ornette Coleman is immense, but by relying on instinct they're restricting themselves just as much as they were in the theme and variation form."⁴⁷ By contrast, Schifrin's old comrade from Buenos Aires, Gato Barbieri, would chart a very different path, embracing free jazz as a language through which to develop his own mode of expression. Moreover, the saxophonist's trajectory differed in another way: unlike Schifrin, who moved away from the association with Latin-ness as soon as he could, Barbieri wholeheartedly and definitively embraced a Latin identity.

Embodying the Latin Other

Leandro "Gato" Barbieri was the son of a carpenter from the city of Rosario. He began his musical education on the *requinto*, a miniature clarinet, before moving on to the alto saxophone and finally the tenor, which would become his main instrument. When his brother Rubén, a trumpeter, got a job with a jazz band in Buenos Aires, the family moved to the capital. At the age of eighteen in 1950, Barbieri was hired by the Casablanca jazz band and began attending

the weekly meetings of the Bop Club, where he met and played alongside Lalo Schifrin. By the time Schifrin returned from France in 1956, Barbieri was one of the most celebrated saxophonists in Buenos Aires. Although he attributed his own style to careful study of Charlie Parker records, critics often noted the influence of cool jazz.⁴⁸ In the 1956 Bop Club poll for favorite soloist, Barbieri came in second, just ahead of the recently returned Schifrin. That year, Barbieri joined Schifrin's new big band. The pianist's departure for the United States two years later left Barbieri feeling a bit confined by the limited jazz opportunities available in Buenos Aires. Nevertheless, he remained in the city for four more years, playing an extremely busy schedule of gigs in the city's jazz clubs. A visit in 1962 by Gene Lees, a critic for *Down Beat*, found Barbieri alternating sets at two clubs—the Mogador and Tucumán 676—performing almost without interruption from 8:00 PM to 4:00 AM. Although Barbieri professed only his debt to Parker, Lees, who was very impressed with the young Argentine, heard John Coltrane in his playing.⁴⁹

At this point in his career, Barbieri shared Schifrin's purism. In fact, his devotion to North American jazz styles could sometimes read as an aversion to innovation. Guillermo Gregorio, another budding Argentine jazz player, criticized Barbieri and other Bop Club musicians for slavishly imitating the latest trends: "If the wave was bebop, they played bebop. If the wave was cool, they played cool."⁵⁰ In any case, mixing jazz with Latin American genres or rhythms was not at all on Barbieri's agenda. At the Buenos Aires nightclub, Jamaica, Barbieri's groups shared the stage with tango musicians Horacio Salgán and Ubaldo de Lío as well as a host of foreign luminaries. The nightclub Tucumán 676, where Lees heard Barbieri, was built as a performance space for Astor Piazzolla, who performed his New Tango there regularly, alternating with jazz bands including Barbieri's. Yet despite this close exposure to what was probably the most exciting musical phenomenon in Argentina, Barbieri would not develop an interest in tango until he had spent nearly a decade outside the country. In Argentina, as he later told Leonard Feather, "I didn't listen to or understand the tango."⁵¹ Likewise, by staying in Buenos Aires until 1962, Barbieri missed the bossa nova craze. In its early years, the new Brazilian music did not have the same impact in neighboring Argentina as it did in the United States. The singer Maysa Matarazzo did bring a bossa show to Buenos Aires in 1961, and João Gilberto performed in the city the following year, but the local press was more impressed with the simultaneous visit of the Modern Jazz Quintet.⁵² More important, local jazz musicians like Barbieri were not drawn to the bossa nova the way U.S.-based performers like Stan Getz, Charlie Byrd, and Dizzy Gillespie were. As Oscar Alemán's career indicates, Brazilian genres like choro,

samba, and baião were quite popular in Argentina during the 1940s and 1950s, but the country's jazz critics denigrated musicians who tried to mix jazz with Brazilian styles. Barbieri appears to have shared their attitude.

The Buenos Aires jazz scene of the early 1960s was limited in several ways. After the end of the swing era, jazz ceased to be dance music and thereby lost its commercial appeal. While New Tango drew the attention of Argentine intellectuals, the biggest-selling records of the day were those of the so-called Nueva Ola, or New Wave, young singers who offered a safe, local version of North American rock and roll. In comparison, modern jazz was a marginal genre with a devoted but small following. As a result, it was extremely difficult to make a living playing exclusively jazz. Horacio Malvicino, the country's leading bebop guitarist, supported himself by recording commercial background music under a pseudonym.⁵³ For his part, Barbieri played in the backup band of Billy Cafaro, one of Argentina's first successful rock and roll singers. Cafaro's imitations of mainstream North American pop offered little to challenge an accomplished musician like Barbieri, but the gig must have helped him pay the bills.⁵⁴

