

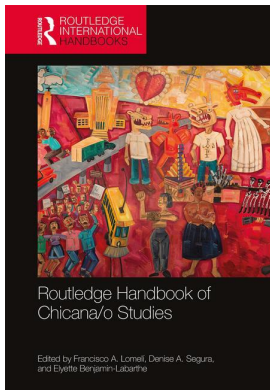
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Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



Routledge Handbook of Chicana/o Studies

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Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315726366-17>

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Published online on: 03 Aug 2018

How to cite :- Steven Loza. 03 Aug 2018, *The challenge of Chicana/o music from:* Routledge Handbook of Chicana/o Studies Routledge

Accessed on: 27 Sep 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315726366-17>

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The challenge of Chicana/o music

Steven Loza

The study of Chicana/o music leads to many issues that reflect how Mexican Americans in the United States have expressed themselves through a culture that has consistently “bordered” the concept of the “border” itself. Their forms of music are diverse, complex, and, in many instances, expressions of conflict. This chapter touches on a variety of topics, ranging from the origins and development of Chicana/o forms or styles and their transformations to observations through sociocultural analyses of issues, such as marginality, identity, intercultural conflict and aesthetics, reinterpretation, postnationalism, and *mestizaje*, the mixing of race and culture. In assessing Chicana/o musical expression, I also critique various contexts representing the music industry, major representative artists, the African diaspora, and globalization.

Tradition, conflicts, and innovation

Perhaps the musical forms that took strongest root throughout the Southwest, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were the *canción mexicana* (the Mexican song, eventually evolving as the *ranchera*) and the *corrido* (ballad). The work of Américo Paredes on the topic (see 1958, 1995) stands out in terms of his perspectives on the issues of identity and conflict represented in the song/ballad repertoire. His reference to this body of music as the “greater Mexican folk song” is significant by tying contemporary Mexican culture to the former Mexican territory taken by the United States in the Mexican–American War of 1846–1848. Paredes claimed that the most salient theme of the *corridos* was that of intercultural conflict, a theory that he nurtured throughout his analyses of the ballads of the Texas–Mexican border and the Southwest. He perceived the consistent theme of conflict between the two dominant groups, the Anglo Americans and the Chicanos, and describes 65 folk songs of the lower Texas–Mexican border (Paredes 1995).

Manuel Peña, a student of Paredes, wrote seminal studies on the music of Texas–Mexicans, specifically the *conjunto* and *orquesta* ensemble styles (1985a; 1985b). Often adapting a Marxist framework, Peña analyzed both the class divisions between the two groups in addition to the conflicts at work within the Texas–Mexican, or *tejano*, community itself.

Paredes and Peña both provide lucid musical examples and analyses in their various bodies of work. Paredes wrote the book “*With His Pistol in His Hand*”: *A Border Ballad and its Hero*

(1958), based on a specific *corrido* and the experience of Texas-Mexican Gregorio Cortez, whose entanglement with the legal system became expressed through a legendary epic ballad among Chicanas/os in the Southwest. In his *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (1995), Paredes notes that “Gregorio Cortez” is the epitome of the Border *corrido*, with the hero betrayed into the hands of his enemies (Paredes 1995, p. 31). He assesses the origin of the Mexican *corrido*, which in part evolved from the Spanish *romance*, speculating that the earliest *corridos* may have emerged in the northern border area of Mexico and the United States.

The conflict of the Mexican experience, as presented above in the case of the Texas-Mexican, was also being expressed in other regions of the United States. One example among many related to Southern California is the classic *corrido* “El lavaplatos” (The Dishwasher), composed by Jesús Osorio, who recorded the song with Manuel “El Perro” Camacho on the Victor label (1930). Later it was recorded by Los Hermanos Bañuelos (also in 1930) on the Brunswick/Vocalion label and yet again by Chávez y Lugo on Columbia Records. Incorporating satire into the expression of an immigrant’s illusion and disillusion with the dreams and myths of Hollywood, the song is a tragicomic sociocultural commentary critiquing contemporary life of the era (Loza 1993). Peña cites this particular *corrido* as a thematically significant one because of its reference to “political and economic issues that were at the heart of the Mexican’s subordination in the capitalist Anglo order that reigned over the Southwest by this time” (Loza 1993, p. 67).

