

# Latin Jazz: The Other Jazz

*By Christopher Washburne*

You have to tell it the long way. You have to tell about the people who make it, what they have inside them, what they're doing, what they're waiting for. Then you begin to understand.

—Sidney Bechet (1960:209)

## Introduction

Since the mid-1940s the jazz scene in the United States has been gradually moving away from playing a significant role in mainstream popular culture to a more marginalized one, aligning itself with practices associated with Western art music traditions. For jazz musicians, this shift from "popular" to "high art" status has proven advantageous in some respects, awarding an unprecedented level of respectability and increased recognition of artistic merit. This is particularly significant, though bittersweet, for many African American jazz innovators who after persevering for years through much racial strife, are finally receiving long overdue accolades. The road from brothels and speakeasys to Lincoln Center was a long and hard-fought one.<sup>1</sup> Doors to institutional funding, concert halls, and universities (i.e., "the privileged white establishment") are open to the jazz world to an unprecedented extent. Programs such as Jazz at Lincoln Center certainly can be seen as a victory for those musicians and proponents of jazz, such as John Lewis, Milt Jackson, Charles Mingus, Leonard Feather, Barry Ulanov, Stanley Crouch, and Albert Murray, among others, who have demanded that the music be taken seriously and afforded a respectability absent in much of its history.

However, on a more negative note, this alignment with art music traditions has been facilitated, in part, by the economic marginalization of jazz within the U.S. music scene. With the dwindling of performance venues and diminished market share in the record industry (present estimates range from 2 to 4%), like classical concert music styles, much of today's U.S. jazz scene has been forced to retreat to the concert hall, publicly funded venues, National Public Radio and television, college radio stations,<sup>2</sup> a smattering of jazz clubs, European jazz festivals, and the Ivory Tower. For most young musicians, today's jazz education takes place in college classrooms and the school-affiliated ensembles that have replaced traditional institutions of jazz education (i.e., bandstands and jam sessions).<sup>3</sup> It is a great accomplishment that jazz is thought to be a serious

enough subject to be taught in universities, but this shift is indicative of jazz's financial struggles. Economically, jazz music in the United States is barely an independently sustainable entity and frequently must be subsidized to survive. The 1987 act of Congress designating jazz "a rare and valuable national American treasure"<sup>4</sup> worthy of support was an important acknowledgement of the art form, but it was also further proof that jazz was and is economically in trouble.

Along with newly-established jazz programs in colleges and concert halls has come a demand for jazz scholarship to both supply teaching materials and to determine a canon of "great works" to be preserved through performance. A subject worthy of study is also worthy of rigorous academic analysis and documentation, and accordingly, numerous doctoral dissertations in recent years have focused on jazz. No longer is the construction of jazz historical narratives left primarily to musicians, journalists, and critics; they are now also being written by trained scholars in musicology, ethnomusicology, history, and cultural studies. With the emergence of this new literature and strong institutional support, as well as the release of influential documentaries and compilations, such as Ken Burns's *Jazz* and its spin-off recordings, we are at an important juncture in the construction of the jazz historical narrative. Now is an opportune time, as the canon is being reconstructed, to stop and ask, what history is being written? What history is being unwritten?

Historically, Latin music styles (i.e., Caribbean and South and Central American) have shared a common history with jazz, intersecting, cross-influencing, and at times seeming inseparable, as both have played prominent roles in each other's development. Regardless, in much of the jazz literature, this role has been diminished or downright ignored. Discussions that include the names of significant Latin jazz innovators, such as Tito Puente, Mario Bauza, Chico O'Farrill, Frank "Machito" Grillo, and others, are noticeably absent. This paper discusses these musicians' conspicuous omission—one of many, I might add—from the established jazz canon.<sup>5</sup> It will explore possible reasons for their omission, examine what forces are at play in their continued exclusion, and attempt to identify what is at stake if they are included.

The discussion begins with a definitional examination of "Latin jazz." The long-standing relationship that Latin and jazz styles have shared will then be historically traced. The discussion will proceed to the present, documenting the current state of Latin jazz on the New York jazz scene with its recent resurgence in popularity and newly obtained prestige, and in contrast, will document its perpetual absence in past and more recent canonical works. I will then explore the unique dynamics involved in the relationship between Latin jazz and the "jazz tradition."<sup>6</sup>

### What is Latin Jazz?

It was not until the mid-1940s, with the innovative work of Dizzy Gillespie, Chano Pozo, Mario Bauza, Machito, Stan Kenton, and George Russell, among others, that a separate stylistic label was deemed necessary to differentiate Latin-influenced jazz from other jazz styles. Previously, a separate sub-style category for Latin-influenced jazz was not employed; instead, a more specific terminology was used to delineate stylistic variations played by jazz groups. These often included the names of dances that were associated with a song's rhythmic structure, such as the quadrille, rumba, stomp, and tango. Over time, these specific terms were used with less frequency as jazz became less associated with dance, and by 1946, they were replaced by two broader labels: "Cubop" and "Latin jazz."<sup>7</sup>

