

Oscar Stagnaro's Jazz-Festejo Bass Style

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Latin jazz broadly refers to the fusion of Latin American music genres with jazz. Since the 1940s the term has frequently been used to refer narrowly to the use of jazz-based harmonic and melodic practices superimposed over Afro-Cuban or Brazilian rhythms. More recently, musicians and audiences have sought a broader and more inclusive definition of Latin jazz. Since the late 1970s, Peruvian jazz musicians living in both Lima and the United States have expanded on existing models of Latin jazz by incorporating Afro-Peruvian genres. Afro-Peruvian jazz incorporates forms such as the *festejo* and *landó* in modern jazz contexts. This paper focuses on one central musician in the development of Afro-Peruvian jazz: bassist Oscar Stagnaro.

Stagnaro was born in Peru and studied at the Conservatory of Music in Lima, Peru. Stagnaro moved to the United States in 1979 and has achieved great success in various genres as a highly-regarded performer, recording artist, and pedagogue. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Stagnaro performed and recorded extensively with Peruvian-American guitarist Richie Zellon. I explore Stagnaro's electric bass style¹ in one particular Afro-Peruvian genre, the *festejo*, as it is manifested in original jazz compositions by Zellon and Stagnaro. Using a discographic analytical approach, I assess Stagnaro's role in developing a jazz-*festejo* electric bass style on recordings both as a sideman in Zellon's band, as well as in the capacity of a composer and band leader on his own CD. This investigation also speaks to issues of authenticity, ethnic and national identity, and social and aesthetic values. I assess how Stagnaro incorporates what are viewed as static, "authentic" musical features of the *festejo* into an individual style based on values of innovation and improvisation. Though a thorough study of Afro-Peruvian jazz is needed, this project serves as an in-depth look at one facet of the broader topic.

Various scholarly studies have informed my approach to this topic, and provided

¹ Christopher Washburne (2008, 183-84) and other scholars seem to adhere to a narrower definition of "style" than I mean here. I use the term in the sense that Brian Harker (1996) does to refer to the whole of the identifiable features of an individual musician's "sound," or performance practice.

important background information and details. The work of William Tompkins (1981), Javier León (2003, 2006) and Heidi Feldman (2006) on Afro-Peruvian music have provided a basic understanding of Afro-Peruvian music, strategies for interpreting its social situation and meaning, and approaches to transcription and analysis. I also draw on ethnomusicological works on other subjects. The analytical methods of Ingrid Monson (1996), Steven Pond (2005) and Christopher Washburne (1997, 2008) informed my approach to analysis of my musical examples.

Writings from without the university-based academic system were crucial to my understanding of this subject. Jorge Olazo's (2002) thorough and approachable survey of Peruvian jazz provided general musical and biographical information and context. My metrical and rhythmic approach to understanding this music relies heavily on Richie Zellon's (2007) pedagogical piece for *Jazz Improv* on Afro-Peruvian jazz and Oscar Stagnaro's (Jisi, 2003) "track-by-track" review of his 2003 disc *Mariella's Dream* for *Bass Player*. The included transcriptions of original festejo compositions provided a valuable starting point for my transcriptions. The liner notes from Zellon's (1994, 1996) albums, as well as Stagnaro's album (2003) also contained valuable information.

Jose "Pepe" Coloma has played a central role in my thinking for this project. Coloma and I have performed together in various Latin music groups together in New Orleans, and I have played bass in Coloma's band, performing original Afro-Peruvian jazz music. This was one of my first exposures to Afro-Peruvian music, and Coloma generously gave me specific guidance in festejo performance practices and recommended recordings to study. As I have worked on this project, Coloma has pointed me towards specific recordings, offered insight into musical issues, and contributed factual information.

My musical examples are taken from four CDs on which Oscar Stagnaro is the bassist.

Richie Zellon's 1982 album, *Landologia*² is generally considered to be the first recording of Afro-Peruvian jazz. Zellon followed *Landologia* with *Café Con Leche* (1994) and *The Nazca Lines* (1996). Stagnaro produced his debut album as leader, *Mariella's Dream* in 2003. In addition to Zellon and Stagnaro, these recordings also feature Alex Acuña and Jose Luis Madueño, among other well-known musicians on the Latin jazz scene.

The origins of Afro-Peruvian music date to the colonial period when African slaves were brought to coastal Peru to work in forced labor camps on *haciendas* and in silver mines. Some slaves also worked as domestic workers in urban homes (Feldman 2006, 2). Despite the dehumanizing conditions of slavery, Afro-Peruvians were able to preserve certain African cultural practices, aesthetics, and sensibilities while forging dynamic new practices based on those precedents and their situations in the New World.³ By the mid-20th century Afro-Peruvian music had ceased to be "performed in a daily life context, [but] continued to be taught and performed within families of musicians" in Lima and in more isolated Afro-Peruvian communities in rural areas (León Quirós 2003, 10).