The diverse musical genres of “Greater Mexico” have been interpreted by numerous configurations of ensembles, but it cannot be denied that the mariachi has come to be more associated with Mexican music than any other type since it became the craze of Mexican radio during the 1930s. As immigration from Mexico has increased, so has the growth of mariachis. As the most international symbol of Mexican music, thousands of mariachis perform at restaurants, clubs, weddings, civic functions, holiday celebrations, and other festivities. Because of the popularity of *rancheras*, mariachis have been a mainstay of musical accompaniment in addition to performing the traditional *son*, a musical form associated with the origin of the mariachi in the central-western Mexican regions. Artists from Mexico have constantly toured cities in the United States, catering to inhabitants of Mexican origin in spectacular shows and venues.

Highly successful mariachis in the Southwest attaining international recognition have included Mariachi Cobre of Tucson, Arizona, Los Reyes de Albuquerque of New Mexico, Mariachi Campana de América of San Antonio, Texas, and three based in Los Angeles, California: Mariachi Los Camperos of Nati Cano, Mariachi Sol de México of José Hernández, and Mariachi Los Galleros of Pedro Rey. The latter three, along with the renowned Mexico City based Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, recorded and performed with Linda Ronstadt during when she was awarded two Grammy Awards for her mariachi albums *Canciones de mi padre* (1988) and *Más canciones* (1991). Ronstadt, born and raised in Tucson and the daughter of a Mexican American, recorded not only mariachi music in Spanish but other recordings of popular and tropical styles. Her involvement in mariachi sparked new interest since the late 1980s, especially among young and women Mexican American musicians. Exclusively, women mariachis have especially emerged since the 1990s, exemplified by groups such as Mariachi Las Reynas de Los Angeles, Mariachi Adelita, Mariachi Las Divas, and Mariachi Femenil 2000. Another highly popular phenomenon has been the great success of mariachi festivals, highlighted by both concerts and performance classes, in cities like San Antonio, Tucson, Fresno, Los Angeles, Albuquerque, and New York City (Sheehy 1997, 1999; Jáquez 2003).

Numerous individual artists have become musical leaders and symbolic beacons of hope for the Mexican-Chicano population. In Texas Lydia Mendoza attained immense popularity not only in the context of *música tejana*, but throughout the United States and Mexico. Born

in Houston in 1916, her family also lived in Monterrey, Mexico, San Antonio, and other Texas locales. She emerged as a major innovator in the interpretation of the *canción*, *corrido*, *bolero* (love song), and *huapango* (a musical composition as well as dance interpreted with guitars, harp, and a violin). Her first solo hit, “Mal hombre,” was recorded in 1933 on RCA Victor’s Bluebird label. She later recorded on the Falcón, Ideal, RCA Victor, Columbia, and DLB labels. She is featured in the documentaries *Chulas fronteras* by Les Blank and *Songs of the Homeland* by Héctor Galán. In 1982 she received the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Award, and in 1999 she was awarded the National Medal of the Arts by President Bill Clinton. A book, in bilingual format and titled *Lydia Mendoza’s Life in Music/La historia de Lydia Mendoza*, was published in 2001, written by Yolanda Broyles-González.

Lalo Guerrero represents another highly significant musical artist. Born in Tucson in 1916 and raised in that city’s Mexican neighborhood known as Barrio Libre, he based himself in Los Angeles during his early twenties and established a dynamic musical career as a songwriter, singer/musician, recording artist, and music club owner. During World War II, he performed for troops as part of a USO tour and composed songs that became standards in the Mexican repertoire, including “Canción mexicana,” recorded by Lucha Reyes in 1940 and “Nunca jamás,” recorded by both Trío Los Panchos and Javier Solís. During the 1940s, he composed a number of songs related to the *pachuco* culture of young Chicanos in Los Angeles, adapting their *caló* slang of Spanish. A number of these songs, including “Vamos a bailar,” “Chucos suaves”, and “Marijuana Boogie”, were adapted by playwright and director Luis Valdez in his musical play *Zoot Suit*, made into a major film through Universal Studios in 1982, starring Edward James Olmos and musician/actor Daniel Valdez. Guerrero became highly recognized as a musical satirist, composing songs related to the United Farm Workers movement, immigration, and Chicana/o culture. Humor is an essential component of his music and he inspired many younger artists, including Los Lobos who recorded a children’s music album, *Papa’s Dream*, with Guerrero in 1995, and which was nominated for a Grammy Award. In 1991 Guerrero was awarded a National Heritage Award by the National Endowment for the Arts, and in 1997 the National Medal of the Arts by President Bill Clinton. Lalo Guerrero is extensively profiled in *Barrio Rhythm: Mexican American Music in Los Angeles* (Loza 1993) and in his autobiography, *Lalo: My Life and Music*, with Sherilyn Meece Mentis (2011).

