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ABSTRACT

After a short historical introduction this paper argues that the lack of a binding theoretical framework for the parameters that define the ‘bossa sound’ led to the emergence of “authenticity” as a value term by which to judge bossa nova played by non-Brazilians. Through the analysis of historical journalistic and promotional sources are, this study reveals modes of advertising, marketing and criticising bossa nova products that frequently rely on pointing out the presence or the lack of hypothetical authenticity. It also concludes that this authenticity discourse can be seen as a template for 19th century bourgeois aesthetic beliefs and notions of US American hegemony.

KEY WORDS

Authenticity, Brazil, Bossa nova, discourse analysis, popular music.

TÍTULO

“Los puristas se disgustarán”: La construcción de autenticidad durante el apogeo del Bossa Nova

RESUMEN

Tras una breve reseña histórica, este artículo sostiene que la falta de un marco teórico vinculante en cuanto a los parámetros que definen el “bossa sound” condujo a la aparición de la “autenticidad” como término de valor para juzgar el bossa nova interpretada por los no brasileños. A través del análisis de múltiples fuentes históricas periodísticas y promocionales, este estudio revela que los modos de anunciar, comercializar y criticar los productos de bossa nova se basan frecuentemente en señalar la presencia o la falta de una hipotética autenticidad. Además, se concluye que este discurso de autenticidad puede considerarse un modelo de las creencias estéticas burguesas del siglo XIX y de las nociones del hegemonía estadounidense.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Música popular, Brasil, bossa nova, análisis del discurso, autenticidad, purismo.

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"Purists Will Wince": Constructing Authenticity During the Bossa Boom

Markus Sejkora

I. Introduction

Not long after its introduction to the musical landscape of the USA jazz musicians such as Charlie Byrd, Stan Getz and Herbie Mann were quick to adapt the Brazilian bossa nova and merge it with their own jazz idiom. The considerable commercial success of some of these outputs led to the so-called "bossa boom"¹ in the early 1960s, characterised by excessive marketing strategies, an abundance of recordings published as bossa nova material and heated discussions surrounding the "new beat from Brazil"². The extreme discrepancies between the resulting, often contradictory theoretical definitions and the multi-faceted recordings labelled as bossa nova music fuelled the emergence of a value term by which to decode and judge exponents of this emerging genre, whose aesthetics had not yet been formalised and canonised. The vague term "authenticity" offered a powerful tool which could be applied to any bossa nova performance in order to objectify individual approval or scorn. The style's exotic origins constituted the idea of an illusory authentic approach as opposed to an outsider's approach. Claims of authenticity due to an insider's

¹ "Outlook for '63: It Shapes Up as One of the Big Ones as Jazz Spills Into Pop Field", in *Billboard. The International Music-Record Newsweekly*, 5 January 1963, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=ICIEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&cf=false>>, p. 18. (All online issues of *Billboard* were last accessed on 9 July 2020.)

² Barry Kittleston, "Bossa Nova Quickens The Jazz Sale Pulse", in *Billboard. The International Music-Record Newsweekly*, 5 January 1963.

knowledge of the “ways of the natives” – unknown to the regular North American citizen – were quickly employed by both marketing experts and musicians in order to differentiate their product from the bulk of bossa material suddenly around.

The following paper consists mostly of citations taken from music magazines, advertisements and LP liner notes. They are amassed and interpreted in order to make apparent the ways in which the construction of authenticity in bossa nova music was achieved through an interplay of individual remarks presented in institutional contexts. The data used for analysis stems almost exclusively from the years 1960 to 1965 and is confined to North American sources; hence, the resulting picture can hardly be called complete. A comprehensive survey of the authenticity construct so intrinsic to the bossa nova discourse and its political implications would have to take into account later, international reactions, as well as scientific descriptions. The following text can be viewed as an introduction to the problem, preceded by a concise historical outline of the American bossa boom.

II. The Bossa Boom. Historical Outlines

The term “bossa nova” first appeared in the U.S. around the year 1960. In the 5 September 1960 issue of *Billboard* a mention of a new single by the Roy “Little Jazz” Eldridge Quartet called “Bossa Nova” can be found.³ Obviously though, in the U.S. the words were not yet connected to any particular style of music; the Eldridge single features a straight 4/4 backbeat with Eldridge blaring a “Minnie the Moocher”-like melody on his muted trumpet, without a hint of Latin influence.

The general American public first learned of bossa nova as a new Brazilian musical movement through guitarist Charlie Byrd. The jazz artist had come to know the bossa nova first hand during his State Department tour of South America. Byrd was the second jazzman selected to officially represent North American culture to visit Latin America; the first had been Dizzy Gillespie in 1956.⁴ Together with bassist Keter Betts and drummer Buddy Deppenschmidt,⁵ Byrd played in 16 different countries from 12 March to 5 June

³ “Reviews of this Week’s Singles”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 5 September 1960, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=xx4EAAAAMBAJ&dlpg=PA1&chl=de&cpg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 33.

⁴ Don DeMichael, “Jazz in Government”, in *Down Beat. The Bi-Weekly Music Magazine*, 30, 2, 17 January 1963, p. 15, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438213>>. (All online issues of *Down Beat* were last accessed on 31 May 2020.)

⁵ John Storm Roberts, *Latin Jazz. The First of the Fusions, 1880s to Today*, New York, 1999, p. 116.

1961.⁶ According to Felix Grant, he “returned convinced that the Brazilians had something extraordinary to offer”⁷ – and, no doubt, something marketable, too. At the press conference marking the completion of the State Department tour, held on 6 December in New York, the guitarist was reported to speak of the bossa nova (misunderstood by the *Billboard* journalist describing the event as “bossanora”) as a “new Latin dance rhythm” which “sounds something like the samba but with modern jazz overtones”. He also hinted at the possibility of the style “sweep[ing] the Western world” and was sure to point out that he would record it soon.⁸ Even though Paul Winter and his sextet had been touring South America at about the same time as Byrd, had recorded bossa nova in Rio de Janeiro in 1961⁹ and had even learned a little Portuguese prior to their arrival in Brazil,¹⁰ Byrd had beat Winter to the “bossa race”. The trio had brought transcriptions of bossa songs with them to play at the “Showboat” club in Washington, among them Antônio Carlos Jobim’s soon-to-be classic *Desafinado*, which they recorded with Stan Getz, Gene Byrd and Bill Reichenbach on 13 February 1962. The entire Byrd-Getz collaboration was released as *Jazz Samba* in April 1962.¹¹ The album remained on *Billboard*’s list of top-selling LPs from September 1962¹² until January 1964¹³ and *Desafinado* spent ten weeks on the Top 40 list.¹⁴ This success cemented Byrd’s reputation as the man who had brought bossa nova to the U.S.¹⁵

⁶ “Next Latin Dance Craze in Brazil?”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 12 June 1961, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=ByEAAAAAMBAJ&dlpg=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&cf=false>>, p. 6.

⁷ Felix Grant, liner notes to: Charlie Byrd, *Bossa Nova Pelos Passaros*, CD, Riverside OJCCD-107-2 (RLP-9436), USA 1992, <https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cliner_notes%7C2263256#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity|liner_notes|2263256>, (text reproduced from original 1962 LP; last accessed on 9 July 2020).