From the 1950s through the 1970s a deliberate revival of Afro-Peruvian music and dance was undertaken.⁴ This revival movement consolidated and adapted the disparate surviving examples of music into a canon based on "two main genre complexes or families" (León Quirós 2006: 218): the *landó* and the festejo (León Quirós 2006, 218). The festejo is seen as "most representative" (Tompkins 1981) and definitive of "what is deemed as the essence of the Afro-Peruvian sound" (León Quirós 2006, 220). The festejo is generally understood as

a music and dance genre characterized by a brisk compound-duple rhythmic

2 *Landologia* was initially released in Peru as *Retrato en Blanco y Negro*. Though the liner notes state that it was released in 1982, a date confirmed by Jorge Olazo (2002), Pepe Coloma recalls bringing a copy of *Retrato en Blanco y Negro* with him when he moved to Boston from Lima in 1979.

3 William Tompkins (1981, 13-38) presents a thorough history of Afro-Peruvian music in the colonial period.

4 The Afro-Peruvian revival is covered in Heidi Feldman's (2006) book on the subject as well as in other sources (León Quirós 2003, Tompkins 1981, et al.).

accompaniment, festive song lyrics, displays of percussive virtuosity, and lively choreography (León Quirós 2006, 218).

As a cohesive delineated genre with a discrete canon of performance practices and repertoire, the festejo is a product of the revival movement which

transformed [it] from a loose collection of songs having a generally festive character into a clearly defined genre that has served as one of the main musical archetypes of Afro-Peruvian musical style and identity since the second part of the twentieth century (León Quirós 2006, 221).

The festejo has its roots in various dance genres, namely the *alcatraz*, *son de los diablos*, *zapateo*, *inga*, and *aqua 'e nieve*, as well as various songs and dances, which may or may not have been referred to as a "festejo" or a related genre, shared certain characteristics in rhythmic/harmonic conventions, or simply been considered "festive" in nature.⁵ Javier León assesses the social significance of the consolidation of the festejo, noting that

the *festejo's* stylistic makeover paralleled social, ideological, and economic changes that affected the context of Afro-Peruvian performance as it moved from a family- or community-based environment to the professional stage (2006, 218).

Here I gesture at a "basic" festejo performance practice as a point of departure. My intention is not to undermine the depth and richness of the festejo as a genre, but to reduce the festejo to a definable basic format in order to facilitate my analysis of my case examples in this study.

The festejo is a song / dance genre featuring ambiguous rhythmic and metrical relationships between instruments and parts emphasizing different metrical organization.⁶ A typical instrumentation includes guitar, *cajón*, and *quijada de burro*, with the potential for a number of other instruments, including *cencerro* bell, *palitos*, and *tumbadores*.⁷ The festejo is

5 For investigations into these complex relationships, see León Quirós 2006, 227-229; Tompkins 1981, 239-284; Feldman 2006, 92-96; and for a more practical discussion of how specific practices from various genres are applied to the festejo, Zellon 2007, 96-98.

6 For a discussion of these relationships see Javier León's article on the festejo (2006, 226-227) and dissertation (2003, 172).

7 For an investigation of the adaptation of Afro-Cuban practices to Afro-Peruvian music, see León's (2006, 183-

typically organized by "one or more verses (*estribillos*) and some kind of a chorus, usually taking the form of a *fuga*--rhythmic, melodic fragments of one- or two-measure duration, sung antiphonally between a soloist and chorus" (Tompkins 1981, 249). The typical harmonic progression consists of a I-IV-V chord progression over two bars of 6/8 (or one bar of 12/8) "outlined by standard guitar basslines and strumming patterns" (Feldman 2006, 94). These guitar bass lines were directly applied to the development of string bass and electric bass festejo performance practices. Javier León (2003) offers an example of this "basic guitar and bass" *festejo* accompaniment" reproduced in Figure 1.1. León traces developments in bass technique in the festejo. Figure 1.2 depicts León's transcription of a festejo bass line that uses a different harmonic scheme but a similar rhythmic style and melodic contour. Recently, a new style of festejo bass accompaniment has emerged, which León and his informant attribute to increased influence from genres based on the Cuban *son*. León's example is reproduced in Figure 1.3. In addition to implying forward motion, syncopation, and metrical ambiguity, this development also lends itself to expanded harmonic possibilities, similar to the role of the anticipated bass *tumbao* in styles derived from the Cuban *son*, by implying a ii, II7, IV/II, or V/II relationship (León Quirós 2003, 194-195).