Negotiating the mainstream

In the numerous and diverse urban settings throughout the United States, musicians and their followers of Mexican descent have nurtured musical forms reflecting the contradictions of tradition, nationalism, assimilation, innovation, reinterpretation, and hybridity. The latter term is reminiscent of the Mexican/Latin American notion of *mestizaje*, the mixing of race and culture, and the evolutionary process that emerges from such interaction. By the 1950s and 1960s, Chicanas/os began to both assimilate and change “mainstream American” styles, including rhythm and blues, rock, jazz, disco, punk, and hip-hop.

The zoot-suit era of the 1940s was characterized not only by the popularization of swing, but also by an assortment of Latin styles including the *mambo*, *rumba*, and *danzón*, all Cuban imports, often by way of Mexico. Swing and tropical rhythms were more popular among the zoot-suit “cult,” which adopted particular styles of dress, language (the *caló* dialect of Spanish, also used in the music of Lalo Guerrero), music, and dance. Zoot suiters patronized particular entertainment spots and formed social groups that eventually became known as gangs. Many speculate that the pachuco gang evolved as a defense mechanism in response to the Zoot Suit Riots, confrontations between pachucos and enlisted military men during the World War II period.

A growing number of African Americans were settling in Los Angeles in search of better-paying war industry jobs. The availability of low-rent housing in the Mexican neighborhoods of East and South Central Los Angeles prompted many African Americans to settle in these areas. Conversely, as Anglos became economically mobile, they moved away from those neighborhoods:

Blacks and Chicanos, isolated together, began to interact and, in large numbers, they listened to the same radio stations. For instance, there was Hunter Hancock (“Ol’ H.H.”) on KFVD. He had a show on Sundays called “Harlem Matinee” that featured records by Louis Jordan, Lionel Hampton, and locals Roy Milton, Joe and Jimmy Liggins, and Johnny Otis the latter who, as also noted by Guevara, introduced jump blues to Chicanas/os in the Los Angeles Eastside at the Angeles Hall in 1948.

(Guevara 1985, p. 116)

One of the various Chicano bands to imitate and reinterpret the jump blues style was that of the Pachuco Boogie Boys, led by Don Tosti and featuring Raúl Díaz on vocals and drums, Eddie Cano on piano, and Bob Hernández on saxophone and flute. A local, regional hit emerged from the group’s various recordings entitled “Pachuco Boogie,” which Guevara describes as a “jump style shuffle with either Raúl or Don rapping in *Caló* [pachuco street slang: half Spanish, half English] about getting ready to go out on a date. Very funny stuff” (Ibid., 117). Tosti, whose real name is Edmundo Martínez Tostado, was originally from El Paso, Texas, coming to Los Angeles as a young boy. He performed with the bands of Tommy Dorsey, Charlie Barnett, Les Brown, and Jack Teagarten in addition to working extensively as an arranger for the popular Los Angeles-based Mexican singer Rubén Reyes. Eddie Cano would emerge as a leading exponent of Latin jazz, performing with the Cuban singer and bandleader Miguelito Valdés in New York and eventually leading and recording with his own Latin jazz groups in Los Angeles (Loza 1993). In the same vein of Latin jazz, another Chicano based in Los Angeles, Poncho Sánchez, who often worked with Cano, would eventually emerge as an internationally acclaimed artist.

In 1952 Hunter Hancock aired an instrumental single on his radio show titled “Pachuco Hop” by African American saxophonist Chuck Higgins. Hancock later became a disc jockey at KGFJ, the first station to broadcast exclusively the music of African American artists every day of the week. “A massive audience in East. L.A. tuned in on each and every one of those days. At about the same time D.J.s like Art Laboe and Dick ‘Huggy Boy’ Hugg started playing jump and doo wap on the radio” (Guevara 1985, p. 118). Chicano saxophonists Li’l Bobby Rey and Chuck Río (Danny Flores) emulated the styles of the Black saxophonists (in addition to Higgins, Joe Houston, and Big Jay McNeely), but also added their own particular Mexican and Latin-based stylistic idioms. Río, as a member of the Champs, achieved international attention with his own composition and instrumental hit “Tequila” in 1958. The record rose to the number one spot on the national rating charts and since then has become a world classic.

