

In the search of a Musical identity

“just as **music** can be a channel through which we express ourselves, it can also have a profound influence on our own developing sense of **identity**...”



Personal Background

- I was born in Cuba, Manzanillo province of Granma to a Cuban-Russian family.



Musical Background



- [My first musical education was mainly classical](#)
- at the age of 18 a began to study jazz and improvization, before I was classically trained saxophone player, studying classical music and playing mostly French chamber music.

The project

- In search of my musical identity I reached out for elements from both Russian and Cuban musical traditions to express myself and understand my cultural legacy through music.

Actions

- Research
- Listening
- Transcription
- Composition
- Arranging and instrumentation
- Rehearsing
- Performing
- Recording

Research and preparation

- Theoretical work to generalize the knowledge about the styles
- Solo transcriptions
- Getting to understand how to put together jazz improvisation with Cuban rhythms, melodic approach
- Study of authentic rhythms on the percussion classes to get closer to the rhythmic essence of it.

Transcription

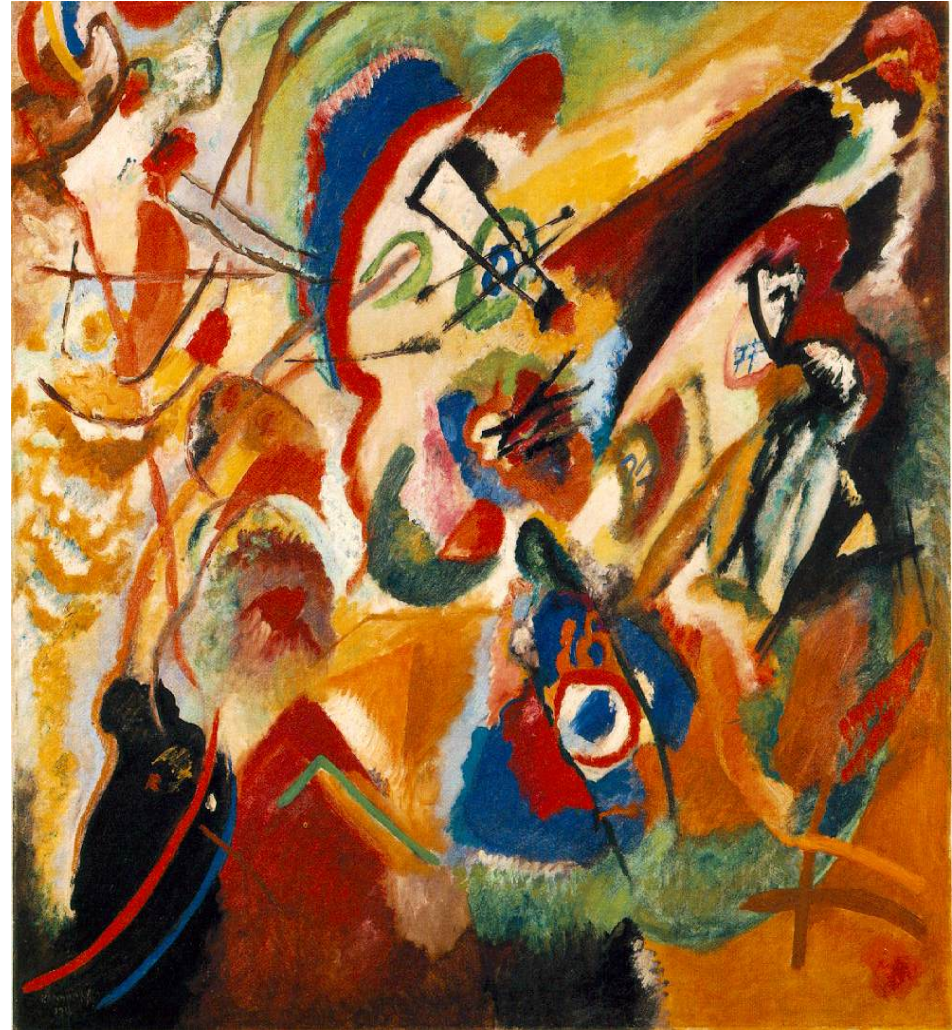
Among with the jazz transcriptions I did for my weekly classes, over 100 transcriptions of different styles were made during the year.