⁸ “Next Latin Dance Craze in Brazil?”, p. 6.

⁹ John S. Wilson, review of Paul Winter’s *Jazz Meets the Bossa Nova*, in: *Down Beat*, 30, 1, 3 January 1963, p. 28, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438178>>.

¹⁰ DeMichael, “Jazz in Government”, p. 45.

¹¹ Roberts, *Latin Jazz*, p. 118.

¹² “Top LP’s For Week Ending September 15”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 15 September 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=hBcEAAAAAMBAJ&dlpg=PP1&chl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&cf=false>>, p. [III].

¹³ “Top LP’s For Week Ending January 4, 1964”, in *Billboard*, 4 January 1964, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=F0UEAAAAAMBAJ&dlpg=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&cf=false>>, p. 20.

¹⁴ Roberts, *Latin Jazz*, p. 118.

¹⁵ Contemporary writings frequently credit *Jazz Samba* with initiating the U.S. bossa wave. See e.g.: Dan Morgenstern, “The Bossa Nova: Everybody’s Doing It”, in *ASCAP Jazz Notes*, 7, November 1962, p. 1, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1470387>> (All online issues of *ASCAP Jazz Notes* were last accessed on 31 May 2020.); [Advertisement], “Jazz

Now that the commercial appeal of the new style was evident, other American labels followed suit and started releasing bossa nova albums. Ira Gitler's hope that the new beat would "not [be] overdone"¹⁶ was blown to the wind and in September 1962 *Billboard* came to the conclusion: "[T]he world of jazz [...] is flipping over a new dance rhythm called the Bossa Nova."¹⁷ The end of August and the beginning of September saw the release of bossa nova titles by Shorty Rogers (*Bossa Nova*, Reprise), Barney Kessel (*Bossa Nova*, Reprise) and Zoot Sims (*Recado Bossa Nova*, Colpix).¹⁸ By the end of October *Billboard* reported of newly available albums by Herbie Mann (*Right Now*, Atlantic), Paul Winter (*Jazz Meets the Bossa Nova*, Columbia), Lalo Schiffrin (*Lalo = Brilliance*, Roulette; *Bossa Nova New Brazilian Jazz*, Audio Fidelity), Coleman Hawkins (*Desafinado*, Impulse!) and Vi Velasco (*Cantando Bossa Nova*, Colpix). The market was also flooded with English versions of mainly Jobim songs, such as *Desafinado* or *Samba de uma Nota Só*; well-known examples are Ella Fitzgerald's version of the first tune and June Christy's version of the latter one. Saxophonist Bill Ramal, a.k.a. Bellino, was apparently one of the first to merge bossa with another pop genre, creating *Bossa Rock* (1962, Duel), "featur[ing] strong tenor sax blowing in front of rhythm"¹⁹. Ventures such as this were crucial in establishing the notion of a truly authentic native Brazilian music being mutilated, as will be seen later on.

Another type of bossa fusion – the orchestra/big band approach employed by Shorty Rogers, Zoot Sims, Lalo Schiffrin and others – was eventually taken up by the "big" jazz labels, and at the beginning of November 1962 Mercury and Verve, respectively, published Quincy Jones' and Stan Getz' *Big Band Bossa Nova* albums.²⁰

Samba & Bossa Nova & Verve", in *Billboard Music Week*, 24 November 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=ARgEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PP1&chl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 8; "Today's Top Record Talent. Charlie Byrd", in *Billboard*, 6 April 1963, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=MQoEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 46; Carlos C. Costa, "More On The B. N. Origins", in *Down Beat*, 30, 31, 5 December 1963, p. 10, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1499702>>.

¹⁶ Ira Gitler, review of Curtis Fuller's *South American Cookin'*, in *Down Beat*, 29, 13, 21 June 1962, p. 23, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1437443>>.

¹⁷ "Bossa Nova Wave Loses Nothing in Translation", in *Billboard Music Week*, 1 September 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=VhcEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PP1&chl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Jack Maher, "It's a Great Big Bossa-Filled World We Live In, Says Almost Everybody", in *Billboard Music Week*, 27 October 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=9RcEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 4.

²⁰ "Bossa and Bands Three Minds With One Latin Thought", in *Billboard Music Week*, 3 November 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=CBgEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PP1&chl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 5.

The high and turning point of the bossa nova “fad” was a large-scale concert held at Carnegie Hall on 21 November 1962, which went down in history as a major disaster. The event, presented by Audio Fidelity Records and Show Magazine and co-sponsored by the Brazilian government,²¹ was supposed to “show what the real bossa nova is like”, as the record label’s owner Sidney Frey put it.²² To achieve this goal – highly reminiscent of exhibitions of exotic peoples at world’s fairs – a large number of performers were flown in from Brazil,²³ resulting in three and a half hours of playing time and a financial loss of nearly \$10,000.²⁴ Featured musicians were, among others, the Oscar Castro-Neves Quartet, Bola Sete, Sergio Ricardo, Antônio Carlos Jobim, João Gilberto, Luiz Bonfá, Roberto Menescal, Carlos Lyra, Agostino Dos Santos, Lalo Schiffrin (with Leo Wright, Art Davis and Chuck Lampkin), Stan Getz (with Billy Bean, Al Harewood and Tommy Williams) and a big band starring Getz and Bob Brookmeyer under the direction of Gary McFarland as the final act.²⁵ The organisers were obviously unable to cope with the logistical challenge of managing a spectacle of such scale. Emcee Leonard Feather, who had to “hurry [the performers] on and off stage”²⁶, and a “constant stream of stagehands, running around like Keystone Kops”²⁷ were necessary to keep the concert from going on even longer. *Down Beat* cited one observer as commenting, “It looked like a bossa nova supermarket.”²⁸ Another problem was the microphone arrangement, which only favored Audio Fidelity’s, CBS-TV’s and the U.S. Information Service’s recording equipment, muffling the sound for the audience and hiding the performers.²⁹ *Down Beat* editor Bill Coss came to the conclusion that “there was little to recommend what could be heard. Almost without exception

²¹ “If at First You Don’t Succeed ...”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 1, 3 January 1963, p. 11, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438161>>.

²² Jack Maher and Bob Rolontz, “Saga of the Bossa Nova Rolls On & On: Now Big Bands Busting Into the Act”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 3 November 1962, p. 26.

²³ Bill Coss, “Bossa Nova. Carnegie Hall, New York City”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 1, 3 January 1963, p. 35, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438185>>.

²⁴ Sam Chase, “Saga of the Bossa Bath at Carnegie: Musicians Cost a Lot of Cruzeiros”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 22 December 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=txgEAAAAMBA-J&pg=PP1&chl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&cf=false>>, p. 16.

²⁵ Coss, “Bossa Nova. Carnegie Hall, New York City”, p. 35; Jack Maher, “Bossa Concert: Bossa Suffers Shoddy Showcase”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 1 December 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=OhgEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PP1&chl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&cf=false>>, p. 10.

²⁶ Coss, “Bossa Nova. Carnegie Hall, New York City”, p. 35.

²⁷ Maher, “Bossa Concert: Bossa Suffers Shoddy Showcase”, p. 10.

²⁸ “If at First You Don’t Succeed ...”, p. 11.