Figure 1.1

E(I) A(IV) B7(V7) E(I) A(IV) B7(V7)

1.1 "Examples of some . . . basic *festejo* accompaniments" (León Quirós 2003, 170).⁸

184) analysis of how the *tumbadores* was adapted to the festejo.

⁸ As I discuss below, I notate all of my examples in 12/8 for clarity; León's original is in 6/8. The string bass and electric bass sound one octave below their written notation, I adhere to that convention throughout. Chord symbols, when used, appear underneath the beat of the measure to which they correspond.

Figure 1.2

A D7 A D7 A Gm A7

Dm G A7

1.2 "Note how the bass line does not use the usual I-IV-V7 pattern" (León Quirós 2003, 171).

Figure 1.3

E E F#- B7
E F#7 B7
E A/F# B7
E B/F# B

1.3 "Example of what Félix Casaverde identifies as the contemporary way of playing a *festejo* bass line and some of the passing chord possibilities implied by the bass" (León Quirós 2003, 195).

My primary method in this project is transcription and analysis of musical examples drawn from commercially released studio recordings. In ascertaining the usefulness and appropriateness of this method, I draw on Ingrid Monson's defense of her methodology:

Because Western notation, with some modifications, is used in some capacity by nearly all jazz musicians, it is an insider notation, and there is no overarching problem for the ethnomusicologist in using it, at least not beyond the fields' usual debates about the utility of transcription. For this project, which focuses upon improvisational process, transcriptions were extremely useful, and I include them without apology (Monson 1996, 23-24).

Monson also addresses the nature of representation and musical transcription in general:

Certainly the transcription of a musical performance is on such 'metapragmatic representation of the facts of indexicality' (as Silverstein calls a discursive event), even though it leaves out important musical variables such as timbre, dynamics, and rhythmic tightness that may contribute to another sort of interactive text. A standard musical transcription, then, is not the only possible interactive text; a recording, which 'freezes' an otherwise interactive and flexible musical environment, is another such text (Silverstein 1993, 36-38) (Monson 1996, 189).

Monson further argues that concerns that "representations of music (such as musical transcriptions) are inherently formalist, reifying, and decontextualizing" are no more urgent or sound than similar concerns about written texts (Monson 1996, 209). Monson "questions whether standard decontextualized harmonic, linear, and rhythmic analysis of musical transcriptions provides a sufficient account of the music in improvisational [jazz] performance," and focuses on assessing her transcribed examples based on what she argues are "insiders" modes of analysis (1996, 9). As Monson bases her analysis on the analytical tools of musicians drawn from ethnographic interviews, I draw on ethnomusicological studies of jazz (Monson 1996; Berliner 1995, Pond 2005, Washburne 1997), Afro-Peruvian music (León Quirós 2003 and 2006, Feldman 2006, Tompkins 1981), and *salsa* (Washburne 1998, 2006) in order to create an analytical framework for my musical examples.

There is no consensus as to the appropriate metrical notation of the festejo. The festejo is based on additive rhythmic concepts and polyrhythmic practices. Western musical notation is not well-suited to representing such concepts and practices. I rely on a version Western musical notation as the best means of representing and analyzing my examples in the context of this paper and I address the question of how best to attempt such a representation here. William Tompkins claims that "although the melodic line [of a festejo] can utilize 6/8, 3/4, 2/4, or 4/4 time, the underlying meter is essentially 6/8" (1981, 239) and transcribes his examples in 6/8 using duplets (1981, 515-518) to demarcate the frequent instances in which two beats of equal value are played over the triplet division of 6/8 time. Tompkins also discusses the use of accent patterns "indicative of 3/4 time" (1981, 251), which can be more easily notated in 6/8 time because both meters consist of six eighth notes per bar. An exploration of the specific complexities of the metrical structure of the festejo is necessary if the depth and meaning of festejo performance practices are to be adequately appreciated. Tompkins points out that

folklorists have overlooked the rhythmic complexity of the festejo and have merely labeled it as a dance-song form in 6/8, declaring performances where 2/4 abounds the result of a bad performance. . . . [Some may] argue that considering the festejo normally moves at a fairly lively tempo, . . . the technical difficulty posed by singing [certain] awkward . . . rhythm[s] may cause a singer to alter the rhythm of a bar . . . to [be] more easily sung. Many performances mix the two meters . . . Since the rhythms used in the melody are subject to change to an extent from one singer to another, this is also partly a question of performance practice. More plausible, however, is that the use of other times is intentional though the performers may not verbalize it in theoretical terms--and has its origin in the more complex polymeters known by the first African slaves (1981, 251-252).⁹

Javier León (2003, 2006) explores in depth what he refers to as the "rhythmic ambiguity" of the festejo. In his musical examples, León frequently transcribes the vocal parts in 2/4 and guitar and percussion parts in 6/8. Addressing the alternate groupings of 1/8th notes in the bass lines described by Tompkins, León notates the meter of the bass in "6/8 (3/4)."