To get the necessary vocabulary I transcribed many traditional pieces and contemporary compositions and made a pool of ideas for my future compositions. Here is the list of CD's I transcribed.☺

1. <u>Emiliano Salvador</u> "Puerto Padre".
2. <u>Tony Martinez and the Cuban Power</u> "Noticias de Cuba"
3. <u>Tony Martinez</u> "Maferedun"
4. <u>Eddie Palmieri</u> "Listen Here"
5. <u>Ray Vega</u> "Latin Jazz Sextet"
6. <u>The Bronx Horns</u> "Catch The Feeling"
7. <u>Jazz Meets Cuba</u>
8. <u>Antonio Hart</u> "Amo tu sonrisa"
9. <u>Larry Coriel</u> Live From Bahia
10. <u>Ray Barretto</u> "Trancedance"
11. <u>Perico Sambeat Ademuz</u>
12. <u>Carlos Sarduy</u> "Charly en La Habana"
13. <u>Alain Perez</u> En el Aire
14. <u>Irakere</u> 30 Años
15. <u>Paquito D'Rivera</u> Reunion
16. <u>Diego Urcola</u> Appreciation
17. <u>Victor Mendoza</u> "Black Bean Blues"
18. <u>Frank Emilio Flynn</u> Barbarisimo
19. <u>Paquito D'Rivera</u> Live at the blue note

Composition

- Record the melodies and motifs that would appear in my mind.
- Keep a notebook of the musical ideas
- Develop and elaborate them afterwards



Arrangement and instrumentation



- Most of the tunes were arranged for a Jazz Quartet
- During the process I was trying to experiment with different set ups and instrumentations depending on the necessities of the particular composition.

Performing.



- During the year I tried to use every chance I had to perform publicly.
- I participated in 30 concerts, 8 of them performing my original repertoire.
- It was important for me to show my compositions in public to get feedback and later make the necessary corrections.

Recording



- During the year I made more than 10 recording sessions on the scoring stage and recorded 11 compositions
- 8 of the songs that were recorded are going to be part of my first album.
- The release is due this autumn.

The album

1) MI CHANGUI

2) COMO FUE

3) LIDIA

4) EL GÜIJE

5) YORUBA MEETS RUSSIAN

6) DE REOJO

7) A PAULA

8) DRUME NEGRITA

Mi Changui.

- Changui is the style that is originally from the part of Cuba called Oriente.



Roberto Baute Segarra
(El guararey de la pastora)



Como Fue

- This traditional Bolero is very dear to me



My Version



Benny More "Como Fue"

Lidia

- This piece is dedicated to my grandmother. She played a very important role in my life and my musical education.



Ex. Aria Parasi



El Güije



- El Guije is a mythological creature, a midget that comes out from the Selva in the night to scary the children. I included Russian folkloric singing in this track to make my vision of it.



Yoruba meets Russian



- This piece is a fusion of many very different elements.



De Reojo

- This piece is inspired by Cache Bache a Trova Duo from Havana.
- It first was composed as a song and I wanted to give a fresh perspective to it putting it into a contemporary jazz context.
- It is very colorful and full of images.



A Paula



- Is dedicated to a very dear person to me.
- The piece is very emotional and intense.
- It is eclectic in many ways as it brings together music and poetry.
- I tried to keep the instrumentation simpler to convey my emotions.

Drume Negrita



- My arrangement of a traditional lullaby by Ignacio Jacinto Villa - Bola De Nieve.
- I was inspired to do this arrangement by my teacher and mentor Perico Sambeat after hearing his own



El Changuí The process



- The idea of the song came to me when I saw a documentary about this Cuban style.
- After this I began collecting the musical ideas and adapting them to a jazz setting.
- **This is the first musical idea that appeared to me.**
- Ex. (recording)



Elaborating the ideas

- During the process I would show the material to my teachers on every stage
- The melody and the arrangement began to get their shape.