In the mid-1940s the jazz climate was ripe for the invention of new labels as musicians began using "bebop" or "rebop" to distance themselves from their swing forefathers. These new delineations, motivated by both musical and extra-musical factors, proved to be lines of contention drawn by the younger generation of jazz musicians who were seen as revolutionary in their musical and social vision (DeVeaux 1997). Bebop musicians not only brought structural changes to the music, but also initiated shifts in how the music was generally perceived. They viewed themselves as artists and began making demands that their music be treated as art. In retrospect, this distinction would prove to be a significant step in moving jazz away from "popular" culture and closer to its present "high art" status. The "bebop" label accentuated this distinction and also served as a marketing tool, one easily adopted by record companies to sell the latest musical trend. In some ways, bebop triggered a "label mania" in subsequent jazz historiography and marketing, where every few years new names were introduced: hard bop, cool jazz, free jazz, West Coast jazz, etc.

Dizzy Gillespie helped popularize the term "Cubop" as a stylistic label, in part through his big band's acclaimed performance of the "Afro-Cubano Drums Suite" with Cuban percussionist Chano Pozo at Carnegie Hall on September 29, 1947. This concert, which featured the collaborative works of Pozo and Gillespie (including "Manteca") and included George Russell's version of Cubop, "Cubano Be Cubano Bop," is popularly referred to as the birth of "Latin jazz" (Roberts 1999; Delannoy 2001). Indeed, the combination of this high profile concert event, the recordings that followed, Gillespie's respected stature in the jazz world, and Pozo's popularity among the New York Latino population ensured that Cuban music would continue to have an influential role in jazz for years to come.

The term "Cubop" itself, an elision of the words Cuba and bebop, symbolized a new type of musical integration. The music drew inspiration

equally from both styles to such a degree that it could no longer be labeled solely "bebop" or "Cuban" music. The appellation aptly symbolizes the new equipollent level of cross-cultural musical integration that differentiated the music from previous Latin and jazz mixings (note the equal distribution of letters in this five lettered word, with two borrowed from each name along with the sharing of the middle letter "b"). The new manner of mixing foregrounded, unadulterated, "authentic" Cuban rhythms and styles (something rare in jazz up to that point) required jazz musicians to develop a deeper understanding of and an unprecedented level of competency in Cuban styles.

As jazz musicians in subsequent years turned toward other Latin music styles (most notably Brazilian) for inspiration and musical mixings, the Cubop name proved too limiting and was eventually replaced by the more geographically-inclusive "Latin jazz." This has remained the sub-style's most frequently used label, referring to any jazz in which elements of Latin American music are prominent. Some, however, have objected to this reductive classification which groups musics derived from diverse traditions (Cuban, Brazilian, Argentine, Mexican, Colombian, etc.) under one category.<sup>8</sup>

Though the Gillespie/Pozo collaboration was brief (1946-48), due to Pozo's untimely death, its influence on jazz history was profound. Pozo became a symbol of Latino recognition in the jazz world; he established the conga drum's use in jazz settings (prior to 1946 it was included mostly as a novelty item), and he opened up opportunities for numerous Latino percussionists to make significant contributions to jazz, such as Mongo Santamaria, Ray Barretto, Sabú Martinez, Willie Bobo, Airtio, and Tito Puente. Gillespie's and Pozo's compositional collaborations resulted in several Latin jazz standards (e.g., "Manteca" and "Tin Tin Deo"). Gillespie's stature in the jazz community legitimized and even demanded the incorporation of Latin musical structures and principles into jazz music making. Latin jazz became an integral part of bebop where most players incorporated the rhythms and repertoire. Some non-Latino jazz musicians, like Cal Tjader, George Shearing, and Stan Kenton, dedicated much of their professional energies to performing Latin jazz. Gillespie became an ambassador of sorts for the internationalization of jazz. He eventually visited Cuba, performed on many State Department tours, and for the last ten years of his life directed "The United Nations Big Band," which featured mostly Latino musicians. Since the time of Gillespie and Pozo's initial collaboration, it has become rare to hear a jazz set without some form of Latin influence.