Barbieri also performed and recorded alongside jazz pianist, composer, and singer Sergio Mihanovich. Barbieri played with Mihanovich's small groups in nightclubs like Jamaica, and he was also a member of the big band that Mihanovich assembled for the album *B.A. Jazz* in 1961. Composed largely of musicians who had previously played with Schifrin, the band recorded a mix of jazz standards and Mihanovich originals. The music, in the words of critic Diego Fischerman, was "elegant, with careful arrangements," but while it may have been closer to Barbieri's heart than Billy Cafaro's rock and roll, it offered little room for experimentation.⁵⁵ The following year, Mihanovich's big band, with Barbieri present once again, recorded a cool jazz soundtrack to *Jóvenes viejos*, a film by the young, avant-garde director Rodolfo Kuhn. Although Barbieri hardly stood out within the sophisticated arrangements, *Jóvenes viejos* is revealing for what it suggests about the place of jazz in Buenos Aires during the early 1960s. The film follows a group of bored, well-to-do young people with no sense of purpose in their lives. Not so much anti-Peronist as apolitical, they compare themselves unfavorably to "the kids in foreign films" who "live in the present."⁵⁶ Music in the film underscores the protagonists' failure to find meaning in their world. There is nothing identifiably Argentine on the soundtrack; instead the characters dance to Cuban drumming in a nightclub, and listen to a Brazilian carnival song through a radio at the beach. Mihanovich's jazz soundtrack is omnipresent, both as diegetic and nondiegetic music. Cosmopolitan and contemporary, the music is well suited to accompany the adventures of young Argentines alienated from their own surroundings. But the

music's coolness also echoes the characters' enervation and boredom. *Jóvenes viejos* suggests that jazz could sound hip in Buenos Aires but that it was often a distinctly vapid hipness.

In that context, it is hardly surprising that the restless Barbieri would decide to leave. Though he had little interest in bossa nova or tango, he was anxious to push his jazz in new directions. The fact that Gene Lees heard Coltrane in his saxophone playing suggests that the Argentine was following the latest developments in the jazz world. According to his wife, Michelle, Barbieri grew frustrated with the narrow traditionalism of Buenos Aires jazz musicians who resisted Coltrane and other jazz innovations.⁵⁷ Ornette Coleman's *The Shape of Jazz to Come* had launched the free jazz movement in 1959, causing a rift reminiscent of the bebop wars of the 1940s. Although it is not clear exactly when Barbieri was exposed to this radical new approach, he would soon get a chance to participate in it directly. Barbieri left Argentina in late 1962, stayed in Brazil for several months, and then, with the encouragement of Michelle, who was born in Italy, he moved to Rome. Barbieri's European career took off slowly, but he did have the opportunity to hear and play with European and North American jazz musicians. In 1963, he met the trumpeter Don Cherry, who had played on Ornette Coleman's groundbreaking free jazz albums and who was now touring Europe with Sonny Rollins. Cherry would eventually play a similar role for Barbieri as Gillespie had for Schifrin. In 1965, the two musicians played together in Paris, and Cherry invited the Argentine to join his band. Barbieri played with Cherry for the next two years, touring Europe and accompanying him to New York in order to record two well-received free jazz albums: *Complete Communion* (1965) and *Symphony for Improvisers* (1966).

Like Gillespie, Cherry was extremely open to foreign musical styles and foreign musicians, but his approach was quite different. Whereas Gillespie sought to forge hybrids by incorporating Cuban or Brazilian rhythms into jazz, Cherry was attracted to what he heard as the universalist, genre-defying possibilities of free jazz. After his stint with Rollins, he had returned to the free jazz fold, playing with several of the leading practitioners of the new music, including Albert Ayler, John Tchicai, and Archie Shepp. Upon relocating to Europe, in 1964, Cherry seemed intent on broadening his musical horizons. He lived for two months in a Moroccan village, "listening to the music and sounds," and later jammed with musicians as varied as the New Orleans clarinetist Albert Nicholas and the Indian sitarist Ravi Shankar. The band he built with Barbieri on tenor sax also featured German vibraphonist Karl Berger, French bassist Jean-Francois Jenny-Clark, and Italian drummer Aldo Romano, "a miniature musical United Nations," in one critic's words. For Cherry, the essence of jazz

was improvisation, and he saw no reason to contain his own musical expression within preconceived boundaries. As he put it, “I want to absorb all the sounds I can and improvise around them.”⁵⁸