In his 2007 pedagogical article on festejo performance in a Latin jazz context, Richie Zellon presents a few examples of basic festejo cajón patterns, as well as the score to one of his original festejo compositions. These examples are notated in 12/8.¹⁰ Though Zellon suggests the possibility that the festejo could be notated in other meters, stating that the festejo "is notated *here* [in this example] in 12/8" (96, emphasis added), he also states that the reproduction of his composition is "*the score*" (97, emphasis added) suggesting that he conceived of and wrote the piece in 12/8. Zellon has referred to the 12/8 meter of the festejo in a number of the liner notes to his albums (Milkowski 1996, Blumenthal 1994, Holston 1998, et al.) In an article written for *Bass Player* (Jisi 2003), Oscar Stagnaro gives a "track by track" review of his 2003 disc *Mariella's Dream*; his festejo examples are notated in 12/8 using similar conventions to Zellon.

9 Tompkins includes a number of musical examples in his argument that I have had to omit here in the name of concision. My adaptation of the above excerpt amounts to a heavily reduced version of Tompkins thorough and compelling argument. Readers interested in this issue should see Tompkins's dissertation.

10 Where metrical ambiguities suggest a 6/4 division of the measure, Zellon does not attempt to notate these in conventional Western notation which still outline the compound quadruple division in 12/8, suggesting that Zellon's aim is at clarity and readability over conventions of Western European art music that are not useful in representing this music

Heidi Feldman states that Alex Acuña conceives of the festejo's metrical organization as being in 12/8 (2006, 93).

Because my examples are taken from compositions by Zellon and Stagnaro, and because I approach written notation as a means to interpreting this music as an "insider" mode of communication (Monson 1996, 23), I transcribe all of my examples in 12/8 time, using Zellon's and Stagnaro's examples as models. I also convert examples taken from other sources to 12/8 to facilitate clarity and simplify comparison between examples. Many of the accents and note groupings in my examples comply more with 6/4 meter than 12/8. My goal is to represent my examples as clearly as possible, and complying with conventions of European musical notation that are not well-suited to that end is not a priority. Therefore I am not consistent in following conventions such as rules regarding eighth note groupings in favor of what I hope are easily intelligible ways of expressing the material. The reader may prefer to think of my examples as being simultaneously in *both* 12/8 and 6/4 time.

Before presenting my own transcriptions and analyses, my first case examples are taken from Richie Zellon's (2007) pedagogical article on the festejo. Zellon includes a transcription of a section from "Johnny Changó" from his 1996 disc, *The Nazca Lines*. The bass parts to Zellon's score are reproduced in Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. Zellon introduces readers to the instrumentation of the festejo, presents transcriptions of a few examples of cajón patterns, and analyzes his example from "Johnny Changó." He notes that his use of a blues harmonic structure marks a departure from the traditional festejo harmonic progression:

As a jazz musician, I took the liberty to alter the triadic I-IV-V progression traditionally employed, to one comprised of dominant seventh chords instead. This enabled me to conceive the bluesy melody assigned here . . . (Zellon 2007, 97).

Zellon identifies a "signature riff in festejo" that is "based on the quarter note-based broken major triad . . ." (Zellon 2007, 97). This riff forms the "foundation for the bass part which

mimics the guitar's accompaniment . . . "(Zellon 2007, 97). Though the harmonic progression is different, Stagnaro's bass part maintains a similar structure, maintaining a similar contour and movement, evocative of the traditional festejo chord progression, within Zellon's "blues-based" harmonic structure.

Zellon applies the concept of *clave* to his conception of the festejo:

In spite of Peruvians not being "clave" conscious, the . . . clave has a strong presence here. When used in this context it is in direct reference to a rhythmical pattern containing the fundamental accents of the music (2007, 98).