The emergence of the new style was caused in part by a growing presence of Latino musicians participating on the New York jazz scene. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Cubans and Puerto Ricans immigrated

to Spanish Harlem in significant numbers, creating a greater demand for musicians competent in Cuban and Puerto Rican styles (Glasser 1995). Many Latino musicians who arrived at that time played with jazz groups. Notable examples include Puerto Rican valve trombonist Juan Tizol, who performed with Duke Ellington; Cuban bandleader Frank "Machito" Grillo, whose big band Machito and his Afro-Cubans (formed in 1942) employed and collaborated with many non-Latino jazz musicians, including Stan Getz, Stan Kenton, Dexter Gordon, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Zoot Sims, Johnny Griffin, Buddy Rich, and Herbie Mann; Cuban trumpeter Mario Bauza, who played at the Savoy Ballroom with Chick Webb and later with Cab Calloway (Bauza was integral in bringing Pozo and Gillespie together); and Cuban flautist Alberto Socarras, who did session work for Columbia Records and performed in Benny Carter's band. Simply put, the Latino musicians' participation in the jazz scene in the '30s and '40s, and the exposure to Latin music styles they brought to American jazz musicians, contributed to stylistic change in jazz. For instance, Gillespie credits his experimentation with Cuban music to his friendship with Bauza (Gillespie 1979). Stan Kenton credits Latin dance bandleader Noro Morales with inspiring his initial Afro-Cuban experiments, which comprised close to 25% of the arrangements in his book when he formed his rehearsal band in 1940 (Roberts 1999). He later collaborated with Machito and the percussionists from the Afro-Cubans on several recordings.

Even before the "birth of Latin Jazz" in 1947, jazz and Latin music forms had already shared a cross-fertilizing relationship that reached back to pre-jazz styles. Since jazz was connected to dance, jazz bands needed to perform music associated with the dance crazes of the day. For instance, along with foxtrots and lindies, tangos, rumbas, sambas, merengues, and congas were played. The extent to which bands incorporated Latin rhythms and repertoire made demarcating a sub-style within jazz seem absurd. The music of the early jazz and swing eras can be classified stylistically on a jazz/Latin continuum of sorts, where bands played music that ranged from straight swing numbers with little Caribbean influence, to swing numbers with a certain degree of Latin influence, to Latin dance numbers with a certain degree of jazz influence, to straight ahead Latin dance numbers. The terms Cubop and Latin jazz came to label a gray area that had existed since jazz's beginnings. Gillespie and Pozo's efforts, along with those of others, served to reinvigorate this long-term relationship.

Jazz \_\_\_\_\_ (Latin Jazz) \_\_\_\_\_ Latin

As jazz emerged from New Orleans at the turn of the century, the city's Caribbean culture served as one important component of the foundations of jazz, something which has been acknowledged by some musicians. Most often noted is a comment made by Jelly Roll Morton during an interview

in 1938 with Alan Lomax for his Library of Congress recordings: "If you can't manage to put tinges of Spanish in your tunes, you will never be able to get the right seasoning, I call it, for jazz." At that time, "Spanish" referred to music coming from any Spanish-speaking region. A prominent performer and innovator throughout the early years of jazz, Morton was a Creole pianist from New Orleans whose recordings are filled with rhythms associated with Latin styles. However, he was not the first to comment on the "Spanish tinge." In 1898 an African American composer, Benjamin Harney, published a book entitled the *Ragtime Instructor*. In the introduction, he wrote that "Ragtime or Negro dance time originally takes its initiative steps from Spanish music, or rather from Mexico, where it is known under the head and names of Habanera, Danza, Seguidillo, etc." (quoted in Roberts 1999:10). And even Duke Ellington commented in 1938, "when I came into the world, Southern Negroes were expressing their feelings in rhythmic 'blues' in which Spanish syncopations had a part" (Ellington 1938:14-18).

As stated above, the early Latin influence in jazz was most notably rhythmic, but it also effected the choice of repertoire. One illustrative example is the "The Peanut Vendor." In 1930, Don Azpiazzú and his Havana Casino Orchestra performed at the Palace Theater in New York City. The group included a typical Cuban percussion section (maracas, claves, bongos, and timbales) and it was one of the first occasions where a mainstream, non-Hispanic, U.S. audience was exposed to an "authentic" Cuban music performance. The success of that concert and RCA Victor's subsequent release of Azpiazzú's version of "The Peanut Vendor," the highlight of the performance, helped launch the rumba dance craze. "The Peanut Vendor" became yet another instance of jazz artists drawing on material from the popular music of the day. Many jazz artists subsequently performed the piece and several were prompted to re-record the song within one year of its initial release, including Ellington (1931), Louis Armstrong (1930), and Red Nichols (1931). Regardless of the fact that its commercial appeal was due, in part, to an American obsession with the "exotic," this is one of numerous examples that illustrate the jazz/Latin connection. "The Peanut Vendor" served to further entrench Latin music in the jazz scene and provided groundwork for what would become known as "Latin jazz."