The Rhythmic structure



The Final Arrangement

This musical score is for a jazz ensemble. It features seven staves: B. Sax, A. Sax, B♭ Trp., T. Sax, Pno., Bass, and D. S. The key signature has one flat (B♭), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into measures 24 through 31. The piano part includes a C7sus11 chord. The drum part features a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Staff Labels: B. Sax, A. Sax, B♭ Trp., T. Sax, Pno., Bass, D. S.

Measure Numbers: 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31

Chords: C7sus11

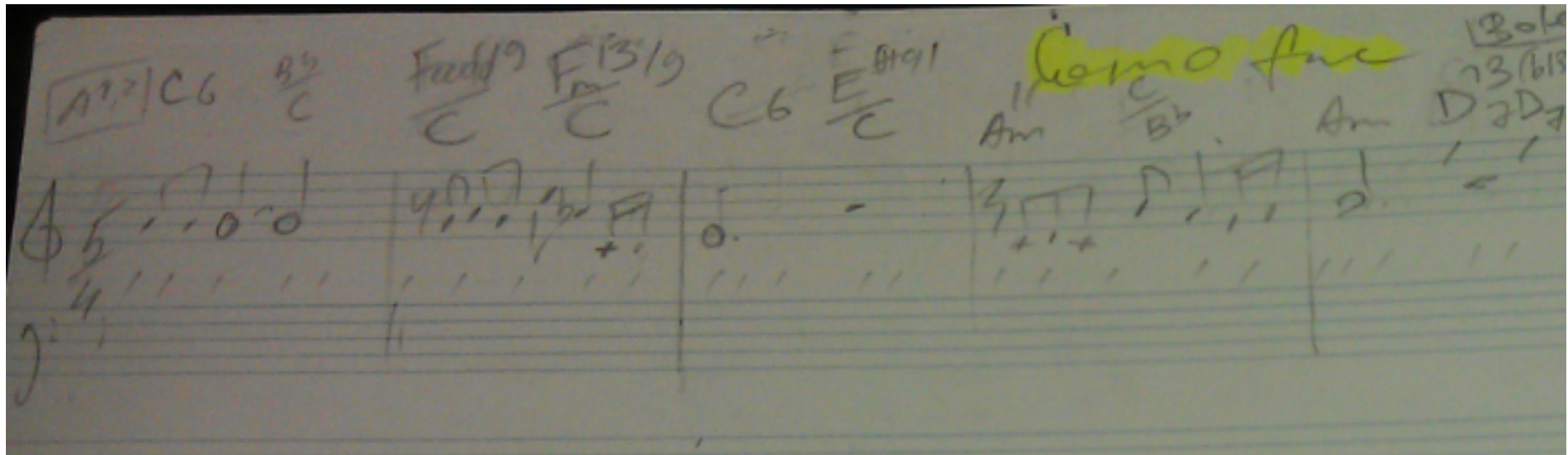


- During the recording session we made 3 takes of this tune.
- The session went smooth because most of the musicians were already familiar with the tune.



Como Fue

- Was one of my first arrangements at Berklee.
- I wanted to make a contemporary version of this traditional bolero, experimenting with different musical elements
- This is how I began to shape the first ideas.



Intro

- I was watching a documentary about Cha cha cha when an idea appeared to me.
- What if I invert the cha cha pattern and put it in 5/4?