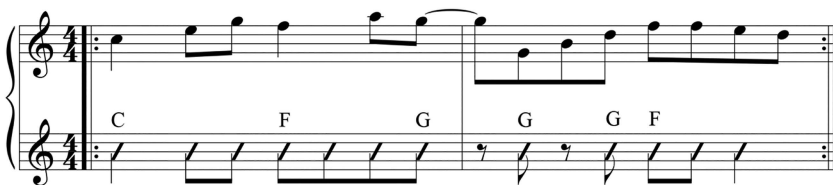
A great amount of attention has been given to what has been referred to as the “Eastside Sound” of Los Angeles (Rodríguez 1980a, 1980b; Loza 1993; Reyes & Waldman 1998), the multitude of bands that emerged in East Los Angeles from the early 1960s through the early 1980s, and the dynamic ambience and impact that these groups nurtured during a period of Chicano reawakening. Although these R&B, rock influenced bands largely emulated the pop music of the day ranging from James Brown to the Beatles, and from the Supremes to disco music, it has been argued that there did exist a specific style in their music, and that the sound and experience reflected the bimusical, bicultural context of Mexican Americans, especially those living in large urban areas. Thus, the sound was not relegated to Los Angeles, but resonated in San Francisco, San Diego, Phoenix, Tucson, Albuquerque, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas.

Although not from the East Los Angeles, Ritchie Valens, whose real name was Richard Valenzuela, was raised in the north side of Los Angeles in the Pacoima barrio of the San Fernando Valley. As he was finishing San Fernando High School, he achieved major stardom in the rock and roll music industry. He was promoted by producer Bob Keane who recorded him on his own label, Del-Fi Records. Understanding that the name Richard Valenzuela was going to be difficult to promote in a racist society, Keane decided to market his young recording artist as “Ritchie Valens.” Certainly the 17-year-old Valens’ international hit recorded in Spanish of the Mexican folk *son jarocho* “*La Bamba*” (1958) represented a radical change in the Top 40 music industry. Valens transformed *son jarocho*; syncopated rhythmic pattern became the innovative template for eventual mainstream hits such as “Twist and Shout,” composed by Bert Burns and recorded by the Isley Brothers (Losa 1992). Figure 13.1 demonstrates the rhythmic pattern Valens employed.

What could have been an even more sensational impact – a Chicano entering the mainstream recording industry – was cut short with the death of Valens in a 1959 plane crash along with rock and roll stars Buddy Holly and J.P. “Big Bopper” Richardson. Other hits by Valens included “Donna” and “Come On, Let’s Go.” Besides Valens, for many years the only other Chicana/o musical artist to achieve such fame was Vikki Carr (Victoria Cardona), born in El Paso, Texas, and raised in the San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County. Carr had a string of international hits during the 1960s including “It Must Be Him” and “With Pen in Hand.” Later she would emerge as a major artist throughout Latin America and Spain, recording new material in Spanish on the CBS International label and receiving Grammy Awards in 1986 and 1992. Another El Paso native who also eventually relocated to Southern California was singer-guitarist Trini López, who attained international recognition with various recordings on major labels during the 1960s to 1970s with his folk/blues/Mexican hybrid of musical interpretation.

In San Francisco another dynamic and innovative context nurtured the emergence of bands led by Carlos Santana in addition to others such as Malo, Azteca, Tower of Power, and Cold Blood. Santana literally led a musical revolution with his interface of Afro-Cuban music, rock, and blues, a style now universally referred to as Latin rock. His recordings such as “Evil Ways,” “Black Magic Woman,” “Samba pa’ ti,” “Europa,” and “Oye, cómo va” (a Tito Puente composition) transformed popular music. In 1998 recordings by Santana were still listed at the top of pop music radio charts, characterized by his album *Supernatural*, which was awarded a record-setting eight Grammys for that year. The record sold over 25 million copies alone, forming part of Santana’s career 80 million recordings sold.