### **Latin Jazz in Today's New York Scene: Prestige and Omission**

Within the last ten years there has been a growing Latino presence in the New York jazz scene, due in part to a recent influx of Cuban musicians; to the prominence of musicians like Panamanian pianist Danilo Perez and Brazilian trumpeter Claudio Roditi, who have attained high regard among the mainstream jazz community; and to the continued internationalization of the jazz economy, with burgeoning scenes thriving in

Latin American and Caribbean countries. This has led to a renewed interest and resurgence in Latin jazz, indications of which include: a massive reissuing of classic Latin jazz recordings on CD (mirroring the jazz recording industry trends); the recording by major jazz labels of Latin jazz records by well-known jazz artists not previously associated with Latin styles—e.g., Roy Hargrove (1997) and Charlie Haden (2001); the publication of *The Latin Real Book*, offering, according to the publisher, “detailed arrangements, exactly as recorded, to help your band play in authentic Latin styles”; the New School Jazz Department’s (1994) and Manhattan School of Music’s (1999) hiring of percussionist Bobby Sanabria to direct an Afro-Cuban big band, in addition to their jazz big band; and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts holding the International Jazz Hand Drum Competition in 2000, the first year in the competition’s fourteen-year history that hand drums were included (most of the competitors were percussionists from the Afro-Cuban tradition). Even Lincoln Center, which has earned a reputation for upholding more traditional notions of the jazz canon, programmed tributes to Latin jazz greats, including Dizzy Gillespie, Chano Pozo, Machito, and Tito Puente.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, at the time of this writing, there are plans for establishing a Lincoln Center Afro-Cuban Big Band led by Arturo O’Farrill. This renewed interest has further led to a push to construct and record a historical narrative of this “other jazz.” This has resulted in the publication of two Latin jazz histories (Roberts 1999; Delannoy 2001); the release of *Calle 54*, a documentary film on Latin jazz; and an exhibition constructed by the Smithsonian Institute, “Latin Jazz: la combinación perfecta,” which will be touring in the United States in the fall of 2002.

Regardless of these developments, only a few scholars have acknowledged and explored jazz’s Afro-Caribbean roots. Martin Williams pointed to the juxtaposition of Creole and black culture in New Orleans as providing the foundation of jazz (1970). Ernest Borneman (1969) boldly called for rethinking the historical studies of jazz by approaching it as an Afro-Latin music tradition, based on the numerous recordings throughout jazz history that incorporate “Creole beats” and “motifs” (e.g., songs with French and Spanish titles). John Storm Roberts (1999) provides useful historical information documenting the interrelationships of Latin music and music of the United States, and Thomas Fiehrer (1991) presents a strong historical and sociological case for the importance of Creole culture in the formulation of jazz. Elsewhere, I have discussed how Latin rhythms play a fundamental role in pre-1947 jazz styles (Washburne 1997); Ingrid Monson has discussed their use in 1950s jazz styles (Monson 2000). Additionally, both Juan Flores (2000) and Paul Gilroy (1993) have questioned why Caribbean contributions to African American musical forms are routinely

ignored. With the exception of the above writers, this connection remains relatively unexplored and omitted from most historical discussions.

Gary Tomlinson writes:

The jazz canon has been forged and maintained according to old strategies—Eurocentric, hierarchical notions behind which the rules of aestheticism, transcendentalism, and formalism are apparent. . . . The canon operates . . . with little serious regard for the contexts in which cherished works were created and even less for those in which their meaning and value are continually discovered and revised. The jazz canon is a canon of the same serving a history of the same, and we have already lost sight of the partiality and impermanence of its structure of value. (1992:75–76)

A brief examination of several influential canonical works demonstrates the pitfalls of the “same serving the same,” with one cost being the omission of Latin jazz. A monumental step in establishing a jazz canon of great works came by way of Martin Williams’s 1973 compilation, the *Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz* (SCCJ). The long-term ramifications of the canonization process set in motion by the Smithsonian Collection can be gauged by two frequently used college textbooks on jazz, by Lewis Porter and Michael Ullman (1993) and by Mark Gridley (1978), which coordinate their discussions with the SCCJ. This alignment is a logical one because of the SCCJ’s commercial availability (until 2000, when it went out of print), which allowed students to purchase their own copies, easing the logistics of teaching a music course. But Williams’s choices reflected his own biases and no Latin jazz selections or artists, with the exception of Dizzy Gillespie (not playing Latin jazz), are included. Porter, Ullman, and Gridley perpetuate his omission. Of their nearly 500-page volume, Porter and Ullman devote only two paragraphs to Gillespie’s work with Chano Pozo and their Latin jazz innovations (1993:195) and bossa nova receives four pages of discussion. Gridley is even more remiss devoting one paragraph to the relationship of Afro-Cuban music and jazz (1978:154). In Gridley’s text, names such as Puente and Machito are entirely absent, and Mongo Santamaria is relegated to mention in a mere footnote. Such dismissive treatment is significant because much of the younger generation relies on educational institutions for their exposure to jazz. If these names of Latin jazz performers and their music are absent from the text, they are most likely not being taught at all, unless instructors are aware of and willing to introduce supplementary texts and recordings. As a result, a jazz history without Latin jazz is being perpetuated.