Score

Como fue

Ernesto Duarte
Alexey Leon

intro Break

Alto Sax

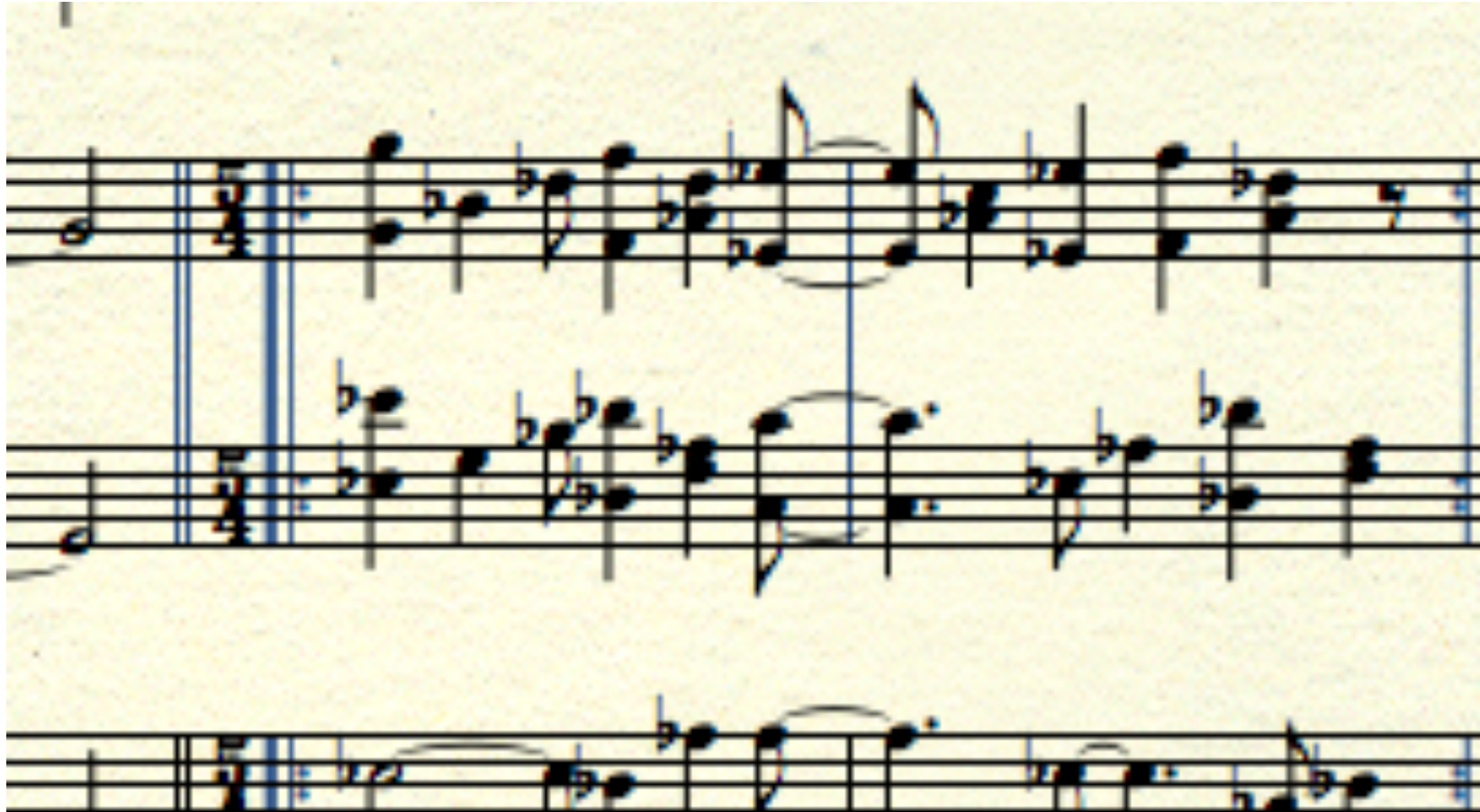
Piano

Bass

Drum Set

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Como fue" by Ernesto Duarte and Alexey Leon. The score is written for Alto Sax, Piano, Bass, and Drum Set. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 5/4. The score is divided into an "intro" section and a "Break" section. The piano part features complex chord voicings, including C6/C, C7sus11, Cm11, Bbm11, Cm11, and Bbm11. The bass part features a walking line with triplets. The drum set part features a complex pattern with triplets and a "3" marking. The Alto Sax part features a melodic line with slurs and ties. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with a yellow background.

Montuno 5/4



Recording

Como Fue Alxey Leon



Project outcomes.

- Recorded album
- Now I'm in process of preparation of a book of Latin jazz licks for melodic instruments.
- In future I want to develop a teaching method about how to utilize the concepts and elements of Latin music in other styles that would help students improve their musicality through it.
- Further I want to develop a method of teaching Latin jazz language to musicians playing melodic instruments bearing in mind to its various aspects (phrasing, typical harmonic situations, etc.)
- The material written on this matter is rather scarce. I want to make a contribution to this area and to share my experience of playing the music I love. It is an attempt to reflect a part of my musical journey and to become closer to my roots musically.

- Thank you very much!

- Muchas Gracias!