In the eastside of Los Angeles, this context was personified through groups such as The Premiers, The Midnites, Cannibal and the Headhunters, Lil’ Ray Jiménez, El Chicano, and Tierra. Although there were hundreds of bands in the circuit through a 20-year period, only a few such as these reached major popularity beyond Southern California. Cannibal and the Headhunters had a major radio hit in 1965, “Land of a Thousand Dances,” and in 1970 El Chicano recorded the classic “Viva Tirado,” composed by African American jazz bandleader Gerald Wilson, who



was married to a Chicana and highly influenced by Mexican culture. Tierra, featuring brothers, guitarist Rudy Salas and lead vocalist Steve Salas, reached unprecedented success among Eastside bands in 1980 with the group's rendition of the Intruders' "Together," which attained platinum record status.

An interesting regional parallel to the Eastside Sound era of Los Angeles was that of San Antonio bred Sonny Osuna and the Sunglows, who in 1962–1963 recorded a major R&B style ballad which became a national hit. "Talk to Me" achieved gold record status and the group appeared on Dick Clark's top 40 television show *American Bandstand*. Osuna would eventually return to contemporary *tejano* music and become a major figure in *La Onda Chicana* of the 1970s. Leading this movement was the aforementioned Little Joe (José María de León Hernández), who grew up picking cotton and attending school only through the seventh grade. In 1959 Little Joe assumed leadership of the Latinaires, which developed a stylistic feature – that of the *polca-ranchera* (a *ranchera* in polka tempo). Johnny Hernández, Little Joe's brother, accompanied the latter's voice and their harmonic blend began to personify the group sound and a new *tejano* direction. In 1969 Little Joe changed the name and concept of the band from the Latinaires to Little Joe y la Familia, and Peña notes that "by 1970 the aesthetic transformation was complete – new fashions and hairstyles (hippie/militant Chicano), a new name, a countercultural lifestyle that included drugs (principally marijuana), and for Little Joe at least a drift towards the ideology of Chicanismo" (1999a, p. 164). Launching *La Onda Chicana* to its next stage, *La Familia* recorded the LP *Para la gente* on Little Joe's own Buena Suerte Record label. The album became a hit throughout the Chicano Southwest, and one of the tracks, "Las nubes," became a virtual anthem of the Chicano Generation (*ibid.*, p. 167). Peña notes that "the vocal phrases maintain a steady barrage of jazz-oriented licks in what amounts to a constant code-switching between Mexican and an American musical 'language' (ranchero and swing-jazz)" (1999a, p. 168). In 1985 Little Joe signed a contract with CBS Records, and in 1991 he was awarded a Grammy Award for his album *16 de Septiembre*.

La Onda Chicana was also represented in New Mexico through the music of Al Hurricane in a similar yet somewhat different style. Leger (2001, p. 765) refers to Al Hurricane (Alberto Sánchez) as "the most influential New Mexican Hispano musician of the second half of the twentieth century." Along with his brothers Tiny Morrie (Amador Sánchez) and Baby Gaby (Gabriel Sánchez), Al Hurricane began a rock and roll group in the 1950s and in the 1960s recorded the popular Mexican *ranchera* "La mula bronca," which became a hit in the Southwest and Mexico. His groups have since concentrated on a contemporary style of Spanish-language music, especially arrangements of the *ranchera* and ensembles featuring guitar, electric bass, and a horn section.

The short-lived career of Selena (Selena Quintanilla-Pérez) is not so different than that of the stardom/tragedy paradox of Ritchie Valens. Born in 1971, and after having developed in the *tejano* musical context, Selena eventually began to record a more international style of pop and became highly successful, winning several Tejano Music Awards and a Grammy. In 1989 she was contracted by one of the major record labels, Capitol/EMI. Her top selling album was "*Amor prohibido*," released internationally in 1994. She also recorded extensively in English, attaining great success, and was attempting to develop a larger crossover style and market when she was tragically murdered in 1995 by one of her business employees. A major film, *Selena* (1998), directed by Gregory Nava, was produced shortly after her death, starring actors Jennifer López and Edward James Olmos. In addition to Selena, other contemporary *tejano* artists representing a period that Peña (1999b) refers to as the post-Chicano era include El Grupo Mazz, La Mafia, and Emilio Navaira.

Los Lobos, a group that defies classification, has nevertheless fit into most of the categories overviewed in this section on the musical culture of Mexican derivation in the United States.