²⁹ Maher, “Bossa Concert: Bossa Suffers Shoddy Showcase”, p. 10; Coss, “Bossa Nova. Carnegie Hall, New York City”, p. 35.

there was no variety of tempo.”³⁰ *Billboard* journalist Jack Maher concurred: “The music as a whole was good, though little effort was made at programming pace and variety. ‘Desafinado’, for instance, was performed five different times and ‘One Note Samba’ almost as many.”³¹ An attempt to compensate for the event was soon afterwards forwarded by Dora Vasconcellos, Brazil’s New York consul general. This second bossa nova concert took place at the Village Gate on two evenings early in December 1962 and showcased Jobim, Gilberto, Bonfá, Menescal, Lyra, Sergio Ricardo, Sergio Mendes and, as U.S. representative, Herbie Mann, who also functioned as emcee.³²

The Carnegie Hall fiasco did not immediately put an end to the bossa trend; “bossa nova continue[d] to grow”³³ and record labels were busy drowning the audience in bossa albums and singles, which were increasingly being imported from Brazil, as well.³⁴ In the spring of 1963 jazz bossa recordings by Dave Brubeck (*Bossa Nova U.S.A.*, Columbia) and Julian “Cannonball” Adderley (*Jazz Workshop Revisited*, Riverside) were published.³⁵ By May *Billboard* reported of disk men acknowledging that “the name [bossa nova] itself might have lost some of its magic”, but the release of new bossa material did not decrease. Maher identified the bossa sound (which he characterised as “subtle back seat”) in Ruby and the Romantics’ *Our Day Will Come* (Kapp), the Corvells’ *One (Is Just a Lonely Number)* (Cub), Joe Harnell’s *Fly Me to the Moon* (Kapp) and, of course, Eydie Gormé’s still widely known *Blame It on the Bossa Nova* (Columbia).³⁶ However, Maher’s prediction, “[This utilisation in pop music,] along with its absorption into TV and radio commercials, and the fashion and footwear worlds, will keep it around for a long time to come”³⁷, would not quite

³⁰ Coss, “Bossa Nova. Carnegie Hall, New York City”, p. 35.

³¹ Maher, “Bossa Concert: Bossa Suffers Shoddy Showcase”, p. 10.

³² “If at First You Don’t Succeed ...”, p. 11; Bill Coss, “Bossa Nova Revisited”, in *Down Beat*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 17 January 1963, p. 42, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438240>>.

³³ Mauricio Quadrio, “Hopes Dim for Brazil Getting Carnegie Disk”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 8 December 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=OBgEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PP1&chl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 5.

³⁴ Mauricio Quadrio, “Requests Pour in For Bossa Tapes”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 15 December 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=KRgEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PP1&chl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 29.

³⁵ Barry Kittleson, “With the Dealers: Couple of New Bossas Nova Up the Business”, in *Billboard*, 16 March 1963, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=eQsEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 10.

³⁶ Jack Maher, “Label Planning Leans Heavily on New Style”, in *Billboard*, 4 May 1963, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=YwsEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

prove true. As the audience's interest was declining, in the summer of 1963 A&R men were already on the lookout for the next "Latin tempo [to] catch the ear of the American public", and the bongoson, the fado, the guarania and the bambuco were named as possible new trend-setters.³⁸ (Naturally, nobody could expect what really was to come, namely, salsa.) By the beginning of 1964 the music press was in unanimous agreement that the bossa nova fad was coming to an end: In January *Billboard* observed, "bossa nova has hit the crest of its popularity"³⁹, and in February Lester Koenig noted that bossa nova was no longer being emphasised.⁴⁰ The trend's last great commercial success, *Getz/Gilberto* (Verve), was released in March 1964, paving the way to stardom for Astrud Gilberto,⁴¹ and inducing Capitol Records to attempt to imitate the album's sound by founding a group called "Brasil '65".⁴² So while the idiom obviously still held some commercial appeal, its marketing as bossa nova – and thus, the fad – had ended. The eerie absence of the term from album titles and advertisements was explained by Nesuhi Ertegun as stemming from rapidly deteriorating sales of bossa nova merchandise, resulting in the record industry's quiet consensus: "The words "bossa nova" are taboo on albums"⁴³.

III. Constructing Authenticity

III.1. Dance Album Marketing

While companies and individuals offered highly contradicting views regarding most components of a true bossa nova sound, there is one aspect on which everybody seemed to agree

³⁸ Sam Chase, "How to Spot Next Latin Craze? That's What A.&R. Men Ask", in *Billboard*, 27 July 1963, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=WgsEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 12.

³⁹ "With Bossa Nova Rise, BMI Bolstered Latin Position", in *Billboard*, 25 January 1964, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=kQEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 74.

⁴⁰ Eliot Tiegel, "Music As Written. Hollywood", in *Billboard*, 22 February 1964, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=M0UEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 35.

⁴¹ Bryan Daniel McCann, *Getz/Gilberto* (= 33 1/3 Brazil), New York 2019, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781501323997>>, p. 3ff (last accessed on 9 July 2020).

⁴² "Latin Jazz Stages Comeback", in *Billboard*, 24 April 1965, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=ZCKEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 41.

⁴³ "Atlantic Releasing Its First Album of Brazil '65 Group", in *Billboard*, 17 July 1965, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=2CgEAAAAMBAJ&dp=PA1&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 8.

to be the key component of the new sound: the *rhythm* or *beat*. The authentic rhythm is singled out as the one aspect that makes bossa nova identifiable. Indeed, “bossa nova” and “bossa beat” were often used interchangeably.

The emphasis on the rhythmic aspect was of particular importance in the marketing of dance albums, especially ones directed at the pop audience. Such releases often featured a big band delivering a mixture of new Brazilian songs such as *Desafinado*, modern pop songs and old jazz standards. The application of the words “bossa nova” to a product did not necessarily describe its content, rather were they often used as a mere eye-catcher. Barney Kessel’s *Bossa Nova* provides a good example of such misleading advertising. The front cover depicts a dancing woman underneath prominent orange letters and in the liner notes Kessel speaks of the bossa nova as “one beat [that] particularly impressed” him. However, further down it is revealed that the album presents only an attempt at renewing the old big band swing tradition and its tunes, employing “rhythms, melodies, and harmonies proven to be accepted by the general public.” Rather than utilising the stylistic developments of Jobim, Gilberto et al, Kessel had set out to “create [his] own Bossa Nova.”⁴⁴

Another bossa nova album very straightforwardly intended for dancing is René Touzet’s *Bossa Nova! Brazil to Hollywood* (1963, GNP Crescendo). This set of Hollywood film songs and bossa nova tunes by Jobim, Gilberto and Touzet was “designed for dancing” and was accompanied by a bossa nova dance instruction of the Arthur Murray Dance Studios.⁴⁵ Dance instructions were also provided for The Continentals’ *Bossa Nova for All Ages* (1963, Canadian American), claiming that the dance was “patterned after the steps and movements used by the native Brazilians who first swayed to the rhythm of the Bossa Nova in the little nightspots of Rio de Janeiro.”⁴⁶

RCA also tried to link dance music to native Brazilian bossa nova on the album *Dance the Bossa Nova* (1962, RCA Camden), subtitled “A top Brazilian band plays the new dance craze”:

⁴⁴ Barney Kessel, liner notes to: Barney Kessel Plus Big Band, *Bossa Nova*, LP, Reprise Records R9-6049, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/Barney-Kessel-Bossa-Nova/release/3202275>>. (All *Discogs* links were last accessed on 9 July 2020.)