A recent body of innovative scholarship has questioned old paradigms of jazz historical writing and offered valuable new approaches—for ex-

ample, the ethnomusicological work of Paul Berliner (1994) and Scott DeVeaux's (1997) social history of the birth of bebop—however, both fall short in their consideration of Latin jazz artists. Berliner's list of "Interviewed Artists" does not include a single Latino jazz musician, nor any musician who has dedicated much energy to playing Latin jazz, with the exception of Doc Cheatham. Likewise, DeVeaux neglects the innovative work by Machito and other Latin jazz musicians during the formative years of bebop. In spite of the value and innovation of these important contributions to jazz writing, they too serve to foster the exclusion of Latin jazz.

Also problematic was the most widely disseminated and heavily-promoted documentary in jazz history, Ken Burns's controversial *Jazz*, in which the almost total absence of discussions of the Caribbean, Latin jazz, or any Latin jazz musician was disheartening. Jazz critic Peter Watrous has commented, "I can't help but think how jazz writing is so provincial, the fact that Ken Burns's first segment says nothing about the Caribbean demonstrates that and how big a role Nationalism plays in the jazz scene" (personal communication). Historian Robin Kelley has also discussed the nationalistic forces at work in Burns's project. He writes that Caribbean music and even African-infused jazz is omitted from Burns's *Jazz* because they "counter the film's burning assumptions: that jazz is exclusively American to be exported to the rest of the world as an advance guard in the struggle for democracy. . . . According to Burns, jazz is not only the exclusive property of the United States, but it has been a premiere manifestation of this nation's democratic ethos" (Kelley 2001:10).

The popular media, radio, and other record industry structures have historically demonstrated a reluctance to embrace Latino contributions to jazz and Latin jazz in general, a practice somewhat still in place. For instance, it was not until 1972, twenty years after Chano Pozo arrived in New York, that *Down Beat* magazine added a percussion category to its annual awards. One writer for that publication (who wished to remain anonymous) commented, "Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, for some reason if the record wasn't straight-ahead they would penalize it. For instance, every time I would review an Eddie Palmieri record and give it five stars, they would publish the review with only four stars. They would only occasionally let me write articles on Latin jazz players. But I could never figure out why they did that with the star rating" (personal communication).

It was not until the 1990s that the "Latin Jazz" category was instituted at the Grammy Awards. And according to Awilda Rivera, DJ at New York City's main jazz radio station, WBCO, the station's long-standing policy was that no more than one Latin jazz cut could be played per hour. It was not until 1999, when she acquired the nightly jazz show, that she was able to influence a programming change—reflecting in part a personal interest in her own Puerto Rican heritage. Now, two or three cuts can be

played per hour. She proudly stated, "They listened to me and the programming department has now changed its policy. Now I can interview you and others that play Latin jazz on nights that were always reserved for straight-ahead styles. It broadens the audience for Latino musicians" (personal communication).

### **So, Why is Latin Jazz Omitted from the Canon?**

Latin songs were incorporated into the repertoire of most jazz groups of the 1930s. The Savoy Ballroom and other New York venues advertised dances featuring rumba bands, swing bands, and groups that played both. Commenting on his six-month engagement at Roseland in 1936, Woody Herman related, "The blues were the best thing we knew how to play, but we had to do a lot of fighting to play them. The management preferred we play mostly dance music—foxtrots, rumbas, and waltzes—to satisfy the dancers" (Roberts 1999:44). Latin dance bands included swing numbers in their sets as well. The ease with which these disparate dances were accommodated by musicians of the era is telling.

But, the recorded history of jazz is deceptive when it comes to reflecting this cross-stylistic performance practice. Jazz groups tended not to record many Latin numbers because Latin groups were recording them, and vice versa. Recorded repertory thus appears more segregated than what was actually being played on the bandstand. (How many of those required rumbas did Herman record in 1936? None!) This points to one cause of Latin music's diminished role in jazz histories: if historical narratives are constructed through the study of recordings (a la Schuller 1968, 1989), then the role of Latin music is distorted, or even missed.

