How Does Brazilian Music and Culture Influence the Musical Elements Heard in Masayoshi Takanaka's *Brasilian Skies*

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Introduction

Exchanging culture through music is a means for an artist and their audience to indulge in and appreciate diverse cultural traditions. Masayoshi Takanaka's Brasilian Skies is a prime example of blending two diverse musical ideas to foster a deeper understanding of another culture. Masayoshi Takanaka has been creating and performing Japanese jazz-fusion music since the late 70's. His music ranges from soulful, expressive, smooth grooves to energetic, punchy, and complex melodies. Takanaka steps out of his musical comfort zone to create his own reinterpretation of Brazilian samba and bossa nova, borrowing instrumentations and harmonic structure from traditional Brazilian music, along with integrating his melodic ideas from jazz-fusion in Japan, forging a connection between two disparate musical genres from different cultures. This paper aims to discuss the influences Brazilian music and culture have had on Takanaka's Brasilian Skies by examining harmonic and rhythmic patterns, instrumentations, and other cultural effects at the time. This research offers insight into cultural exchange through music and will prove beneficial to musicologists and Takanaka fans.

Samba, Bossa Nova, and Jazz-Fusion

Brasilian Skies is heavily influenced by Brazilian samba and bossa nova, separating this album from the rest of his discography. Samba is more than just music in Brazil, it involves music, dancing, and emotion. Samba is very expressive, but a broadened definition of sound would be very percussive, featuring a less-sophisticated harmonic structure, exaggerated accents, and melodic ideas that have a basic style with simple deviations. Early samba was heavily influenced by the sound of polka, habanera, marcha, and maixixe.[1]Bossa nova is a samba-derived style but is less percussive, softer, and more harmony-oriented.[2] Takanaka uses the musical elements from these two genres and blends them with

[1] Chris McGowan and Ricardo Pessanha, *The Brazilian Sound: Samba, Bossa Nova, and the Popular Music of Brasil* (Philadelphia: Temple university press, 2009), pg. 21

[2] Antonio Adolfo, *Brazilian Music Workshop* (Brésil: Advance Music, 1993).

Japanese jazz fusion. Jazz Fusion in its original form was a fusion of Jazz, Rock, and Funk music. It's very rhythm and groove-driven and utilizes many electric instruments. Like most genres Jazz Fusion began incorporating some other sounds and genres notably world music, folk, progressive rock, and electronic music. Its sound is very experimental, energetic, and chaotic. Takanaka is breathing more life into the definition of fusion, by adding another layer of culture, borrowing elements heard in Brazilian music.

Instrumentation

Jazz-fusion features a variety of instrumentation, as a generalization, Jazz-Fusion often features electric guitar, bass, synthesizer/electric keyboard, brass, drum set, vocals, and other selections. As with most ensembles, each instrument serves a role in the composition and complements each other differently. Generally, Drum sets keep time and help add more definition to the piece, the bass adds a melodic texture, keeping the groove. The keyboard accentuates the chord progressions while horns will add rhythmic interjections, and the Guitar with play chords, but in a more percussive way than the other voices. Keyboard, Guitar, and Horns occasionally play the melody. In samba, music is built from the interlocking syncopated rhythms of the percussion. Similar to the previous genre, every instrument has a role. There are three surdos, large bass drums, each playing its own part, either keeping time or adding an improvisational rhythmic line. Providing more foundation to the beat is the pandeiro, which is played to provide a rattling or jingling effect. Jingling is also heard in the chocalho, which are jingles in a frame that are playing in a forward and back motion. Still in the scope of shakers, the Caxixi, or basket shakers are played to create a constant shaking to keep the rhythm or accented notes. Agogo Bells are two metal bells joined by a handle, played with a drumstick, and squeezed together for a "drier" sound. The Tamborim provides a sharp sound, being the highest-sounding drum of the ensemble. Repinique which often is used as a solo instrument, as it's more prominent, the caixa is similar to a snare drum, as it has a bright, rattling, punchy sound to it. An effect instrument that provides a distinct "monkey-like" sound, is the Cuica, which is a friction drum with a stick on the inside of the membrane, the squeak is produced

from rubbing the stick with a wet cloth, and multiple pitches can be produced depending on where the player's hand is on the outside of the drumhead. Samba uses a variety of instruments other than percussion; vocals are often used in call-and-response style singing, The Cavaquinho is a stringed instrument, similar to a ukulele, and the Apito de Samba, or samba whistle, which is used to lead samba schools, is also a prominent effect instrument used to lead the direction of the song. Bossa nova features Piano, Bass, clave, Tamborim. Samba Gafiera, a Brazilian subgenre, is played at middle-class samba dance parties, similar to Takanaka's instrumentation, Gafiera features electric piano, guitar, electric bass, drums, and similar percussion, and horns. Takanaka uses all the instruments described above and blends the vocations of each instrument to form a new ensemble.

Featured Brazilian Artists

This new sound, birthed from 2 disparate musical genres, could not have been the creation of a singular musician, Masayoshi Takanaka recorded a majority of Brasilian Skies in Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro in 1978. While visiting Brazil, Takanaka's approach to incorporating Brazilian musical elements into his new album was not only innovative but also collaborative, as Takanaka employed the brilliance of several influential Brazilian artists that have previously performed samba or bossa nova including Paulinho da Costa; an internationally known drummer and samba school bandleader, Sergio Carvalho; a keyboardist and composer, Daudeth de Avezado; who played cavaquinho on the album, and Ary Carvalhae; a recording engineer that has worked with Jorge Benjor and Chico Buerque. Featuring these artists, and more Brazilian artists not listed, adds more integrity and authenticity to the music being created in this album, shifting the discussion toward cultural appreciation rather than appropriation.