In *Complete Communion* and *Symphony for Improvisers*, Cherry replaced the traditional song form with extended suites that occupy an entire side of an LP. Each suite contains several distinct, though related musical themes. Following the statement of the theme, passages of collective improvisation alternate with more clearly delineated solos. In both cases, Cherry, Barbieri, and the other musicians focused their improvisations not so much on scales or chord changes, but on the melodies of the musical themes themselves. This approach to free jazz, what Ekkehard Jost calls “thematic improvisation,” allowed Cherry to incorporate foreign musical material in a novel way.⁵⁹ Melodies, harmonies, and rhythms from musical genres outside of jazz could easily serve as the basis for improvisation. In a live set recorded in 1966 at the Café Montmartre in Copenhagen, the band plays the melody from Jobim’s bossa nova “A felicidade,” but they do not play the tune as a bossa. Instead, they use it as a “free jazz head,” a jumping-off point for improvisation that does not conform to any preconceived chord structure. The band moves from an embellished version of the melody to a quick quotation of Ornette Coleman’s “Focus on Sanity,” then launches into free improvisation, before ending with a restatement of the bossa nova. Improvisational freedom is not limited to Barbieri’s saxophone and Cherry’s pocket trumpet; drummer Aldo Romano begins with the basic bossa nova pulse, then transforms it, before eventually abandoning it altogether. Improvising against that Brazilian rhythm would have been the point for Gillespie. Cherry, by contrast, imported music from around the world in order to enrich his own personal expression. In later years, Cherry would further develop this vision of “world music,” incorporating Arabic, South African, and Indian material as the basis of his improvisatory musical explorations.⁶⁰

For Barbieri, the association with Cherry meant instant credibility and an introduction to many of the most important figures in avant-garde jazz. In 1967, the New York-based ESP record label, the leading producer of free jazz, invited him to cut his first record as band leader. The album, called *In Search of the Mystery*, was recorded in one day with musicians Barbieri did not know. The music is a noisy version of free jazz, and Barbieri’s saxophone playing is, in general terms, reminiscent of the later work of John Coltrane. By 1964, Coltrane had largely abandoned the challenging, harmonic explorations for which he had been known in favor of a freer style of improvisation over modal vamps.⁶¹ Barbieri, like such free jazz luminaries as Archie Shepp and Pharoah Sanders, embraced Coltrane’s new approach. Freed of the harmonic

constraints of bebop, Barbieri developed an intense, emotional style built on a distinctive, warm tone. At this point, there was nothing recognizably Latin in his music, and his ESP album was largely ignored. However, over the next few years, Barbieri performed and recorded alongside several of the most important musicians in the free jazz world. His tenor saxophone is featured on the composer Carla Bley's two ambitious projects of the late 1960s: *Genuine Tongue Funeral* and, alongside his former band mate Don Cherry, the jazz opera *Escalator over the Hill*. Barbieri's inclusion in these projects reflected the free jazz credentials he had earned by playing with Cherry, rather than any cachet that attached to his ethnic or national identity. Karl Berger, the German vibraphonist who was also a member of Cherry's European band and played on *Symphony for Improvisers*, earned the same opportunities as Barbieri: he recorded an album as leader for ESP, and he appeared on *Escalator over the Hill*. Still, one wonders whether the critical response to Barbieri's saxophone playing was shaped by expectations of a "Latin" musical temperament. Reviewing a 1966 club date with Don Cherry, *Down Beat's* critic described Barbieri as "a passionate and flamboyant musician."⁶²

Barbieri soon came to realize that his new, free-jazz style could have radical political implications and that those politics, in turn, could provide him with a way of distinguishing himself in the jazz world. He took a step in this direction in 1969 when he performed on the first *Liberation Music Orchestra* album, a work of "protest jazz" conceived by Charlie Haden, Ornette Coleman's former bass player, and arranged by Bley. Dedicated, in Haden's words, to "the end of all war, racism, poverty, and exploitation," the album contained an homage to Che Guevara, a musical re-creation of the 1968 Democratic convention, as well as a medley of antifascist songs from the Spanish Civil War.⁶³ The *Liberation Music Orchestra* drew an explicit connection between revolutionary politics and the improvisational freedom of the "new thing" in jazz. In an intriguing moment at the end of the Spanish Civil War medley, Barbieri plays a soaring and occasionally shrieking solo over a piece of "found sound," a recording of the original Spanish song from the 1930s.⁶⁴ In this way, Bley and Haden tether a moment of radically individualist self-expression to a specific historical moment and an overt political message. This particular way of politicizing free jazz aesthetics would serve as a model for Barbieri.

Of course, free jazz had already been politicized. In particular, the free jazz community had been deeply divided in the mid-1960s over issues of race. One sign of this division was the rapid demise of the Jazz Composers Guild, an organization founded by the trumpeter Bill Dixon in order to promote the new music. In addition to disagreements over scarce recording contracts and guild

policy, the central conflict pitted Dixon's inclusive, interracial vision against the black nationalism of LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka) and the nascent Black Arts movement.⁶⁵ For Jones, the work of African American free jazz musicians like Albert Ayler and Archie Shepp was an expression of black power. This vision could be alienating to the many white musicians who were part of the free jazz scene. Carla Bley, an original member of the Jazz Composers Guild, responded to the growing racial tensions in the movement: "I realized I had European roots, so why was I trying to find African roots? I'd been like a bastard—if you're a bastard, you don't inherit. I decided if they don't want me, I don't want them."⁶⁶ Like Bley, Barbieri, who would certainly have considered himself a white person, began to question his own right to express himself through free jazz. If this was a music that represented African American experience and consciousness, what was his claim to it?

