

Gato Barbieri - Chapter Four: Alive In New York (1975)

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A1 Milonga Triste 6:25 A2 La China Leoncia 15:49 B1 Bahia 10:30 B2 Lluvia Azul 9:52

Gato Barbieri -tenor saxophone, guiro, voice Howard Johnson - tuba, bass clarinet, flugelhorn, tambourine Eddie Martinez - piano, Fender Rhodes Paul Metzke – guitar Ron Carter – bass Portinho – drums Ray Armando - percussion, conga

Taken from three nights of recording in February of 1975, Gato Barbieri's Chapter 4 is a continuation -- albeit in a concert setting -- of the music explored on his first three chapters for Impulse. Finally available on CD this set includes three Barbieri compositions, including the four-part suite "La China Leoncia" and his ubiquitous "Milonga Triste." The band here includes percussionist Ray Armando, bassist Ron Carter, multi-instrumentalist Howard Johnson (here on tuba, flügelhorn, and bass clarinet), pianist Eddie Martinez, guitarist Paul Metzke, and Brazilian drummer Portinho. The band here is full of warmth as well as fire, and the blowing is full of passion. Barbieri's bands in the early and mid-'70s were well rehearsed, and deeply in tune with his brand of Latin jazz. The empathy in the rhythm section is utterly uncanny as Carter, Martinez, and Portinho create a shape-shifting backdrop for the frontline players to wind and entwine one another, incorporating formal notions of song into the action. The opening "Milonga Triste" is a case in point as Gato plays the melody, Johnson, in his own gift for lyricism, plays contrapuntal fills, and Metzke trots out elongated fingerpicked figures for Barbieri to solo off of, never losing the lyric in the process even as the intensity of the tune grows with every chorus. The suite begins as a free blowing exercise where modes are kept hovering about for the frontline players to improvise from until a melody is established and a direction taken that changes continually in the following three parts. The album's closer, "Lluvia Azul," begins as a ballad of dreamy quality and becomes a Latin jazz steamer by the end of the first third of its ten minutes, and becomes a lyrical orgy of harmonic invention and chromatic interplay with burning salsa rhythms fueling the entire thing. Chapter 4: Alive in New York is one of Barbieri's finest moments on record. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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