A broad interpretation of the concept of *clave* can be observed in a wide range of genres including, for example, United States jazz, Brazilian *samba*, and Afro-Cuban *son* and its derivatives. On a basic level, *clave* structure can be understood as a repeating two-part phrase structure consisting of one more syncopated and one less syncopated part that informs performance practices in a basic way. Zellon connects the *clave* structure of the festejo to Afro-Cuban music, and I borrow the term, *clave*, from Cuban music. Much of the basis of this argument is drawn from scholarship on Afro-Cuban based music (Washburne 1997, 2008). The underlying *clave* structure in festejo bass technique can be understood more generally as being organized around a less-syncopated first half of a 12/8 (grouped according to a 6/4 subdivision of the quarter note) measure, and a more syncopated second half of the 12/8 (6/4) measure. Specifically beats 1, 3, and 5, 8, and 10 are given rhythmic priority and notes that are sounded on these beats are usually accented. More generally and not specific to the bass, Zellon observes a similar accent hierarchy: "festejo's most important accents are on the 5th and 10th eighth note" (2007, 96).

"Johnny Changó" is a 32 bar AABA jazz composition. Figure 2.1 and 2.2 depict examples of Stagnaro's bass lines during the A sections. Stagnaro's bass lines here are reminiscent of the examples of basic festejo bass lines in Figures 1.1 and 1.2, delineating the festejo *clave* structure,

and evoking the traditional bass line harmony with broken triads and a contour reminiscent of Figure 1.1. Figure 2.3 depicts Stagnaro's line in a section played in unison with the piano, guitar, and saxophone. The clave structure is clearly demarcated here as well. The bridge (B sections) marks a contrast to the A sections; Stagnaro plays a variation of the Cuban son-inspired anticipated bass line described by Javier León (2003, 195). This variation is depicted in Figure 2.4. While the GMaj9 chord is not sounded until the first beat of measure 2, the bass line anticipates it by sounding a *g* on the and-of-four of the previous measure. This is repeated in each measure of the example. As in genres that employ anticipated bass lines based on the Cuban son, this technique results in harmonic ambiguity, providing a sense forward motion and excitement. Though Stagnaro embellishes the basic bass line depicted in Figure 1.3, the forward motion and harmonic ambiguity implied by the anticipated bass notes are maintained throughout, as is the underlying clave structure.

Figure 2.1

G7_ G7_ C7_ G13_

D9_

2.1 Bass part to "Johnny Changó" (Zellon 2007, 99).

Figure 2.2

G13 C7_ G7_

Slap >

G13_ D7

2.2 Bass part to "Johnny Changó" (Zellon 2007, 99).

Figure 2.3

Slap > Slap >

G13 _____ D7

G13 _____ D7

B7(#9) _____ E7(#9) _____ Ami7 _____ D7(#9)

2.3 Bass part to "Johnny Changó" (Zellon 2007, 99).

Figure 2.4

AbMaj9 _____ GMaj9 _____

AbMaj9 _____ GMaj9 _____

2.4 Selection of Stagnaro's bass line on the bridge of "Johnny Changó" (Zellon 1996; transcribed by author)¹¹

Figure 3.1 depicts Stagnaro's bass line corresponding to the introductory section of Richie Zellon's "Café con Leche," from his 1982 disc, *Landologia*. This section is also used as a bridge in other parts of the arrangement. Stagnaro employs an octave-based line using the slap technique. This technique involves striking the lower-pitched bass strings with the thumb and "popping" the higher-pitched strings by pulling them away from the fingerboard and allowing them to strike the fingerboard as they sound. Stagnaro's use of the slap technique emphasizes the bass line in a section of music that lacks a melody, placing the rhythm section groove at the forefront of the listener's attention.¹² Stagnaro's use of the slap technique may reflect the influence of contemporary North American bassists such as Larry Graham, Marcus Miler, and

¹¹ The chord symbols in this example and my other transcriptions are my interpretation, one of many possibilities, and likely not completely accurate to the composer's conception.

¹² In his analysis of Herbie Hancock's "Chameleon" (1973), Steven Pond observes how the "groove, not [the] melody, acts as the music's central organizing feature" (2005, 41). I apply that analytical approach here.

Stanley Clarke, who used the technique in various styles including primarily funk, R&B, instrumental R&B (or "smooth jazz"), and jazz fusion. Stagnaro's use of this technique also situates this music's relationship to other genres.

The slap electric bass technique has a long history of use within Latin music in the United States, paralleling its use in funk and other genres. Salvador Cuevas pioneered the use of the technique, reflected in such examples as his playing on Willie Colon's "Casanova" (*Corazón Guerrero*, 1982), or, with Hector Lavoe, on "Juanito Alimaña" (*Vigilante*, (1975)). The use of the slap electric bass technique can trace its precedents to bass instrument aesthetics of African musics via Afro-Cuban musics. Upright bass and Ampeg Baby Bass¹³ players in Latin music frequently employ a percussive approach to the instrument. Israel "Cachao" López's signature sound was produced by plucking the strings out away from the fingerboard, resulting in a staccato, percussive attack. At a clinic given at Tulane University in 2006, Cuban bassist, guitarist, composer, and educator Juan Carlos Formell expressed the widely-held aesthetic value of this technique and of the percussive bass sound aesthetic in Afro-Cuban derived musics. Formell expressed the widely-held notion that the aesthetic origins of this technique can be traced to the Cuban *marímbula*, a "large low-pitched *mbira*- or *sanza*-like [percussion] instrument of Congolese origin"(Washburne 2008, 173) that preceded the string bass as a bass instrument in Afro-Cuban music.