Barbieri would solve this crisis of confidence by embracing a new identity as a Latin American and a representative of the third world. As he explained in several interviews, his breakthrough came by way of a series of conversations he had with the Brazilian filmmaker Glauber Rocha, one of the leading practitioners of the revolutionary brand of cinema known as Cinema Novo. As Barbieri put it,

I was in a bad way, in a time when I didn't want to play any more. My friend, Glauber Rocha, whose films had impressed me so much, came to New York. He helped me find a way out. . . . [Black musicians] had accepted me right away because I came from an underdeveloped country, that is they did not consider me white. They thought I had problems similar to their own. But I could only understand that intellectually. And speaking with Glauber clarified things for me; he made me understand them. And this is what I understood: that I had to draw inspiration from the popular music of the Third World, that that was my source. The black musicians had realized it from the beginning, and it took me years to understand something so simple.⁶⁷

Barbieri made it clear that by embracing the third world he was not just tapping a new source of musical inspiration; he was discovering his roots. As he told Nat Hentoff, he now realized that he could improve his jazz by infusing it with "all that I can also learn about my own background, my cultural background, in the Third World." According to his wife Michelle, "Gato wanted very much to be a black jazz musician. But once he understood that *he* had strong cultural roots too and that he came from a part of the world where there is great oppression . . . then Gato was able to come into his own."⁶⁸ Although

at times Barbieri did refer to his specifically Argentine background—Michelle told the critic Robert Palmer that Gato was “not afraid any more of being Argentinian”⁶⁹—he more often insisted on this broader identity as a representative of the third world.

As these accounts reveal, Barbieri’s new identity was the outcome of two mutually reinforcing, transnational dynamics. The first was produced by North American perceptions of Latin America. As the history of Latin music makes clear, the North American culture industries tended to lump all of Latin America together into one undifferentiated, exotic other. In the United States, Barbieri, like Schifrin before him, was Latin. Within the intensely politicized context of jazz in the late 1960s, this overgeneralizing could take on a distinct, left-wing valence. From this perspective, all Latin Americans occupied a subaltern social position parallel, in a general sense, to that of African Americans. This dynamic was reinforced by developments in Latin America, where the radicalization of youth following the Cuban Revolution had produced artistic movements premised on the adoption of a pan-Latin American identity. Glauber Rocha’s *Cinema Novo* was one example of this larger tendency. Ironically, the revolutionary, third-world identity promoted by anti-imperialist Latin Americans reinforced the ethnocentric North American tendency to collapse Latin American heterogeneity into a stereotyped “Latin-ness.”

These two dynamics intersected with Barbieri’s musical experience in the jazz world of the late 1960s. From Don Cherry, he had learned a method for incorporating foreign musical elements into thematic, free-jazz improvisations. Meanwhile, he had become a specialist in the free improvisational style typical of the later work of John Coltrane and of Coltrane disciples like Pharoah Sanders. Playing in Haden’s Liberation Music Orchestra, he had seen how this free jazz aesthetic could be harnessed to composed music that carried an overt, leftist political message. In 1969, Bob Thiele, the owner of Flying Dutchman Records, gave him the chance to put these lessons together in the service of a musical vision that expressed his new Latin identity. The album, appropriately titled *The Third World*, featured a lineup that included several major figures in the free jazz world—Charlie Haden, the trombonist Roswell Rudd, and Lonnie Liston Smith, the pianist in Pharoah Sanders’s band—playing a sampling of Argentine and Brazilian music. Although the album has its share of noisy, collective improvisations as well as the squeaks and squeals associated with the more strident versions of free jazz, it also has many straightforward and melodic passages. This musical formula, attached to a political message that fit the times, launched Barbieri’s successful career as a jazz bandleader.

For the most part, the music on *The Third World* is a free-jazz pastiche reminiscent of the music Barbieri made with Cherry and Haden. In Barbieri's version of Sergio Ricardo's bossa nova, "Zelao," drummer Beaver Harris begins with a marchlike beat that clearly alludes to samba. Yet within a few minutes, the accompaniment offered by Harris, Haden, and Smith has come untethered from any recognizably Brazilian genre, leaving Barbieri to play the melody against a noisy background, while Rudd adds improvised ornamentation. Barbieri's choice of "Zelao" was not incidental, since the song's lyrics about an impoverished favela resident made it one of the very first socially conscious bossa novas. Musically, though, the band treats it as melodic and rhythmic raw material. A similar approach is evident on the album's first track, which opens with a song by Anastasio Quiroga, a goatherd from the northwestern province of Jujuy discovered by Argentine folklorist Leda Valladares in the early 1960s.⁷⁰ Barbieri plays the simple melody—a llama herder's call—on the flute and then sings it, before segueing into Astor Piazzolla's tango, "Prepárense." By fusing the urban and ultrasophisticated New Tango to a piece of naïve, rural folklore, Barbieri elaborates a homogenizing vision, in which all Latin American genres constitute folk music of the people. Similarly, the album's last track fuses Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos's "Bachianas Brasileiras" to a song by the South African jazz pianist Dollar Brand.