⁴⁵ René Touzet and His Orchestra, *Bossa Nova! Brazil to Hollywood*, LP, GNP Crescendo GNP 87, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/René-Touzet-And-His-Orchestra-Bossa-Nova-Brazil-To-Hollywood/release/6762245>>.

⁴⁶ Bernie Lawrence, liner notes to: The Continentals, *Bossa Nova for All Ages*, LP, Canadian American CALP 1009, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/The-Continental-Bossa-Nova-For-All-Ages/release/5773120>>.

“[...] [H]ere [...] you will hear the authentic bossa nova – recorded in Brazil by one of that country’s outstanding orchestras specializing in in the new beat. [...] Dance the bossa nova, listen to the bossa nova – but get with the original and authentic styling that made it famous in the first place!”⁴⁷

Rather than making the effort of describing how to actually dance the bossa nova, the anonymous liner notes author creates the illusion of a genuine bossa step already in existence. The text accompanying Les Summers’ *Dance Bossa Nova* (1963, Time Records) goes even further and claims the bossa nova “has carved a niche into the dancer’s repertoire”⁴⁸.

The record companies’ obvious need to legitimate the marketing of bossa nova as dance music stems from the fact that said style – unlike other post-war Latin imports such as rumba, tango, cha cha, paso doble, bolero et al⁴⁹ – was never intended for dancing.⁵⁰ Labels’ attempts at marketing bossa nova like any other Latin genre and their struggle to establish an official dance in hindsight was regularly met with ridicule. In November of 1962, John Tynan pointed out that “thus far bossa nova ha[d] eluded the dance masters”⁵¹. In November, Verve Records started an extensive campaign to promote *Jazz Samba* via radio and television, organising dance parties and contests with participants performing samba to *Desafinado* and other selections from the album.⁵² But the samba apparently proved unsatisfactory for bossa; there was “no bossa nova dance in general circulation”⁵³ and by December “a new dance to go with the music [was still] being pushed by the dance studios.”⁵⁴ According to deejay Dick Stewart, the main problem was that bossa “confuses

⁴⁷ Liner notes to: Zaccarias and His Orchestra, *Dance The Bossa Nova*, LP, USA 1962, RCA Camden CAS-749, <<https://www.discogs.com/Zaccarias-And-His-Orchestra-Dance-The-Bossa-Nova/release/5098831>>.

⁴⁸ Liner notes to: Les Summers and His Orchestra, *Dance Bossa Nova*, LP, Time Records 52089, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Les-Summers-And-His-Orchestra-Dance-Bossa-Nova/release/2167825>>.

⁴⁹ See “With Bossa Nova Rise, BMI Bolstered Latin Position”, in *Billboard*, 25 January 1964, p. 28

⁵⁰ Dick Stewart, “San Francisco Beat: Boast Kids Not Dancing in Streets Over Bossa Nova”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 17 November 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=QxgEAAAAM-BAJ&pg=PP1&hl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&cf=false>>, p. 36.

⁵¹ John Tynan, “The Real Story of Bossa Nova”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 28, 8 November 1962, p. 21, <<https://jazz.ripnfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1437959>>.

⁵² Jack Maher and Bob Rolontz, “Saga of the Bossa Nova Rolls On & On: Now Big Bands Busting Into the Act”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 3 November 1962, p. 5.

⁵³ Jack Maher, “Flying High: Bossa Has No Step, But It Sure Has Lotsa Climb”, *Billboard Music Week*, 17 November 1962, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Dan Morgenstern, “Bossa Nova Doings”, in: *ASCAP Jazz Notes*, No. 8, December 1962, p. 2, <<https://jazz.ripnfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1470396>>.

the kids, most of whom try to dance it with a sort of modified twist.”⁵⁵ The Arthur Murray steps propagated through the Touzet LP seem to have been moderately successful at providing a unified bossa nova dance; teachers of the dance school were even employed by the former twist palace *Interlude* to demonstrate it.⁵⁶ However, there were also other dances in circulation, e.g. one by the 105 Fred Astaire Dance Studios, which was distributed by Colpix Records, who also entered a liaison with Thom McAn to promote special “bossa nova shoes”.⁵⁷

For the above-mentioned reasons all-out dance bossa albums remained a minority. Other pop-oriented packages were ambiguous on the subject, leaving the decision whether to dance to the music or not up to the listener. Joe Harnell’s highly successful *Fly Me to the Moon* LP (1963, Kapp) featured the statement: “[...] Bossa Nova is a melodic, soothingly rhythmic experience – and always an exciting one. Whether you dance to the new beat or simply listen, you’ll discover the truth in what we say.”⁵⁸

III.2. Authenticity in the Music Press

It should come as no surprise that such bossa nova pop recordings were belittled by jazz critics, who came to describe their perceived lack of intellectual substance as “in-authentic”. Bossa nova and its Brazilian protagonists became weapons in the continued bourgeois “honest high art vs. commercial low art” debate fought by writers and musicians alike. Authenticity was mainly linked to the involvement of Brazilian performers or to the main performer’s knowledge of the “native” style, acquired through “field work” with Brazilian musicians or intensive self-study. The widely accepted understanding of bossa nova as a hybrid of samba and (cool) jazz fueled the notion that jazz bossa presented a legitimate, authentic approach, whereas pop bossa was marked as a crime against the style’s roots. A review by Leonard Feather of the above-mentioned Kessel album illuminates this quite clearly:

“I don’t know who is kidding whom, but the album is a strange farrago of sounds that are closer to Twist music or rock and roll than to bossa nova. There is nothing wrong with his doing this

⁵⁵ “San Francisco Beat: Boast Kids Not Dancing in Streets Over Bossa Nova”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 17 November 1962, p. 36.

⁵⁶ “West Coast Adds Momentum With Club Dancing”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 1 December 1962, p. 5.

⁵⁷ “Shoe Time: Thom McAn Puts Kick in Bossa”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 15 December 1962, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Liner notes to: Joe Harnell His Piano and Orchestra, *Fly Me to the Moon and the Bossa Nova Pops*, LP, Kapp Records KS-3318, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Joe-Harnell-His-Piano-And-Orchestra-Fly-Me-To-The-Moon-And-The-Bossa-Nova-Pops/release/842124>>.

if he wants to make some fast bread; but he should have done it under a pseudonym if he wishes to retain the respect in which all of us in jazz have long held him. He is too fine a musician to lend his own name to this kind of gimcrackery.”⁵⁹

One of the main self-declared experts in bossa nova was the flutist Herbie Mann, whose previous Latin music explorations, collaborations with Brazilian musicians and public declarations helped his ventures be sanctified as legitimate: “[A touch of authenticity] is supplied most effectively when Mann plays a conventional flute”⁶⁰, observed Feather. Mann’s high authenticity status was certainly strengthened by the report that “the Brazilian consul and an entourage, including Miss Brazil, arrived at [a Village Gate concert] to show appreciation for the flutist’s interest in the music” in the autumn of 1962.⁶¹ Two articles confirm that Mann – constantly reminding the public that only few American bossa nova recordings had anything to do with the original – was regarded as one of the first to bring bossa nova to the USA.⁶²