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Rhythmic Analysis

Common rhythmic patterns played by keyboards and guitarists imitate the accent pattern in percussion. In bossa nova, whichever voice in on the bass, whether keyboard, guitar, bass or drumkit plays the surdo part. In samba, there are three surdo parts, the primary play the strong beat on beat 2, while the second plays on beat 1 but quieter, the third is an improvisational voice. Improvisational voices in samba often also include the repinique, cuica, Pandeiro, and Ganzá. Many of these instruments double as keeping the rhythm, being the surdo, repinique, pandeiro, Ganzá, and caixa. Instruments that highlight or primarily play accents consist of Tamborim, clave, cuica, reco-reco, cowbell, cuica, and surdo. Instruments that keep rhythmic pulse can act as accent instruments, and vice-versa when necessary. Many instruments have multiple responsibilities, for example the Pandeiro, that's plays the pulse, accents, and bass accents all at the same time. In bossa nova, the keyboard will play closed block or inverted chords on the accents. In bossa nova, João Gilberto introduced a new rhythmic idea to acoustic guitar- *violão gago*, where the guitarist plays a simplified bass line with their thumbs, and accents with their fingers, imitating an entire samba band.

Harmonic Analysis

The harmonic structure of a piece is the foundation of the mood that is meant to be associated with the music. Japanese Jazz-fusion uses a mixture of chord progression commonly found in both jazz and rock. Fusion also features mode scales in the melodic voices based on the harmonic chord underneath. For example, If the piece was in C Major, and the chord underneath was a G Major dominant, the melodic voice would play a Mixolydian mode, being the fifth mode for the fifth scale degree. Any Chord progression found in classic rock, blues, and jazz-funk is considered a Jazz-fusion chord progression, there is no harmonic limitation in Jazz Fusion. In the title track of the album, Brasilian Skies, the intro uses a Guitar riff in E major, while the Cavaquinho plays A major over B as the harmonic foundation. This track features a "turnaround" progression in the bass when the melody begins, I-V-I-V-I-IV-I-V-I. The Cavaquinho, a Brazilian acoustic-guitar-like instrument plays the chords under the

electric guitar with a dotted quarter note eighth note repeated pattern. During the bridge, Takanaka also takes influence from American jazz artist, George Benson, using a very distinct I-IV-vi-I progression, previously heard in the very popular song Breezin'. Another notable harmonic progression in the title track is the I-ii-iii-IV-V shifts while the arpeggios on B Major, a minor, g# minor, f# minor, and E Major arpeggios in the melodic line, creating a chaotic shift before resolving back to E major entirely. Throughout the entire song, the melodic line is based on the E major scale, occasionally outlining the e minor pentatonic scale. Outside of this album, in general, Japanese Fusion and Bossa nova share similar chord structures, as they are both influenced by the same genres of blues and free jazz. Bossa nova music usually uses cluster chords squeezing the 9th and 3rd together in tight voicing. Chord progressions commonly found in samba are: I-V-I, II-V-I, I-II-III, and I-iv-iii-VI7-II7-V-I. All harmonic sophistication existing in samba were influential to bossa nova.

Conclusion

[talk about the importance of exchanging culture and dialogue through music]

References

Adolfo, Antonio. Brazilian Music Workshop. Brésil: Advance Music, 1993.

Entire book is about samba and bossa nova chord rhythms and harmonies, as well as defining characteristics of their respective subgenres.

Sutton, R. Anderson. "'Fusion' and Questions of Korean Cultural Identity in Music." *Korean Studies* 35 (2011): 4–24. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23719448.

This article gives a definition of fusion, exploring examples of Korean fusion music incorporating Western classical and jazz elements into Korean traditional folksongs with western instruments and harmonies. Explains that music and identity, historical developments and globalization, and mobility and flexibility are all factors of fusion music.

Béhague, Gerard. "Rap, Reggae, Rock, or Samba: The Local and the Global in Brazilian Popular Music (1985-95)." *Latin American Music Review / Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 27, no. 1 (2006): 79–90. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4121698.

Bocskay, Stephen. "Undesired Presences: Samba, Improvisation, and Afro-Politics in 1970s Brazil." *Latin American Research Review* 52, no. 1 (2017): 64–78. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26743666.

Discusses the 'golden years' of Samba in the 70s, which is the period I am researching. Introduced me to the Partido Alto style of Samba, which highly resembles Takanaka's songs. Discusses the political and cultural importance of samba music, as it was a means for musicians to express their frustrations and advocate for racial equality through lyrics. Samba also

challenged racial prejudice in Brazil by highlighting the disparities faced by Afro-Brazilians at the time. Discussed the impact of the Brazilian regime on bossa nova musicians and music.

Bystron, Janco Boy, and Chico Santana. “Brazilian Grooves and Cultured Clichés.” In *Music Practices Across Borders: (E)Valuating Space, Diversity and Exchange*, edited by Glaucia Peres da Silva and Konstantin Hondros, 191–210. Transcript Verlag, 2019. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvnp0hzm.11.

Defines ‘Samba’, discusses how the Latin groove of samba originated from African music with European elements and developed more within Brazil. Explains several samba styles and discusses carnival celebrations. Layed out the three forms of engaging with samba, Visualization, Auditory perception, and Corporeal Conversion, or seeing, hearing, and performing samba.

McGowan, Chris, and Ricardo Pessanha. *The Brazilian Sound: Samba, Bossa Nova, and the Popular Music of Brasil*. Philadelphia: Temple university press, 2009.

Discusses the history and cultural importance of samba and bossa nova music. Discusses instrumentation and roles of instruments in ensemble.

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