Throughout *The Third World*, music from Latin America is treated as material for the band to use as the basis for its improvisations, or as folk music to be transformed into jazz. However, in at least one moment, Barbieri breaks from the album's dominant aesthetic by deploying a style that North American audiences would have recognized as Latin. The moment occurs in the introduction to "Antonio das Mortes," a piece Barbieri wrote in homage to Rocha's film of the same name, which tells the story of a killer-turned-revolutionary outlaw. Given the centrality of Rocha in Barbieri's account of his own transformation, the reference to the film can be taken as an indication of the saxophonist's new political consciousness. The initial statement of the melody is set against a Cuban *tumbao*, or rhythmic pattern, played on conga drums by Richard Landrum. In this way, Barbieri uses the most prominent musical signifier of Latin identity in the North America context—Cuban percussion—in order to signal his embrace of a third-world identity. With Barbieri soloing over an identifiably Latin rhythm, this passage replicates the international division of labor that was so central to earlier versions of Latin jazz. The moment quickly passes, though, as the congas drop out and a much freer and noisier collective improvisation takes over. Nevertheless, the opening of "Antonio das Mortes" is a hint of the music that Barbieri would make in the future.

Over the next several years, Barbieri recorded five more albums for Flying Dutchman, in which he continued to pursue an amalgam of jazz and Latin popular music. His musical evolution during this period was shaped by the emergence and growing influence of jazz-fusion. Although fusion's roots can be traced to the mid-1960s experiments of Gary Burton and Larry Coryell, the genre took off with Miles Davis's albums of 1969 and 1970, *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. Generally understood as a hybrid of rock and jazz, fusion is associated with the use of electric instruments and the preference for a rock-style backbeat over the swinging rhythm more typical of jazz. However, from the beginning, Latin music was an important element in the fusion mixture.⁷¹ The Brazilian percussionist Airtó Moreira played on *Bitches Brew* and together with his wife, Flora Purim, was a founding member of Chick Corea's influential fusion band, Return to Forever. Corea, who played with Moreira in Miles Davis's band, had a serious Latin jazz pedigree, having begun his career as the pianist in Cuban conguero Mongo Santamaría's band. Weather Report, another influential fusion band founded by Davis alumni, featured Moreira on its first album before he was replaced by another Brazilian percussionist, Dom Um Romão. The inclusion of Latin American percussionists in these fusion projects accompanied a marked openness to recognizably Latin rhythms and, occasionally, instrumental techniques.⁷²

As Barbieri moved away from free jazz and toward a more fusion-influenced sound, he also tended to embrace a more conventional version of Latin jazz. On Barbieri's album *Fenix*, recorded in 1971, Ron Carter's electric bass replaced Charlie Haden's acoustic one, and keyboardist Lonnie Liston Smith played the Fender Rhodes electric piano on some tracks. On drums was the fusion specialist Lenny White, who had played on *Bitches Brew* and would later replace Airtó Moreira as the drummer in Return to Forever. Also added to the lineup were two percussionists, the Afro-Cuban specialist Gene Golden and the Brazilian percussionist Naná Vasconcelos, who played both congas and the Afro-Brazilian berimbau. Barbieri's material remained much the same—*Fenix* contained two Brazilian tunes, a tango, a couple of Argentine folk songs, and one original composition named for a Latin American revolutionary icon (this time it was Tupac Amaru)—but his style had evolved. In particular, the collective approach of free jazz ensembles, premised on a blurring of the line between soloist and accompanist, gave way to a more traditional jazz band concept. Moreover, since Roswell Rudd's trombone had not been replaced by another horn, the album basically offers Barbieri with an expanded and assertive rhythm section. Golden's use of Cuban-derived patterns on Brazilian and Argentine material and Vasconcelos's nontraditional approach to the berimbau

gave the rhythm section a generically Latin feel. That is, the flurry of congas and bongos conformed to North American expectations of Latin rhythm. This effect is heightened by the fact that the album is filled with one- or two-chord vamps for Barbieri to solo over, thus replicating the harmonic stasis characteristic of Afro-Cuban music.⁷³ In this way, a song like “El Arriero,” by the Argentine folklorist Atahualpa Yupanqui, is transformed from wistful tune to intense Latin jam.