Even when Latin-influenced jazz recordings are examined, historians of recorded jazz are disadvantaged by past prejudices held by the jazz industry. Due to the exoticism associated with Latin music in the United States in the 1930s and '40s, promulgated by the media and through performers like Desi Arnaz and Carmen Miranda, Latin-influenced jazz was often viewed more as a novelty than as a serious musical venture. Latin percussionists, considered ancillary, were seldom given credit in liner notes throughout the 1930s and the early part of the 1940s. For instance, on Louis Armstrong's version of "The Peanut Vendor" (1930), all musicians are listed except those playing percussion. Likewise, on Cab Calloway's 1940 recording of "Goin' Conga" (Okeh), despite being the first jazz recording that features an extended percussion solo, no credit is given to the soloist or accompanying percussionist. The fact that an established jazz musician, Mario Bauzá, was playing maracas (Allejandro Rodriguez soloed on the bongos) pointedly illustrates the jazz industry's disdainful views. When Bauzá played trumpet, on the other hand, he was rarely omitted from liner credits.<sup>10</sup> In the context of these prevailing attitudes, it becomes

evident how important the efforts of Gillespie, Kenton, and others were in calling for proper recognition of Latin musicians whose participation and musical traditions were integral in the making of the music. After the 1940s, Latin musicians were indeed credited equally with more frequency.

In some ways, Gillespie's insistence on the "Cubop" label was the worst thing that could have happened to Latin jazz's prospects for incorporation into the canon because it began a move that distanced the music from the mainstream, if only by way of terminology, and relegated it as a sub-style. This new label has proven divisive when certain musicians, for exclusionary purposes, were characterized as "Latin jazzers" as others were labeled "beboppers" or "swing musicians." Latin jazz has been systematically "ghetto-ized" ever since, evidenced by its separate Grammy category and radio programming. This stylistic pigeonholing has little to do with what jazz musicians actually played, but it still persists in the press, in the recording industry, and even among musicians. Is Gillespie a bebopper or Latin jazzer? The answer is obvious: he is a great musician and jazz is a style of music that has since its inception incorporated a wide range of influences. As Jerome Harris writes, "The history of jazz supplies an openness, for jazz has been a syncretic art from the beginning . . . the incorporation of influences from non-jazz musics by jazz is quite substantial and it's likely to continue to be significant" (2000:116). Paul Berliner concurs: "Just as jazz was born from an amalgam of African, European, and African American musical elements, it has continued the practice of absorbing different musical influences. Jazz remains a characteristically open music system capable of absorbing new traits without sacrificing its identity" (1994:489-90). Regardless of jazz's openness to new sources of influence and its long interrelationship with Latin styles, the marginalization of Latin jazz and Latin jazz artists persists.

The canonization process itself, which privileges preservation and requires the delineation of a tradition in which to preserve, is fraught with inherent difficulties. Since all historical texts are economies of truth (in Foucault's sense), what gets economized is motivated by a complex set of factors. Canonization presents a wholesale transference of non-jazz concepts to the study of the music. What it often does not allow space for is the internationalization of the jazz scene and the multiplicities that jazz encompasses. In fact, the "canon" resists or attempts to expel ambivalences in the definitorial field in order to create a unified narrative, which will not allow for heterogeneous trails of origin. In this context, canon building undermines the internationalization of jazz to avoid the disempowerment of the African American jazz legacy, or an American jazz legacy.

Jerome Harris deftly identifies two positions taken by writers and musicians. The first of these he labels the "canon position," where jazz is seen

as a music defined by a specific African American–originated *canon* and socially constituted guild. The second stance, the “process position,” views jazz as the result of certain African American–originated *processes* and aesthetics manifested in the music (Harris 2000:121). Both are slightly problematic in their essentialism, although the latter constitutes a more porous, open-ended approach to the tradition, providing room for non-African American contributors and innovators. The canon position is strategic because it defines jazz as a sort of endangered species and elevates it to high art status, which as a result brings higher visibility and even a small, but significant, economic boost (e.g., Burns’s *Jazz*). When the jazz tradition is viewed more as a process, individual musicians are empowered to innovate through a much broader spectrum of media forces than is the case within the strictly canon-based conception of jazz as an “establishment.” In reality, most musicians operate somewhere between these two positions. Travis Jackson has explored the elasticity with which musicians bounce between these divergent strategies in order to provide definitions that best serve their needs (2001:52–54).

Latin jazz necessarily straddles the “canon” and “process” positions because of its constitutive role in early jazz and its use as a continual source for experimentation in the internationalization of the jazz scene. And it is this duality of positions that prevents and postpones its acceptance into the canon. For many in the jazz establishment (i.e., the community of jazz musicians, promoters, educators, writers, DJs, industry people, and consumers), Latin jazz represents something alien, a continual disruption, which is paradoxical precisely because it shares a common origin with mainstream jazz, yet has undergone several stages of disassociation along the road. Borrowing a physics metaphor from the trans-linguistic science of Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), one could define the impact of Latin jazz on the mainstream tradition as one of centripetal (unifying) and centrifugal (dispersing or disseminating) forces respectively, constantly replaying this theme of participation without belonging. Every time it comes back to knock on the door, it unsettles the tradition and it creates ambivalence.