Even when questioning bossa nova’s solely Brazilian origin, writers felt compelled to link the sound’s emergence to a Brazilian protagonist. Harry Babasin and John Tynan credited Laurindo Almeida with being of paramount importance in developing the bossa nova sound in Hollywood in the early 1950’s. Almeida, on the other hand, named Gilberto as the originator of the bossa nova rhythm.⁶³ The nationalist stance of bossa nova being a nativist Brazilian product was intentionally or unintentionally reinforced by *Down Beat* in the form of readers’ letters to the editors. For instance, Suzi Clarke from New York City wrote: “Regarding your bossa nova articles – I find it appalling that the man who created bossa nova, Joao Gilberto, not even mentioned [sic]! Laurindo Almeida, indeed!”⁶⁴ Paul Winter also felt the need to defend the Brazilians: “It is very disappointing that The Real Story of Bossa Nova (DB, Nov. 8) is a very wrong story. Bossa nova was no more invented

⁵⁹ Leonard Feather, “Record Reviews. Bossa Nova Bandwagon”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 28, 8 November 1962, p. 24, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1437962>>.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ “Strictly Ad Lib: New York”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 29, 22 November 1962, p. 12, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438006>>.

⁶² Dan Morgenstern, “Bossa Nova Doings”, in *ASCAP Jazz Notes*, 8, December 1962, p. 2, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1470396>>; “Further Comments And Definitions On Bossa Nova”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 31, 20 December 1962, p. 10, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438108>>.

⁶³ Tynan, “The Real Story of Bossa Nova”, p. 21f.

⁶⁴ Suzi Clarke, “Chords & Discords. Bossa Nova Banter”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 30, 6 December 1962, p. 6, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438054>>.

on our West Coast than jazz in Recife. [...] Give the Brazilians credit for their music.”⁶⁵ And Stephen Agetstein from Baltimore wrote:

“If the publicity men would treat the new movement with respect and artists would play the music as bossa nova instead of trying to conform by using modern jazz writing, b.n. could become a new, accepted part of jazz. As it is, however, it is a disgusting farce.”⁶⁶

A review by Richard Hadlock also ties the ability to play authentic bossa nova to the nationalist discourse:

“[N]on-Brazilian musicians seldom achieve the saucy, almost frivolous overtones that characterize so much of Brazil’s brighter music. [...] By adding one or two qualified percussionists here (drummer Paulo is a Brazilian) [Lalo Schiffrin’s] band comes closer to authentic rhythms than a group with a single jazz drummer possibly could.”⁶⁷

Leonard Feather’s explanation why Lalo Schiffrin presented a legitimate bossa interpreter, despite his Argentinean origin, provides an entertaining example of “I liked him before he was cool” reasoning: “[H]e was in the vanguard of the new samba movement and was recording material of this kind many months before the current craze got under way.”⁶⁸ This “pioneer bonus” was also handed to Dizzy Gillespie by Don DeMichael: “[H]e’s never gotten proper credit for being among the first to introduce bossa nova in this country – I know, personally, that he was playing it as early as March, 1961.”⁶⁹

The construction of “Brazilian” as a synonym for “authentic” was a brittle one, though, and quickly came apart during some of Leonard Feather’s “Blindfold Tests”, conducted for *Down Beat*. Charlie Byrd, lauded by Felix Grant as knowing the real way Brazilians play bossa,⁷⁰ was dismantled by Schiffrin: “[H]e doesn’t have the same approach to bossa nova as the Brazilian guitarists do. [...] this record in itself doesn’t have any value. I don’t think this guy is Brazilian either. Even in the jazz flavor, it would be monotonous and dull.”⁷¹

⁶⁵ Paul Winter, “Chords & Discords. Bossa Nova Banter, Part II”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 31, 20 December 1962, p. 6 and 8, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438102>>.

⁶⁶ Stephen Agetstein, “Chords and Discords. Bossa Nova Lament”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 1, 3 January 1963, p. 9, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438159>>.

⁶⁷ Richard B. Hadlock, “Record Reviews. Lalo Schiffrin”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 31, 20 December 1962, p. 30, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438126>>.

⁶⁸ Leonard Feather, “Blindfold Test: Lalo Schiffrin”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 31, 20 December 1962, p. 38, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438134>>.

⁶⁹ Don DeMichael, *Down Beat Music*, 8, 1, p. 21, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1471244>>.

⁷⁰ Felix Grant, liner notes to: Charlie Byrd, *Bossa Nova Pelos Passaros*.

⁷¹ Feather, “Blindfold Test: Lalo Schiffrin”, p. 38.

And bossa missionary Herbie Mann was accused of playing *Desafinado* with the wrong chord changes and without the bridge.⁷² Another Blindfold Test saw Frank Rosolino questioning the authenticity of the mainly Brazilian Castro-Neves big band: “Actually, I think it sounds less authentic than a lot of American bossa nova things I’ve heard.”⁷³ Whereas to him, Brookmeyer’s playing sounded “as authentic as bossa nova can ever be.”⁷⁴ The panning of Charlie Byrd was repeated by Laurindo Almeida: “Was that meant to be bossa nova? I don’t know who the guitarist was, but it sounds like one of those gauchos from the Brazil-Argentina border.”⁷⁵ Regarding the Castro-Neves big band, he was seen to be in disagreement with Rosolino, as he complimented them as sounding “very Brazilian”⁷⁶.

While the authenticity debate among critics and musicians was by no means homogenous or unquestioned,⁷⁷ the construction of bossa nova as an exotic folk music that required special insider knowledge or Brazilian roots to be performed properly provided a convenient way of conveying legitimacy and, thus, market value. This was also obvious to the American record labels, who were quick to assimilate that debate into their marketing operations.

III.3. Jazz Album Marketing

The first label to pull the authenticity rabbit out of the hat was Verve, building on the success of *Jazz Samba* and its reputation as the album that started the bossa boom in the first place. It was soon advertised as the “album that started it all” and even as the very “[f]irst Bossa Nova album”⁷⁸. In an attempt to capitalise on its major success, Verve launched a series of other bossa albums: Getz’ *Big Band Bossa Nova*, Bob Brookmeyer’s *Trombone Jazz Samba* and Cal Tjader’s *Contemporary Music of Mexico and Brazil* were all released in 1962;

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Leonard Feather, “Frank Rosolino Blindfold Test”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 3, 31 January 1963, p. 31, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1497123>>.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Leonard Feather, “Laurindo Almeida Blindfold Test”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 5, 26 February 1963, p. 35, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1497175>>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ See e.g. Quincy Jones’ remark, “the purist approach to bossa nova was silly in that it claimed pure Brazilian parentage and wanted not what its proponents call ‘bastards.’”. “Conference of Jazz Pays Bossa Nova Brief Notice”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 13, 6 June 1963, p. 11, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1497349>>)

⁷⁸ “The Bossa Nova Jazz of America Is on Verve!”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 29 September 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=j0UEAAAAMBAJ&clpg=PA18&chl=de&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 33.

