

## Gato Barbieri - New York Meeting (2010)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Equinox* (John Coltrane) 6:57 2 *Its Over* (Gato Barbieri) 5:48 3 *Prepárense* (Astor Piazzolla) 8:11 4 *Straight No Chaser* (Thelonious Monk) 6:12 5 *Blue In Green* (Miles Davis) 6:09 6 *Someday My Prince Will Come* (Frank Churchill, Larry Morey) 7:24 7 *So What* (Miles Davis) 9:15 Gato Barbieri – tenor saxophone Carlos Franzetti – piano David Finck – double bass Nestor Astarita – drums

I own many recordings by Gato Barbieri, both well-known and obscure. He is best known for his passionate, drawn out improvisations. But he is also known by those of a certain age for his more smooth and melodic projects. *New York Meeting* is a departure from both styles in that it is a straight-ahead jazz album, reminiscent of some of the best jazz of the late '50s and early '60s. Think Verve and Blue Note. Barbieri was 78 when this was recorded, but here he plays with all the controlled virtuosity of a much younger man. The passion and fire are still there, but he reins in his tendency to excess to be just one member of a combo in which each musician is as important as his fellows. Featured are Carlos Franzetti on piano, David Finck on contrabajo, Nestor Astarita on percussion, and of course Gato Barbieri on tenor saxophone.

Most tunes are covers of jazz giants everyone knows: Thelonius Monk, John Coltrane, and Miles Davis. But it was the stupendous swinging take on Astor Piazzolla's *Prepárense* which drew me in. That alone is worth many times the price of the CD. That cut remains my favorite but I am also fired up by Coltrane's *Equinox*, Monk's *Straight No Chaser*, and Davis' *So What*, on which Barbieri comes closest to his musical abandon of old.

The CD is attractively packaged in a six-panel gatefold and comes with a useful booklet containing pictures, album information, biographical sketches of the musicians, and musings by Astarita and modern Argentine musical giant Litto Nebbia. If you ever liked Gato Barbieri but haven't heard of him lately, *New York Meeting* will reawaken the spirit of his magic in your soul.

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Get it while it remains available, you'll treasure it always. ---Jurt Harding, amazon.com

Latin Jazz saxophonist Leandro "Gato" Barbieri, who composed the Grammy-winning music for the steamy Marlon Brando film "Last Tango in Paris" and recorded dozens of albums over a career spanning more than seven decades, has died at age 83.

Laura Barbieri, his wife of nearly 20 years, said her husband died Saturday in a New York hospital from pneumonia. The musician recently had bypass surgery to remove a blood clot.

"Music was a mystery to Gato, and each time he played was a new experience for him, and he wanted it to be that way for his audience," she said. "He was honored for all the years he had a chance to bring his music all around the world."

The Argentine-born musician recorded some 35 albums between 1967 and 1982, when he stopped consistently making new records. He toured regularly and went on to record four more albums, including 1997's smooth jazz "Que Pasa," which reached No. 2 on Billboard's contemporary jazz charts.

Though in poor health, Barbieri, still sporting his trademark black fedora hat, had been performing monthly at the Blue Note jazz club in New York, since 2013. He last performed at the club on Nov. 23.

"He was my best friend," Laura Barbieri said Saturday. "I'm so grateful we had these 20 years together." She said a public memorial was being planned, but details have not been finalized.

Last year, Barbieri received a Latin Grammy lifetime achievement award for a career that covered "virtually the entire jazz landscape."

The citation from the Latin Recording Academy credited Barbieri with creating "a rebellious but highly accessible musical style, combining contemporary jazz with Latin American genres and incorporating elements of instrumental pop."

Barbieri won a Grammy for best instrumental composition in 1973 for his music for "Last Tango In Paris," the controversial erotic drama starring Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider that earned two Oscar nominations.

When director Bernardo Bertolucci needed sexy music for "Last Tango," he turned to Barbieri who was known for his distinctive, sensuous, huge-toned tenor sax sound.

"It was like a marriage between the film and the music," said Barbieri of the soundtrack that made him an international star, in a 1997 interview with The Associated Press. "Bernardo told me, 'I don't want the music to be too much Hollywood or too much European, which is more intellectual. I want a median.'"

Barbieri said tango had a special appeal because it is deeply tied to his Argentine soul.

"Always in the tango is tragedy — she leaves him, she kills him. It's like an opera but it's called tango," Barbieri said in 1997, noting that half of Argentinians, including him, had roots in Italy. "The lyrics and the melodies are very beautiful. It's very sensual."

Born on Nov. 28, 1932, in Rosario, Argentina, Barbieri grew up in a family that included several musicians, but did not take up an instrument until he was 12 when he heard bebop pioneer Charlie Parker's recording of "Now's the Time" and began studying clarinet.

After moving to Buenos Aires in 1947, Barbieri picked up the alto saxophone. He earned the nickname "El Gato," which means "The Cat," in the 1950s because of the way he scampered between clubs with his saxophone.

He gained national prominence playing alto saxophone in an orchestra led by Lalo Schiffrin, the pianist and composer who later made a big impact with his TV and film scores, including "Theme from Mission: Impossible."

Later in the 1950s, Barbieri switched to tenor saxophone as he began leading his own groups.

In the 1960s, splitting his time between Rome and New York, Barbieri became part of the Ornette Coleman-inspired free jazz revolution, working extensively with trumpeter Don Cherry from Coleman's groundbreaking quartet. Influenced by other modern jazz saxophonists — including John Coltrane, Albert Ayler and Pharoah Sanders — he developed a warmer, grittier sound on the tenor sax. He recorded and performed with such avant-garde jazz musicians as Cherry, Carla Bley and Mike Mantler.

But he soon rediscovered his roots, incorporating South American rhythms, harmonies and melodic themes on albums starting with "The Third World" in 1969 — and eventually developed his own contemporary jazz sound. He followed that with the live album "El Pampero" in 1971.

After releasing the "Last Tango" album in 1972, Barbieri recorded a series of mellower Latin-infused soul-jazz and jazz-pop albums, including four "Chapter" albums for the Impulse! label, which explored Brazilian, Afro-Cuban and Argentine rhythms. He then released "Caliente" (1976) for the A&M label, which included his popular rendition of Carlos Santana's "Europa."

Barbieri recorded new material consistently until 1982, when a dispute with his record label led him to focus solely on touring. He recorded only intermittently in the 1980s, and did not release any albums from 1988-97. He released "Que Pasa" in 1997 after dealing with the turmoil of losing his Italian-born wife of 35 years to a degenerative illness in January 1995, and then undergoing triple bypass heart surgery two months later.

He had to recover physically and overcome depression at the death of his wife to finish the album, which he credited with being a healing force.

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"The only way I saw was to go out and do something every day," he said. "The music gave me life."

Barbieri would release only three more albums over the rest of his life — including "The Shadow of the Cat" in 2002, a Latin-flavored smooth jazz session featuring guest trumpeter Herb Alpert, and "New York Meeting" in 2010 on which he played straight-ahead jazz standards, such as Thelonious Monk's "Straight, No Chaser" and Miles Davis' "So What." --- nytimes.com

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