Most visibly, the centrifugal dynamics inherent in Latin jazz serve to promote a heterogeneous texture in the music allowing for individual musicians to explore a wide variety of styles that resist the singular aesthetics of the canon and promote globalization and internationalization. Latin jazz explicitly invites the participation of other non-African American cultures in jazz, as such possessing a transformational engine feeding off an ambivalence regarding musical and cultural affiliations. In other words, the Latin presence in jazz history complicates the black/white dichotomy of racial politics in the United States jazz scene.

Conversely, an occasion where Latin music served as a centripetal force on jazz was the emergence of Cubop. Cubans coming to New York in the

1930s and '40s were steeped in the philosophies and sentiments associated with the Negritude movement. This was an intellectual movement that was promulgated in Cuba by the writings of Fernando Ortiz and Nicolas Guillén, which encouraged the exploration of the African roots of their culture, taking pride in their African heritage, and accentuating African elements in their arts and religion. The influence of these ideas is evident in the name that Machito chose for his New York band: the "Afro-Cubans." Chano Pozo was also a key figure in introducing this Afro-centric sensibility to the New York jazz world. A consummate performer who possessed a comprehensive knowledge of both sacred and secular Cuban styles, Pozo introduced the American jazz scene to the deep spirituality essential to so many Cuban music styles and absent in the novelty approaches to Latin jazz of previous eras. Pozo's vocal interjections in African languages, his use of Afro-Cuban religious musics tied to his Abakwa beliefs (an Africa-derived religion practiced in Cuba), and his playing of an instrument that originated in Africa (the conga drum) gave African American jazz musicians a direct connection, by way of Cuba, to an African homeland that resonated with the burgeoning Civil Rights movement of the mid-1940s.

The fact that Cubop's emergence coincides with political interest in the African diaspora in New York is not coincidental. This is evident in Gillespie's comments concerning his inability to speak Spanish and Pozo's poor English skills. He claimed it didn't matter because they spoke a common language: "African" (quoted in Santoro 2000:527). Gillespie's explorations into Afro-Cuban musics were explorations into his own roots: "I found the connections between Afro-Cuban and African music and discovered the identity of our music in theirs" (Gillespie 1979:290). As an African diasporic consciousness grew in the 1940s and '50s among jazz musicians—as well as an urge to articulate that consciousness in the music—Afro-Cuban musical traditions became central to the process of triangulating between Africa and African America (Monson 2000:17). Musicians such as Art Blakey and Max Roach, both of whom credit Pozo and Machito for introducing them to Afro-Cuban styles, adapted Afro-Caribbean rhythms to the drum set and incorporated them in jazz settings.<sup>11</sup> Throughout his career, Blakey used Afro-Caribbean rhythms as referential expressions of Africa. Indeed, many of his albums that have African themes, such as *The African Beat* (1962), *Holiday for Skins* (1958), and *Orgy in Rhythm* (1957), express that African-ness through the incorporation of Afro-Cuban rhythms and, following in the Pozo/Gillespie tradition, include collaborations with Afro-Cuban percussionists Sabú Martínez and Carlos "Patato" Valdez.

Regardless, some musicians have been reticent to embrace Cuba's integral role in the articulation of an African consciousness and, by extension, an added racial dimension in jazz. For instance, when discussing Count

Basie's use of Caribbean rhythms, trombonist and Basie alumnus Benny Powell adamantly denied any connection to the Caribbean, stating that those rhythms are African (see Washburne 1997). Powell's long association with Randy Weston, a musician who has extensively explored his African roots in jazz, must certainly have colored his response. David Murray, speaking of his work with Senegalese musicians stated, "I'm not interested in going to Cuba and mixing, I mean that's been done. I'm not from Cuba; I'm from somewhere in Africa. I'd just like to find that place and know that I've touched home."<sup>12</sup>

It seems clear that part of Cuba's appeal in Gillespie's search for African roots was access. In the 1940s it was much easier to interact with Cuba than with African nations, especially since many Cuban musicians were living and working in New York City. Today, Senegalese musicians are accessible, and for Murray they represent a more "authentic" homeland. Cuban musicians are no longer needed as mediators for that purpose and in some ways have been discarded for a "closer to the roots" connection. With the exception of Monson, few writers have explored the role of Cuban musicians and music styles when discussing this sensitive and racially charged topic. The questions that need to be asked are: How does acknowledging a Caribbean component in jazz affect those who wish to accentuate the Africanisms and/or African Americanisms in the music? How does it affect those who adopt a nationalist stance and focus on the Americanisms? Without the acknowledgement of its centripetal possibilities, Latin jazz will be seen as a purely disrupting force and therefore a threat to the African American jazz legacy. Those wishing to promote that legacy will ensure Latin jazz remains outside of the canon.