In the United States, the critical response to Barbieri’s new version of Latin Jazz was effusive. During his free jazz period, some critics applauded the saxophonist’s passion, but others had been less impressed. One review of Cherry’s *Complete Communion* dismissed Barbieri as “a ‘new thing’ player less from conviction than from despair.”⁷⁴ The mixed reviews he received in this period reflected the divided critical assessment of free jazz itself. Once Barbieri started to embrace Latin identity and revolutionary politics, North American critics responded with nearly unanimous praise. According to John Wilson, Barbieri had evolved from “an exponent of the avant-garde shriek and squeal school” to a more mature musician aware of “his personal roots in the music of Argentina, Brazil and Colombia.”⁷⁵ The idea of Barbieri’s supposed roots in popular Latin American music is hard to square with the biography of an Argentine jazz musician who until recently had never had any interest in tango, much less samba or Andean folk music. Nevertheless, this image was crucial to Barbieri’s appeal, at least to critics. By turning to Latin music, Nat Hentoff argued, the saxophonist was “plunging as deeply as he can into himself . . . creating as he returns to his source.”⁷⁶ Barbieri was here figured as the bearer of an authentic Latin self, a notion that shaped what critics heard when they listened to his music. Thus one reviewer described his improvisations as “bossa-tinged free flurries,” even though bossa nova is generally associated with a much lighter touch than Barbieri’s.⁷⁷ For Robert Palmer, probably Barbieri’s greatest champion in the U.S. press, “Gato’s passionate, sweeping statements and his shrieking punctuations impart a peculiarly Latin variety of soul.”⁷⁸ Even his free jazz mannerisms, learned from Coltrane and Sanders, now sounded Latin. Barbieri’s adoption of a Latin persona, evident in his choice of material, his extensive use of Latin American percussion, and his left-wing political pronouncements in liner notes and magazine interviews, profoundly influenced the critical reception of his music; Barbieri sounded Latin because he identified as Latin.

But if Barbieri’s self-presentation affected the way North American jazz critics heard him, this critical response also influenced his musical development, encouraging his shift from the noisy, adventurous free jazz of *The Third World* to the more accessible Latin workouts of *Fenix*. Jazz critics in the United

States approached Barbieri's music by assimilating it to earlier versions of Latin jazz. Particularly salient here were the Gillespie/Pozo collaborations of the 1940s as well as the big band innovations of Mario Bauzá and Machito. John Wilson, who celebrated Barbieri's evolution away from free jazz as a sign of his growing maturity and self-knowledge, compared his group to "Machito's band of 20 years ago." According to Michael Cuscuna, "Gato has successfully assimilated the music of Black America and Latin America, a feat . . . accomplished only by Diz and Gato."⁷⁹ This model of Latin jazz tended to replicate the association of Latin with Cuban rhythm. Barbieri, who was by his own account interested in attracting a wide audience, was giving the critics what they wanted. And the critics responded. For Robert Palmer, "the music became more and more powerful" in *Fenix* and subsequent albums.⁸⁰ Similarly, Michael Bourne's review of *Fenix* in *Down Beat* praised the music's "absolute passion," as well as "the communion of black and Latin energy."⁸¹ With the Latin element neatly packaged in the form of Cuban and, to a lesser extent, Brazilian percussion instruments, critics could more easily understand and embrace Barbieri's music as a Black/Latin hybrid.

Barbieri's effort to reach a larger audience began to bear fruit when Bernardo Bertolucci invited him to compose and perform the soundtrack for *The Last Tango in Paris* (1972). The film was an international sensation, and Barbieri became famous, even earning a Grammy nomination. In the Argentine press, Astor Piazzolla criticized Bertolucci for choosing Barbieri, who, he argued, was no tango musician. Barbieri responded that the film really had nothing to do with tango and that his soundtrack was "purely and exclusively movie music."⁸² Indeed, Barbieri seems to have borrowed the melody for the film's theme song not from a tango but from a tune by Brazilian composer Radamés Gnattali.⁸³ As he had demonstrated on *The Third World* and on *Fenix*, Barbieri was now committed to forging a personal mode of expression through the incorporation of South American material. In any case, Barbieri's association with Latin music in general, as well as his recordings of tangos on his Flying Dutchman albums, had helped get him the *Last Tango* gig. Like Schifrin before him, Barbieri had discovered that identifying as a Latin jazz musician could be lucrative. On the basis of the stature he gained from *Last Tango*, Barbieri was signed by Impulse Records, the jazz division of ABC-Paramount. ABC lavishly funded four Barbieri albums, titled *Chapter One* through *Four*, financing recording sessions with South American musicians in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro and flying the whole band around the world for extended touring. Thanks to aggressive distribution, the albums—especially *Chapter One: Latin America*—achieved large sales figures by jazz standards.⁸⁴

On his first two Impulse albums, Barbieri took advantage of the financial support he received from the record company in order to experiment with the possibilities afforded by the concept of Latin jazz. By this point, he had developed an instantly identifiable tone, a big, grainy sound that critics, relying on Latin stereotypes, often labeled “macho” or “passionate.”⁸⁵ This timbre lent itself both to intense, soaring solos in uptempo Latin numbers and to a lush, romantic style in slow tangos or on the *Last Tango* soundtrack. Both iterations of the Barbieri sound are in evidence on the Impulse records, but the musical context is quite different. On these albums, Barbieri foregoes the familiar accompaniment of a standard jazz group. On some tracks, the ensembles that accompany him include such Andean instruments as the charango, the quena, and the siku. On others, he plays with one of Rio’s famous samba schools. Moreover, a greater proportion of these albums are given over to original compositions, in which Barbieri experiments with folk rhythms that are quite distinct from the Cuban-derived beats that predominate on the Flying Dutchman albums. There are some elements of continuity with the earlier records—particularly the vamps based on repeating figures played by Argentine jazz bassist Adalberto Cevasco on electric bass. Still, the novel instrumentation and particularly the use of rhythms derived from Andean folk music represented a real challenge to familiar versions of Latin jazz.