Citing Rickey Vincent (1996), Steven Pond (2005) applies Olly Wilson's "core of 'African conceptual approaches to music making'" (Pond, 2005: 36) in his analysis of the slap electric bass technique on *Headhunters* (Hancock 1973). Vincent sees the slap electric bass technique of Bootsy Collins and Larry Graham as reflective of one of Wilson's "African conceptual

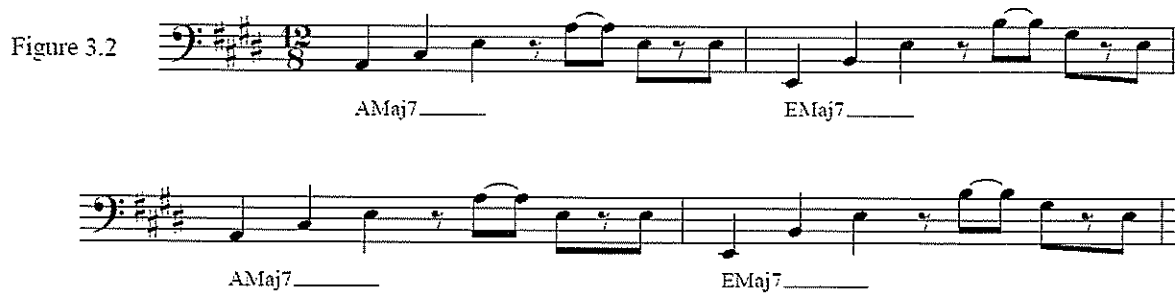
¹³ The Ampeg Baby Bass is solid-bodied electric bass with a fingerboard and neck of an upright string bass popular in various Latin music genres.

approaches to music making" (in Pond 2005, 36): a "tendency to play in a percussive manner" (in Pond 2005, 65). Thus Stagnaro's use of the slap technique here signals a number of important relationships. It situates this music within a cosmopolitan jazz tradition which draws from United States African-American genres. It reflects a deep tradition of percussive approaches to bass instrument performance practices through Afro-Cuban music and African music aesthetics. And it situates Stagnaro's contribution to Afro-Peruvian jazz within inter-related music cultures of the African diaspora and is reflective of definitively African musical aesthetics.

Figure 3.2 depicts an example of Stagnaro's bass playing during the solo sections of "Café con Leche". In this example, Stagnaro adapts a basic festejo bass line which highlights the festejo clave structure and melodic contour. This example also demonstrates how Stagnaro evokes traditional festejo harmonic progressions in very different harmonic contexts by outlining the triad and following the general contour of the traditional festejo bass line depicted in Figure 1.1. Figure 3.3 depicts a melodic line played in unison with the synthesizer and guitar leading into the first solo, and as a coda at the end of the composition. The underlying principle of clave is evident here as well.



3.1 Stagnaro's "slap" bass line from the introduction section of "Café con Leche" (Zellon 1982; transcribed by author)



3.2 Stagnaro's bass line on the solo section of "Café con Leche" (Zellon 1982; transcribed by author)



3.3 Unison line on "Café con Leche" (Zellon 1982; transcribed by author)

"Latitudes" is the first track on Zellon's 1994 CD, *Café Con Leche*. "Latitudes" is a festejo written by Zellon in 32-bar AABA form. Zellon explores a number of inter-genre connections and cites the African roots of the genres he incorporates in this example:

It goes into a *montuno* that is normally an Afro-Cuban concept, which I adapted into the Afro-Peruvian idiom . . . It's all coming from Africa anyway. While 12/8 is heavily African, it's also the rhythm for a blues shuffle" (Zellon in Blumenthal 1994).