Jerome Harris discusses the anger that African Americans feel concerning their underrepresentation in the jazz industry, arguing that "It is not surprising that some African Americans have become vested in a definition of jazz (also held by some whites) as a cultural form in which no non-African American can validly participate" (2000:118). And as jazz becomes less relevant in everyday African American life, with more non-black performers and non-Americans in the industry, "the pangs of dislocation that [these trends] engender could well increase for some of the jazz community, putting more pressure on their narrow definitions of jazz and their exclusionist sense of cultural identity" (ibid.:120). Those associated with Jazz at Lincoln Center, for example, have discovered that the canon position, which endows jazz with high art status, also provides access to large portions of public funds previously reserved for Western art music traditions. Narrowing their definition of jazz allows them to claim it as their own, and in some ways this exclusionist approach plays into predetermined structures in the United States public funding infrastructure. Since

funds are scarce and the jazz economy is dwindling, a protectionist atmosphere is encouraged by those who are presently funded. A rise in the popular appeal of Latin jazz in recent years presents a threat to this fragile balance of the jazz economy, creating an even greater need to continue the marginalization of Latin jazz.<sup>15</sup>

Latin jazz presents another clash with the canon position because, unlike other newer jazz styles, it has maintained a close connection with dance, as performances frequently include audience dance participation. Jazz's newly-attained high art status, which brings with it European-derived listening practices, is somewhat at odds with this dance component—they are not dancing in the aisles of Lincoln Center or Carnegie Hall. In fact, Tito Puente's contract for his last performance in Carnegie Hall specifically stated that dancing was strictly forbidden in the aisles, due to a fire regulation. In protest, Puente made sure to announce the presence of this clause, adding that he felt it was absurd to listen to his music without dancing. This compelled several members of the audience to stand up and dance to his music. They were expeditiously berated by ushers with threats of expulsion. Since dancing has been divorced from most jazz performance for so long, this dance connection can create confusion among Latin jazz outsiders, pushing some to ask if the music can be classified as jazz at all.

### Conclusionary Remarks

In discussing Jazz at Lincoln Center, Robert O'Meally (2001) observed that "Its philosophy—that jazz is a black yet distinctly American art form—is taken directly from the [Ralph] Ellison canon." In light of the thriving European, Japanese, South American, and Caribbean jazz scenes, it is obvious that jazz has long ago broken out of the American borders. The beauty of jazz expression is that it can be adapted in so many contexts. That has been its nature from the beginning, as it has inherited a flexibility and openness from the African American culture from which it blossomed. Promoter George Wein stated, "No Europe, No Jazz," when commenting on jazz's economic reliance for survival on overseas markets (Nicholson 2001:28). Wein was making reference to Art Blakey's "No America, no jazz" comment, which Blakey followed with, "We are a multiracial society" (Taylor 1993:242). This raises the question of what "America" encompasses in the definition of jazz. I don't think that a "No Latin America, no jazz" position is productive. But without the influence of Latin styles and musicians, jazz would certainly sound different. Why not acknowledge this? As Sidney Bechet stated, a diversity of voices needs to be heard and acknowledged. They need to reflect the diversity of those who created the music, those who innovated, and those who continue to make the music.

## Notes

1. It is important to note that in the 1940s jazz was programmed with some regularity in concert hall settings. Examples include the Ellington series at Carnegie Hall that began in 1943 and Dizzy Gillespie's performances at both Carnegie and Town halls in 1947. Also, Norman Granz's "Jazz at the Philharmonic" started in 1946. During those times, however, jazz did not attain the same level of institutional support that it has recently received.

2. As of 1996 there were less than one hundred stations in the U.S. playing twenty hours or more of jazz per week. Few are commercial stations (Harris 2000:112).

3. The first collegiate jazz education program was founded by Gene Hall at North Texas State University in 1947. Although this program served as a model for others, similar programs did not proliferate until much later.

4. House Concurrent Resolution 57, 100th Congress, 1st Session, September 23, 1987.

5. What I mean by the "established jazz canon" is the core body of jazz history texts and recordings that are used for teaching and researching.

6. See DeVaux (1991) for a definitional discussion of the "jazz tradition."

7. Similarly, terms such as foxtrot, stomp, etc., were used with less frequency, falling under the larger category of swing.

8. Musicians like percussionists Tito Puente and Bobby Sanabria often refer to their music as "Afro-Cuban" jazz in order to specify its origins.

9. The latest, the "Latin Tinge" concert, took place on May 5, 2001.

10. Personal communication with Bauza's drummer, Bobby Sanabria, 2000.

11. Personal communication with both Blakey and Roach, 1989.

12. David Murray in an unpublished interview with Tim Mangin, 2000.

13. Latin jazz's recent resurgence has prompted even Marsalis to program tributes to Machito, and, in a more symbolic gesture, perform parts written for Dizzy Gillespie in Chico O'Farrill's *Afro-Cuban Suite* at O'Farrill's funeral in July 2000.

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