Although *Chapter One* and *Chapter Two* were extremely well received, Barbieri’s new music seemed to defy the analytical capacities of North American jazz critics. Ray Townley gave *Chapter One* five stars, but his only substantive comment about the music was that it was “more international in scope” and achieved a “better-blending of Gato’s horn with the supporting South American rhythms.”⁸⁶ Chuck Mitchell raved about Barbieri’s “continuing confrontation with his South American roots” in *Chapter Two* but warned consumers that “the music’s relation to Afro-American jazz is much more subtle than on the Dutchman recordings. . . . Don’t buy expecting to hear Latin-jazz.”⁸⁷ For these critics, Barbieri seemed to have abandoned the essential formula of Cuban-derived rhythms plus jazz harmonies and improvisation.

Whether this challenge to North American expectations was too severe or whether Impulse simply refused to fund any more South American expeditions, *Chapter Three* represented a return to an earlier model. For this album, Barbieri assembled a traditional, New York Latin big band—jazz horn section, piano, bass, drums, and Cuban percussion—and hired the legendary Cuban arranger Chico O’Farrill. Having worked with Machito, Dizzy Gillespie, and Stan Kenton in the 1950s, O’Farrill had been a key player in the birth of Latin jazz. By bringing him in, Barbieri essentially embraced the most familiar version of



FIGURE 2.2 • Gato Barbieri performs at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1973 with many of the musicians from *Chapter One: Latin America*. Raul Mercado on the quena, Domingo Cura on the bombo, Amadeo Monges on Indian harp. Visible in the rear is Paul Motian on drums, while Adalberto Cevasco on bass is obscured. Getty Images.

Latin jazz. On the album's final track, "Viva Emiliano Zapata"—yet another original composition named for a Latin American revolutionary—piano and bass lock into a simple, two-chord Cuban *montuno*. Bongos and conga enter, followed by O'Farrill's densely arranged flute and horn parts, providing a comfortable backdrop for Barbieri's solo. *Down Beat's* critic seemed relieved by the familiarity and accessibility of the music: "Precise brass blasts ride along on waves of sweaty, happy Latin dance rhythms and Gato is given ample room to curse or coo as he pleases. . . . Viva Gato Barbieri y Chico O'Farrill!"⁸⁸

Barbieri performed in Argentina on two separate trips during this period: the first in 1971 and the second in 1973 during the recording of *Chapter One*.

By this time, he had profoundly transformed his image and personal style. In his Argentine period, Barbieri had worn his hair short and dressed in the conservative style of the porteño middle class of the 1950s. In the mid-1960s, he adopted the berets and turtle-neck sweaters of the jazz hipster. By the early 1970s, he wore his hair long, wore loose-fitting clothing, and had adopted his signature fedora. Moreover, he was as outspoken about his politics in Argentina as he was in the United States. In front of North American audiences, Barbieri often denounced U.S. imperialism in Latin America; on stage in Argentina, he repeatedly chanted the most politically explicit lines of Yupanqui's "El arriero": "The suffering is ours, but the cows belong to someone else."⁸⁹ Although countercultural fashion and revolutionary politics were certainly visible in Argentina, they were more dangerous. Barbieri's visits home coincided with the military dictatorships of Roberto Levingston and Alejandro Lanusse, a period of intense social conflict. Barbieri spoke of feeling uncomfortable walking the streets of Buenos Aires sporting the long hair and clothing of a hippie.⁹⁰