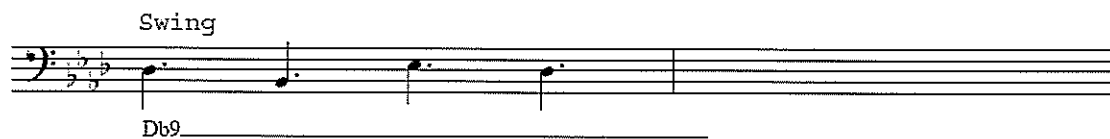
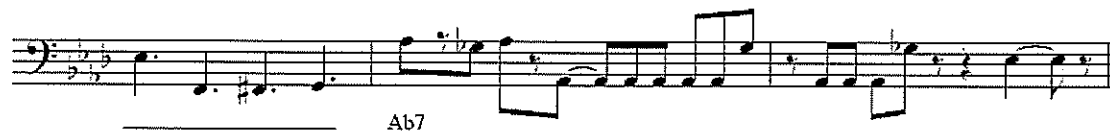
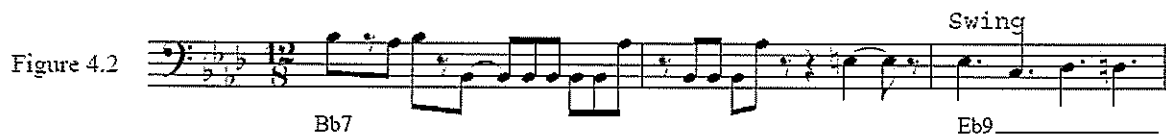
Figure 4.1 depicts an example of Stagnaro's bass line in the introductory and closing sections of "Latitudes". This is a modified version of the basic bass line depicted in Figure 1.3 with some embellishments. Example 4.2 depicts Stagnaro's bass line on the bridge sections during the *head*.¹⁴ Stagnaro's fluid transition from festejo to 12/8 shuffle and back situates these musicians as professional jazz musicians fluent in various styles. Zellon's use of musical characteristic that index certain genres in this composition reflect his views expressed in the liner notes. Zellon situates Afro-Peruvian music, Afro-Cuban music, and North American blues as sharing direct

¹⁴ The head refers to the opening and closing choruses of a jazz arrangement, during which the melody is stated

connections, and common African origins. Stagnaro's bass line leading into the shuffle demonstrates how the clave organization is still applied in heavily embellished and unusual situations. Leading into the measures of swing, Stagnaro implies more of a 12/8 subdivision (groupings of three eighth notes) over the typical 6/4 (groupings of two eighth notes).



4.1 Sample bass line from introductory section of "Latitudes" (Zellon 1994; transcription by author)



4.2 Example of Stagnaro's bass line on the bridge of "Latitudes" (Zellon 1994; transcription by author)

Zellon's incorporation of 12/8 shuffle feel, the unique *montuno*--an Afro-Cuban rhythmic concept adapted to the festejo--, and Stagnaro's use of Afro-Cuban inspired bass-lines reminiscent of Figure 1.3 situate this performance and the musicians in relation to Afro-Cuban music and United States African American music traditions. It is noteworthy that these musicians perform in all of these genres as well, both Stagnaro and Zellon studied jazz at Berkley college,

and play jazz as well as Afro-Cuban based Latin jazz, reflecting cosmopolitan professional musical practices. The piece is still grounded in festejo performance practices. In other sections Stagnaro's bass lines reflect close approximations of the basic festejo bass lines represented in Figures 1.1 and 1.2. The other instruments and the percussion pattern maintain the festejo time line, and the montuno section, though imported from Afro-Cuban traditions, is transformed to fit the festejo time line and clave structure.

Figure 5 depicts Stagnaro's bass line over one complete chorus during Jose Luis Madueño's piano solo in Stagnaro's composition "Festejo Para Tere," from his 2003 debut as leader, *Mariella's Dream*. Stagnaro's bass lines in this example are based primarily on the basic bass line depicted in Figure 1.3, with substantial embellishments, and departures from that model, especially in the second half (the "syncopated" side of the clave structure) of each measure. At measure 18 Stagnaro inserts one measure of the 12/8 shuffle feel depicted in Figure 4.2, as the soloist plays a line evocative of a "swing" shuffle-based jazz rhythmic style.

As Madueño approaches a dramatic apex towards the end of his solo, evident in both syncopation, dynamics, and melodic contour, Stagnaro adds rhythmic drive and energy by displacing his basic bass line by one eighth note. Measure 25 begins with a rhythmic pattern typical of this example, but in the second half of the measure, in accordance with clave structure, the same typical rhythmic cell is repeated but one eighth-note earlier. This displacement is continued through measure 26, resolving, as the energy of the soloist winds down in measure 27. Thus Stagnaro is able to depart substantially from his basic bass line--which in turn is based on the basic example depicted in Figure 1.3--by displacing the rhythmic placement of the pattern while still anchoring the sound with the repetitive pattern and adherence to the underlying clave structure.