in 1963 Getz' *Jazz Samba Encore!*, *Getz/Gilberto* and *With Guest Artist Laurindo Almeida* followed suit. The 1962 *Jazz Samba* follow-ups were advertised as “three more brilliant [additions] to [Verve's] growing library of authentic Bossa Nova”⁷⁹, implicitly denoting Verve as the only label offering “true” bossa nova. Later advertisements made the implicit explicit, emphasising the record company's pioneering role in supplying the American audience with genuine authentic bossa nova, thus creating an aura of exclusivity. The use of superficial analytical vocabulary fortifies this notion:

“Bossa Nova is music with a different harmonic structure, due, perhaps, to the cultural and language difference of Brazil. Bossa Nova is not, as some make-do albums would have you believe, merely swinging music played over a vague samba rhythm. Bossa Nova – the real thing – is the new influence on American jazz. To make jazz sense, the soloist plays in his own idiom and fits his improvisation to the exciting new harmonic and rhythmic structure of Bossa Nova. As Stan Getz has done on *JAZZ SAMBA* and *BIG BAND BOSSA NOVA*; as Cal Tjader has done on *CONTEMPORARY MUSIC OF MEXICO AND BRAZIL*. Bossa Nova was another Verve first. The jazz of America – all the Americas – is on Verve.”⁸⁰

Here, jazz-bossa is presented as a true hybrid, merging the exotic with the unknown. While the feeling of otherness (“cultural and language difference”) as the very fuel of exoticism remains intact, the idea of togetherness (“all the Americas”) guarantees bossa nova's South American authenticity to remain intact even when being fused with North American jazz; so long as the jazz musicians are schooled in the “real thing”.

Apparently, Verve's strategy for enhancing the “authentic” feeling of their bossa product line consisted of either replacing American artists with Brazilian ones or pairing musicians of both nationalities. Accordingly, Getz' and Brookmeyer's rhythm sections featured percussionists Carmen Costa and José Paulo (both of whom appeared on numerous bossa recordings),⁸¹ while Tjader was paired with guitarist Laurindo Almeida.⁸² For subsequent releases Getz was paired with Almeida, Luiz Bonfá (who replaced Charlie Byrd on *Jazz Samba Encore!*), and João Gilberto.

⁷⁹ “Jazz Samba & Bossa Nova & Verve”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 24 November 1962, p. 8.

⁸⁰ “What Is Bossa Nova?”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 27, 25 October 1962, p. 27, <<https://jazz.ripm-fulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1437907>>.

⁸¹ Stan Getz, *Big Band Bossa Nova*, LP, Verve Records V6-8494, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/Stn-Getz-Big-Band-Bossa-Nova/release/1352810>>; Bob Brookmeyer, *Trombone Jazz Samba*, LP, Verve Records V6-8498, USA 196, <<https://www.discogs.com/Bob-Brookmeyer-Trombone-Jazz-Samba-Bossa-Nova/release/997026>>.

⁸² Cal Tjader, *Cal Tjader Plays the Contemporary Music of Mexico and Brazil*, LP, Verve Records V6-8470, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/Cal-Tjader-Plays-The-Contemporary-Music-Of-Mexico-And-Brazil/release/8559303>>.

Verve, naturally, was not the only label employing the formula “Brazilian musicians = authentic = good”. The list of jazz artists getting paired with Brazilian or generally Latin musicians is extensive. E.g., Riverside recorded Julian “Cannonball” Adderley with a group unmistakably called “Brazilian Sextet” (*Cannonball’s Bossa Nova*);⁸³ Colpix provided Zoot Sims with Latin-sounding names for his rhythm section: Willie Rodriguez and Tommy Lopez (*New Beat Bossa Nova, Vol. 2*);⁸⁴ Capitol placed at least one Latin percussionist, Frank Guerrero, in Stan Kenton’s orchestra (*Artistry in Bossa Nova*);⁸⁵ Vee Jay equipped Eddie Harris with percussionists Jack Del Rio and Osvaldo Cigno (*Bossa Nova*);⁸⁶ Prestige put Montego Joe and Juan Amalbert in charge of the Latin rhythm section for Willis Jackson’s *Bossa Nova Plus*;⁸⁷ and Blue Note opted for Willie Bobo and Patato Valdez to accompany Charlie Rouse (*Bossa Nova Bacchanal*).⁸⁸

That quite a few of the Latin musicians involved in American bossa productions had had little to no part in shaping the new style in Brazil in the late 1950’s or, in some cases, were not even Brazilian – as can be seen from the examples above – was apparently of little concern to the labels. Cal Tjader’s involvement with Latin jazz since the 1950’s was enough to choose him as representative for contemporary Brazilian and Mexican music, even though he was born an American of Swedish descent.⁸⁹ Laurindo Almeida, on the other hand, really was of Brazilian origin,⁹⁰ and the rumours of his pioneering role made him a quasi-embassador for bossa nova in the States (he was even referred to as “one of the

⁸³ “They’ve Got an Awful Lot of Bossa in Brazil”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 29 December 1962, <<https://books.google.de/books?id=TRgEAAAAMBAJ&clpg=PP1&hl=de&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>>, p. 5.

⁸⁴ Pete Welding, “Record Reviews. Ole!”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 25, 12 September 1963, p. 25, <<https://jazz.ripnfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1498779>>.

⁸⁵ John S. Wilson, “Record Reviews. Ole, Again Yet”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 26, 26 September 1963, p. 22, <<https://jazz.ripnfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1497600>>.

⁸⁶ John Tynan, “Record Reviews. Overloaded Bandwagon”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 10, 25 April 1963, p. 26, <<https://jazz.ripnfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1497260>>.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Lise Waxer, “Tjader, Cal[en Radcliffe]”, in *Grove Music Online* (2001), <<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000049882>>. (All *Grove Music Online* articles were last accessed on 9 July 2020.)

⁹⁰ Ronald C. Purcell, “Almeida (Nobrega Neto), Laurindo (José)”, in *Grove Music Online* (2001), <<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000043173>>.

fathers of Bossa Nova”⁹¹). That he had emigrated to the USA in 1947,⁹² long before the bossa boom started, was of no great importance, it seems. Besides the aforementioned Tjader and Getz albums, Almeida – classified by Leonard Feather as “ubiquitous”⁹³ – appeared on numerous bossa albums where a guitarist was needed. Shorty Rogers’ *Bossa Nova* (1961, Reprise),⁹⁴ Herb Ellis’ *Three Guitars in Bossa Nova Time* (1963, Epic),⁹⁵ Steve Allen’s *Bossa Nova Jazz* (1963, Dot Records),⁹⁶ Vic Lewis’ *Bossa Nova at Home and Away* (1963, His Master’s Voice)⁹⁷ and Joanie Sommers’ *Softly, the Brazilian Sound* (1964, Warner Bros. Records)⁹⁸ all featured Almeida as sideman. Five bossa nova albums credit him as main artist: *Viva Bossa Nova!* (1962, Capitol),⁹⁹ *Acapulco ‘22* (1963, Tower Records),¹⁰⁰ *Ole! Bossa Nova!* (1963, Capitol),¹⁰¹ *It’s a Bossa Nova World* (1963, Capitol)¹⁰² and *Guitar from Ipanema* (1964, Capitol).¹⁰³ Despite this omnipresence on the American bossa scene Almeida’s

⁹¹ Liner notes to: Steve Allen, *Bossa Nova Jazz*, LP, Dot Records DLP 3480, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Steve-Allen-Steve-Allen-Plays-Bossa-Nova-Jazz/release/4566278>>.

