With the emergence of be-bop [a form of Jazz] from its hidden, out-of-the-way incubators uptown into the heady air of Broadway, it’s become the thing to talk learnedly of the Afro-Cuban origins of bop rhythm. A trip to the Palladium to dig the remarkable Machito band can soon put the matter into its true perspective. (Dizzy Gillespie and Stan Kenton are frequent visitors.)

The subtle interplay of Machito’s five-man rhythm section, with Machito or Graciela making a sixth on the claves, is wondrous to hear. With each percussionist doing something of his own, the sounds fuse into an irresistible beat. Emphasis shifts from man to man, in a continuously varying pattern, but the beat is always there, strong, true and exciting. There lies the essential Cubano contribution to be-bop—the shifting among rhythm instruments while attempting to produce a steady discernible pulse. But the bopsters [be-bop Jazz musicians] are a long way from mastery of this technique, which is second nature within the Machito band.

Material consists largely of standard and original [Latin American] numbers of every rhythm—rumba variations, boleros, guaguanacos, guajaras, guarachas. The current craze is the mambo, a fast rumba, with which the hip terpers are now compulsively occupied. One of the hall’s features is the Wednesday night mambo contests, which regularly draw not only the hip steppers but also instructors and pros like Arthur Murray and the de Marcos.

- Written by Jerry Wexler, *Billboard*, January 8, 1949