Figure 5

1

G7 F7 Eb7 Db7

5

C7 Bb7 AMin7 D7 G7 F7

9

EB7 Db7 C7 Bb7

13

AMin7 D7 G7 F7 Eb7 Db7

17

C7 Bb7 AMin7 D7 G7 F7

21

EB7 Db7 C7 Bb7

25

AMin7 D7 G7 F7

EB7 Db7 C7 AMin7 D7

Figure 5: Stagnaro's bass line during the piano solo on "Festejo Para Tere" (Stagnaro 2003; transcription by author)

With this survey and analysis of these various examples I aim at a general understanding of Stagnaro's jazz-festejo bass style. Javier León addresses the meaning and social significance of musical style:

Rather than assuming that style is a by-product or reflection of what happens to a popular music genre, for better or worse, when it undergoes a process of mass distribution and promotion, I suggest that musical style is the symbolic battleground within which performers work out their perceived relationships to the music that they perform, as well as to the mass-mediated musical environment in which it is performed. In this sense, I agree with Jose Carlos Mariategui (1981) and posit that style is one of the musical manifestations of that struggle between what he terms the revolutionary (i.e., resistive) and the decadent (i.e., hegemonic). At the same time, however, I challenge the notion that these two tendencies are mutually exclusive and that musicians have little understanding of the dynamics involved in this negotiation (2006, 217).

Stagnaro's style is a dynamic example of León's conception of style. As I have demonstrated, Stagnaro's personal musical style is indicative of complex social relationships, both inherent in lived experiences and explicitly demarcated by these performers.

Stagnaro and Zellon, as well as many of the other musicians on these recordings, notably Ramón Stagnaro, Danilo Perez, Jose Luis Madueño, and Alex Acuña, constitute a core group of Peruvians living in the United States who have achieved success as first-call musicians on the international jazz, Latin, and pop music scenes. Christopher Washburne identifies the homogenizing role of Latin music in inculcating "notions of a pan-Latino ethnic identity" in the United States since the 1960s. In this context, and considering that many of these musicians primarily perform in Latin jazz contexts that emphasize Afro-Cuban rhythmic structures, their incorporation of Afro-Peruvian music can be seen as "resistive" to the "hegemonic" force of Afro-Cuban based musics. Heidi Feldman assesses the role of Afro-Peruvian music in Peruvian immigrant communities in the United States:

U.S. Peruvians of all races and cultural backgrounds reproduce the experience of living in Peru through Afro-Peruvian [music] (Feldman 219).

Though this interpretation positions Stagnaro's festejo style as "resistive," a more nuanced

interpretation may be more appropriate to this situation. As Afro-Cuban based musics have contributed to the development of a sense a pan-Latin ethnic identity, Afro-Peruvian music can be seen to index a Peruvian national identity among emigrant professional musicians and their audiences living in the United States.

As I have explored in my musical examples, Stagnaro situates the Afro-Peruvian influences of his music within the broad range diasporically situated musics within which he performs, incorporating U.S. jazz, Afro-Cuban-based Latin jazz, and salsa. I draw on Paul Gilroy's (1993) concept of a transnational diasporic cultural system and point to the intentional situating of this music by the performers who invoke other music genres of the African diaspora in performing this music. This situating is also reflected in their statements regarding the relationships of these different musics to Africa.

Following the lead of a number of scholars (Pond 2005, Monson, 1996, et al.), I posit that much of Stagnaro's bass playing can be understood as a form of *signifyin(g)* (Gates 1988). Stagnaro uses basic material, understood by informed listeners as indexing specific Afro-Peruvian musical practices, and re-contextualizes them and signifies on them to create new meanings specific to this situation.

Stagnaro asserts the values of innovation and individualism valued by listeners of modern jazz, while carefully navigating the stylistic demands of the festejo. While the use of electric instruments, drum set, original compositions, and other features of this music index values of innovation and what might be perceived as mainstream musical ideals, Stagnaro demarcates specific stylistic markers and references that carefully navigate issues of stylistic authenticity and other issues discussed above. But Stagnaro is careful to innovate within discrete parameters of his own clearly demarcated style based on a deep knowledge of and expertise in a wide range of music traditions. Stagnaro navigates these complex relationships while asserting a musical

cosmopolitanism reflecting his expertise across various genres, asserting a deep relationship to specific genres and maintaining a specific kind of authentic interpretation of Afro-Peruvian music.

Oscar Stagnaro and the other musicians discussed in this paper are exceptional musicians performing exceptional music. I do not claim to have adequately represented the breadth and depth of the music under discussion, but have aimed at proposing one of many possible readings and interpretations of this music. I have pointed to specific identifiable musical characteristics that speak to broader musical and social issues and have demonstrated how an in-depth analysis can reveal insight into musical and social issues that may be missed by a broader or more cursory perspective.

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