Although many Argentine critics responded positively to Barbieri's new music, some were unimpressed. Most Argentine artists who achieved success abroad were celebrated as heroes. Lalo Schifrin, for example, was described as a "genius" who had achieved fame and fortune in Hollywood.⁹¹ Barbieri did receive his share of plaudits along these lines: local writers reported proudly that in the United States, he was widely seen as the most important saxophonist since Coltrane.⁹² Moreover, many Argentine critics responded favorably to Barbieri's Latin Americanist musical vision. As one put it, "The great originality of Gato Barbieri resides in two prodigious achievements: the insertion of jazz into popular Indoamerican music, achieving a freshness that spans the continent, and his unique capacity to take up, break apart and reassemble a melody."⁹³ Still, there were indications that Barbieri's pan-Latin, musical identity made less sense in Argentina than it did in the United States. One critic, for example, found the saxophonist's style "rigid, monotonous," dazzling only to those with "foreign ears."⁹⁴ Another argued that Barbieri's "limited creative capacity" was not capable of overcoming the mismatch between jazz and South American folk music.⁹⁵ Finally, one perceptive critic described the *Chapter One* project as "folklore in the blender." He argued that Barbieri was essentially trying to invent a new music—not Argentine, Venezuelan, or Brazilian music, but rather a new, Latin American hybrid—and that he lacked the musical maturity to pull it off.⁹⁶ This critical ambivalence in Argentina reveals that Barbieri's Latin music innovations were very much a product of the North American musical, ethnic, and political context. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Barbieri never returned to live in Argentina. As he recently commented, "I'm not Argentine, I'm international."⁹⁷



FIGURE 2.3 • Barbieri playing ca. 1970. *Primera Plana* (March 30, 1971), 49.

In 1976, Barbieri's career took one more turn. Dissatisfied with the marketing efforts of Impulse and wanting, as always, to reach a larger audience, he signed with A&M records and, under the guidance of producer Herb Alpert, released *Caliente!*⁹⁸ From the lush string arrangements to the choice of an apolitical stereotype for a title, everything about the album signaled the saxophonist's embrace of a more mainstream musical idiom. The album was a commercial success, especially Barbieri's cover of Carlos Santana's "Europa," which may be the saxophonist's best-known recording. On this track and throughout the album, Barbieri indulged the romantic, sexy side of his Latin identity, while abandoning both his political radicalism and his aesthetic avant-gardism. By maintaining a Cuban percussion section and by covering Santana, he definitively embraced the conventional, North American understanding of Latin music. This new direction was highly profitable, but it alienated jazz critics. Leonard Feather declared that he had "hastily overestimated" Barbieri, Stephen Holden denounced him as a "caricature of a Hollywood hipster," and even Robert Palmer waxed nostalgic for the music he made before the "pop-jazz

albums” of his A&M phase.⁹⁹ Barbieri, like Schifrin before him, had moved beyond the specialized subculture of jazz.

Both Lalo Schifrin and Gato Barbieri were perceived as Latin in the United States, and both took advantage of the musical and commercial opportunities that perception created. In the process of engaging with such a constraining label, Schifrin and Barbieri produced new musical hybrids. Schifrin’s “Mission Impossible” theme used Cuban percussion to create a novel template for television and film music, while Barbieri expanded the category of “Latin jazz” beyond its original form. Critics understood these new hybrids to result from mixing North American jazz with distinct, Latin traditions. Yet neither Schifrin nor Barbieri was the bearer of a Latin musical tradition; in fact, neither had any interest or expertise in music from Latin America until after they left Argentina. Their musical innovations were the result of the agency they were able to exercise within an unequal global structure in which Latin America was associated with exotic, earthy rhythms and with values such as passion and sensuality.

Comparing their trajectories reveals how this global structure had changed between the late 1950s when Schifrin arrived in the United States and the mid-1960s when Barbieri did. Schifrin’s Parisian musical education and his self-presentation as an intellectual enabled him to prosper at a time when Latin rhythms like the bossa nova constituted seductive symbols of cosmopolitan sophistication. As a white Argentine, Schifrin was the perfect guide to the exotic rhythms of Latin America: he could claim natural expertise while remaining comfortably familiar. By contrast, Barbieri arrived at a moment of political and cultural ferment. In the context of the free jazz movement and the rise of protest jazz, his persona was politicized. More than a guide to the exotic otherness of Latin America, Barbieri embodied that otherness. He did not present and repackage Latin rhythms for North American music fans, as Schifrin had. Rather, he articulated Latin-ness as an irreducible difference and an implicit critique of white, North American power and privilege.

Notwithstanding the achievements of Schifrin and Barbieri, both musicians were constrained by the preconceptions attached to the term *Latin jazz*. North American critics, audiences, musicians, and record label executives apprehended their music through a framework that maintained the purity of musical categories like Latin and jazz and articulated them to equally pure ethnic and national categories. This framework limited the musicians’ capacity to innovate. In neither Schifrin’s nor Barbieri’s case can the adoption of familiar models of Latin music be reduced to a straightforward case of selling out. Schifrin’s movie music remained aesthetically inventive even as it incorporated

conventional Latin signifiers, and Barbieri's adoption of less innovative versions of Latin jazz came before he starting playing overtly commercial smooth jazz. Instead, their stories exemplify the ideological processes that work to embed unequal power relationships within the popular music of the Americas. The fame and fortune that Schifrin and Barbieri achieved by specializing in Latin music or embodying a Latin persona reinscribed stereotypes. Despite the significant transformations of the 1960s, one could be forgiven for thinking that not much had changed in the twenty years between Stan Kenton's *Cuban Fire* and Barbieri's *Caliente*.