⁹² Purcell, “Almeida (Nobrega Neto), Laurindo (José)”.

⁹³ Leonard Feather, “Bossa Nova Bandwagon”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 28, 8 November 1962, p. 29, <<https://jazz.ripnfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1437967>>.

⁹⁴ Feather, “Bossa Nova Bandwagon”, in *Down Beat*, 29, 28, 8 November 1962, p. 24, <<https://jazz.ripnfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1437962>>.

⁹⁵ Welding, “Record Reviews. Ole!”, p. 25.

⁹⁶ Steve Allen, *Steve Allen Plays Bossa Nova Jazz*, LP, Dot Records DLP 25480, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Steve-Allen-Steve-Allen-Plays-Bossa-Nova-Jazz/release/3666857>>.

⁹⁷ Vic Lewis, *Vic Lewis Plays Bossa Nova at Home and Away*, LP, His Master’s Voice CSD 1492, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Vic-Lewis-And-His-Bossa-Nova-All-Stars-Vic-Lewis-Plays-Bossa-Nova-At-Home-And-Away/release/3788670>>.

⁹⁸ “Pop Spotlight”, in: *Billboard*, 28 November 1964, p. 28.

⁹⁹ Laurindo Almeida & The Bossa Nova Allstars, *Viva Bossa Nova!*, LP, Capitol Records ST 1759, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/Laurindo-Almeida-The-Bossa-Nova-Allstars-Viva-Bossa-Nova/release/2458888>>.

¹⁰⁰ Laurindo Almeida, *Acapulco ‘22*, LP, Tower Records T 5060, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Laurindo-Almeida-Acapulco-22/release/5178304>>.

¹⁰¹ Laurindo Almeida & The Bossa Nova Allstars, *Ole! Bossa Nova!*, LP, Capitol Records ST 1872, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Laurindo-Almeida-The-Bossa-Nova-Allstars-Ole-Bossa-Nova/release/4812558>>.

¹⁰² Laurindo Almeida & The Bossa Nova Allstars, *It’s a Bossa Nova World*, LP, Capitol Records ST 1946, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Laurindo-Almeida-And-The-Bossa-Nova-All-Stars-Its-A-Bossa-Nova-World-International-Hits-In-Jazz-Samb/release/585427>>.

¹⁰³ Laurindo Almeida, *Guitar from Ipanema*, LP, Capitol Records ST 2197, USA 1964, <<https://www.discogs.com/Laurindo-Almeida-Guitar-From-Ipanema/release/2270606>>.

competence in presenting the style authentically was questioned by at least some. Regarding his playing, Oscar Castro-Neves observed:

“[T]his is the classic feeling. Classical guitar is something that is usually the same feeling for all the tunes. Always the same sound everywhere, because you have the playing with the fingers, the technique is more or less the same, the arpeggios and the scales, you know? It can be Brazilian, because we play very much this way there, but not because it’s real Brazilian feeling.”¹⁰⁴

Multiple Brazilian artists such as Baden Powell or Jobim were featured on Herbie Mann’s *Do the Bossa Nova* (1962, Atlantic), while on Paul Winter’s *Jazz Meets the Bossa Nova* (1962, Columbia) an original Brazilian rhythm section could be heard. Both of these examples were at least partially recorded in Rio de Janeiro,¹⁰⁵ showcasing the major labels’ conviction to outdo each other with a maximum of perceived authenticity. This is illustrated by an advertisement for the Paul Winter album: Underneath a whisky bottle whose label reads “100 Proof Pure Bossa Nova”, it is stated that “Columbia Records gives it to you straight with the most authentic instrumental Bossa Nova album on the market. This is the real selling sound that will leave the watered-down imitations high and dry.”¹⁰⁶

For music critics already involved in the authenticity debate, the marketing apparently did the trick. *Down Beat*’s John S. Wilson wrote:

“This disc was recorded partially in Rio de Janeiro during the group’s South American trip and partially in New York City on its return. As a result, much of the bossa nova material in the set was recorded prior to the arrival of the bossa nova fad up here. It is, possibly because of this, simply stated, unpretentious, and representative of the charming side of the bossa nova that made it initially attractive.”¹⁰⁷

Note that, according to Wilson, Columbia could also have presented themselves as introducing bossa nova to the U.S., with Paul Winter “discovering” the new style at about the same time as Charlie Byrd. The reason the label refrained from doing so has most likely to do with the fact that *Jazz Samba* was released before *Jazz Meets the Bossa Nova*. The advertisement cited above dates from 24 November 1962 and the album first appeared among *Billboard*’s top-selling LPs in December of that year.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Leonard Feather, “Oscar Castro-Neves Blindfold Test”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 12, 23 May 1963, p. 35, <<https://jazz.ripnifulltext.org/RIPNIFJAZZ/Permalinks/1438689>>.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁶ [Advertisement], *Billboard Music Week*, 24 November 1962, p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ Wilson, review of *Jazz Meets the Bossa Nova*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁸ “Top LP’s For Week Ending December 29”, in *Billboard Music Week*, 29 December 1962, p. [II].

While advertisements and personnel names were important in creating a superficial authentic atmosphere, liner notes were of utmost importance in explaining just *why* one recording was more authentic than another. Most authors tried to back up their goal with analytical descriptions of the characteristics and the origins of bossa nova, rounded up by providing evidence of the main artist's understanding of the new style's secret aesthetics. Dan Morgenstern's text for Coleman Hawkins' *Desafinado* fits this schema perfectly: A short account of how bossa nova entered the USA is followed by long lines of justification.

"Nothing could be more fitting than a union of this newest of jazz trends with one of the most durable of jazz masters. [...] He has survived all the 'new things' [...]. [...] Hawk applied himself to 'One Note Samba,' trying out a variety of approaches to get through to the essence of the bossa nova. [...] By the end of the date, he had become a bossa nova expert, completely at home in a style which isn't at all simple."¹⁰⁹

Morgenstern then supplies the reader with basic bossa nova aesthetics before he comments on the individual tracks. On *Samba Para Bean* he observes: "Both composition and interpretation are authentic bossa nova, engendering a gently lyrical mood with a tinge of passion underneath."¹¹⁰

The notes to Zoot Sims' *New Beat Bossa Nova* follow the same approach. The text carefully constructs the image of an authentic native style, which, however, suits skilled American jazzmen perfectly due to its

"definite jazz overtones, which allow the soloist to improvise rather freely. Sims and Hall do just that, but their message never intrudes or invades. [...] The authentic bossa nova requires several, specific percussive instruments – all of which are used on this recording. [...] On this recording a regular set of drums is used, but for authenticity, the main attacks are light use of the snare and cymbals [...]. [...] Al Cohn and Manny Albam have studied the bossa nova and come up with amazingly perceptive and authentic settings."¹¹¹

The excessively apologetic tone that dominates this writing is somewhat rare. Most liner notes authors utilise a subtler style, much like Morgenstern.

Gene Lees, writing for Paul Winter's *Jazz Meets the Bossa Nova* also makes sure to emphasise the nativist origins of the bossa nova: "[I]t's not [a synthesis of jazz and samba]

¹⁰⁹ Dan Morgenstern, liner notes to: Coleman Hawkins, *Desafinado*, CD, Impulse! IMP 12272, Europe 1997, <<https://www.discogs.com/Coleman-Hawkins-Desafinado/release/10844072>>, p. 3ff (text reproduced from original 1962 LP).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹¹¹ Liner notes to: Zoot Sims, *New Beat Bossa Nova Means the Samba Swings*, LP, Colpix Records SCP 435, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/Zoot-Sims-And-His-Orchestra-New-Beat-Bossa-Nova-Means-The-Samba-Swings/release/4109835>>.

– not exactly. It’s something the Brazilians have achieved for themselves.” But the Paul Winter Sextet had learned its secrets: “[O]f all the U.S. attempts to play bossa nova I’d heard since we got home, this was the only one that really captured its essence – its sensitivity, its subtlety.”¹¹²

Unsurprisingly, the authenticity trick was applied generously to Herbie Mann’s *Do the Bossa Nova*. “When playing Brazilian music, play it like the Brazilians do. That’s Herbie Mann’s musical philosophy. [...] That’s why Herbie Mann took his beard and his two flutes to Rio to record this album.” The author then places the “real Bossa Nova” heard on this album over the “synthetic Bossa Nova” heard on most American albums, accounts of Mann’s disgust with “the way [One Note Samba] had been done on American recordings”, and finally assures the reader that the “Brazilians told him he played [Bossa Nova] like a native.” All doubts surrounding Mann’s total legitimacy are wiped away with the closing statement: “He went to Brazil [...] just to make these recordings, so that America could finally hear the *real* Bossa Nova. It’s the next thing to being there!”¹¹³

Barbara Gardner is sure to point out the involvement of Brazilian musicians on Ramsey Lewis’ *Bossa Nova*: “[Lewis] was fortunate in having Josef [sic] Paulo and Carmen Costa to woodshed with the trio. These artists are two of the most sought after performers in the Bossa Nova rage.”¹¹⁴

The authenticity-providing José Paulo and Carmen Costa are also underlined on Bob Brookmeyer’s *Trombone Jazz Samba*: “Also present are two Brazilians. Jose Paulo draws an unusual spectrum of colors and accents from the *pandeiro*, a Brazilian tambourine. Carmen Costa, a celebrated singer in Brazil, is heard in much of the album on the *cabassa*, a gourd-like percussion instrument [...]”¹¹⁵

George Biagio tries to transfer the pioneer image surrounding Charlie Byrd onto Lionel Hampton, who also recorded with Paulo and Costa:

“During a recording session in the spring of 1962, Hamp picked a rhythm section comprised of some of Brazil’s top musicians. With these native Brazilians supplying the authentic Latin beat, Hamp blended in his own inimitable style of jazz, and from this session came the first Bossa

¹¹² Gene Lees, liner notes to The Paul Winter Sextet, *Jazz Meets the Bossa Nova*, LP, Columbia CS 8725, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/The-Paul-Winter-Sextet-Jazz-Meets-The-Bossa-Nova/release/12922147>>.

¹¹³ Dick Kleiner, liner notes to Herbie Mann, *Do the Bossa Nova*, LP, Atlantic 1397, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/Herbie-Mann-Do-The-Bossa-Nova/release/2867532>>.

¹¹⁴ Barbara J. Gardner, liner notes to The Ramsey Lewis Trio, *Bossa Nova*, LP, Argo LP 705, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/The-Ramsey-Lewis-Trio-Bossa-Nova/release/4462936>>.

¹¹⁵ Nat Hentoff, liner notes to Bob Brookmeyer, *Trombone Jazz Samba*, LP, Verve Records V6-8498, USA 1962, <<https://www.discogs.com/Bob-Brookmeyer-Trombone-Jazz-Samba-Bossa-Nova/release/997026>>.

Nova jazz recording released in this Country. Now [...] he has brought this group together again to record what we feel is authentic Bossa Nova jazz as interpreted by the master of the vibes.”¹¹⁶

Biagio's claims seem to have gone quite unnoticed, though.

Felix Grant's accompanying notes to Byrd's *Bossa Nova Pelos Passaros* shall provide a final example for authenticity-centred bossa nova marketing. After reminding the reader of Byrd's State Department tour and, thus, of his pioneer status, Grant singles out the guitarist as the first U.S. Americans to truly understand the style:

“[A]fter having heard this music he seriously set out to interpret it in the manner of the Brazilians. [...] Although some American musicians came back from South American trips and recorded an occasional bossa nova or so, to my knowledge Byrd was the first to listen carefully, play it nightly on the job, and to record a complete album in this idiom. His awareness of the background of the music is, I believe, what clearly sets Charlie apart from the current crop of trend-followers who hire a bongo player, head for a recording studio – one eye on the clock, the other on the arrangements – and then have the effrontery to claim that they have recorded the real thing. His present position as a key individual in “bossa nova: U.S. style” surely reflects the difference.”¹¹⁷

IV. Conclusion

Bossa nova's lack of strong uniform musical characteristics provided – and still provides – a perfect vehicle for ideological beliefs. Regarding jazz critics and musicians, authenticity is conjured up as rhetoric weaponry against commercialisation and exploitation of a people and their music. This attitude is nourished by ideas of nationalism and a *l'art pour l'art* conviction which are in line with 19th century European high art philosophies of national styles and absolute music. U.S. critics imposing authenticity upon South American musicians can be seen as a subconscious prolongation of North American hegemony claims, politically reinforced through the Organization of American States. The Verve slogan, “The jazz of America – all the Americas – is on Verve”, testifies to this mentality. The same goes very much for most of the remarks cited in this paper and is especially evident in Gene Lees' article “Anatomy of a Travesty”, in which he eloquently paints the picture of Antônio Carlos Jobim and João Gilberto as helpless victims of U.S. American corporate greed.¹¹⁸ Defending South America against the record industry or communism appear as two sides of the same coin.

¹¹⁶ George Biagio, liner notes to Lionel Hampton, *Bossa Nova Jazz*, LP, Glad-Hamp Records Inc. GHLP 1004, USA 1963, <<https://www.discogs.com/Lionel-Hampton-Bossa-Nova-Jazz/release/7612430>>.

¹¹⁷ Felix Grant, liner notes to: Charlie Byrd, *Bossa Nova Pelos Passaros*.

¹¹⁸ Gene Lees, “Bossa Nova. Anatomy of a Travesty”, in *Down Beat*, 30, 4, 14 February 1963, p. 22–24, <<https://jazz.ripmfulltext.org/RIPMJAZZ/Permalinks/1438316>>.

This paper should be regarded as one first step towards a broad analysis of the continuing debates and controversies surrounding bossa nova. Ever since this illusive style's inception it has been utilised as a template for nationalist or aesthetic debates that draw on multiple Western bourgeois value categories, either for affirmative or deconstructive purposes. Regarded thusly, the construction of authenticity is but one aspect of the bossa nova discourse, where a highly subjective and ambiguous term becomes a placeholder for subversive socio-aesthetic and nationalist remarks.