Organized in its first stage as a group of high school associates out of Garfield and Roosevelt High Schools in East Los Angeles and named Los Lobos del Este de Los Angeles, the young group began performing Mexican and other Latin American folk music during the early years of the Chicano movement. Their folk and traditional repertoire comprised their first album, produced by Luis Torres and released in 1978. With time, the group diversified its style and expanded into the rock and blues the members had learned even before their venture into Mexican music, and recorded a series of seven albums from 1983 to 1994 on Slash Records, a Warner Brothers affiliate. Notable among these was the first, *And a Time to Dance* (1983), which was awarded a Grammy for its track “Anselma” (a *norteño/tejano conjunto*-styled *ranchera*/polka), the 1988 *La pistola y el corazón*, comprising all Mexican folk songs and which was awarded yet another Grammy, and the highly acclaimed 1992 *Kiko*, which featured an eclectic mix of rock, blues, Mexican folk, and world music influences such as the use of Japanese taiko drums and North Indian sitar. In 1987 Los Lobos collaborated on the major portion of the commercial soundtrack of the highly successful film *La Bamba*, based on the life of Ritchie Valens and written and directed by Luis Valdez. The title track, “*La Bamba*,” a remake of the original Valens hit of 1959, achieved the number one spot on the national charts in 27 countries. Los Lobos consists of four Chicanos: Louis Pérez, César Rosas, Conrad Lozano, and David Hidalgo; and Steve Berlin, a Jewish American originally from Philadelphia. Frequently referred to as a postmodern ensemble, Los Lobos represents the hybrid, intercultural characteristics of popular music that emerged at the end of the twentieth century and have been recognized as innovators in this artistic movement.

Yet another movement that has personified much of the Chicano musical affinity has been that of punk, and by evolution, new wave, especially in the dense urban contexts of Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago, the city of the second highest population of Mexican descent in the United States (Los Angeles has the highest such population). Groups that achieved major recognition in Los Angeles during the 1980s included The Brat, Los Illegals, the Undertakers, and Los Cruzados (also known as The Plugz). From Chicago, Los Crudos achieved wide attention within the punk scene, as did Spitboy from San Francisco. Figure 13.1 illustrates the immigration themed text of a song recorded by Los Illegals, where the dialectic of conflict persists in what can in some ways be construed as a *corrido* concept. Molded in a heterogeneous musical style incorporating nuances from punk and hard rock, reggae, Latin, and the Spanish language, the song reflects the urban diversity of a city such as Los Angeles and its various levels of urban “angst.” Added to this cultural ambience is some explosive political thought directed towards the exploited urban immigrant: the undocumented worker, or the “illegal alien”; the song’s title, “El Lay,” refers both to Los Angeles and to the slang expression for sexual intercourse, “a lay.” Hopelessness and exploitation are thus conveyed through a metaphor that connotes a casual, demeaning sexual lifestyle characterized by faceless, noncommittal sexual activity and promiscuity. The song describes the illegal alien’s arrival, employment in, and deportation from Los Angeles as, to the song’s authors, nothing more than “El Lay” (Loza 1993, pp. 230–233).

A more recent context exhibited by young Chicano musicians is that of hip-hop. A highly successful 1990 recording by Kid Frost (Arturo Molina) on his LP *Hispanic Causing Panic* sampled the musical theme of El Chicano’s (and Gerald Wilson’s) “Viva Tirado” on his “La Raza” track. Pérez-Torres observes concerning the recording:

Kid Frost’s use of the popular “Viva Tirado” evokes that moment of great political and social activism among Chicano populations in the late 1960s and early 1970s. From the affirmation of Brown Power to the Blowouts (the school walkouts in East Los Angeles), the Chicano Movement formed a high-water mark of the struggle by Chicanos for civil rights

and political engagement. The musical incorporation of El Chicano suggests a recollection of subaltern resistance.

(2000, p. 212)

In assessing the issues of cultural identity and ethnic nationalism, the aesthetics of rap emerges as a highly charged vehicle among a constantly growing corps of young Chicano/Latino contemporary rap artists. Although the aesthetic of rap has webbed itself internationally as a preferred expression of youth culture in a variety of languages, its relationship to Latinos in the United States as part of African American music is not simply an artistic interaction, dialectic, or experiment. Rather, it is reflective of living quarters such as South Central Los Angeles, Chicago's Southside, or The Bronx of New York, spaces almost exclusively populated by Latinos and African Americans. Rap has been a point of synthesis and inevitable value to the young members of this geographic/cultural sector (Loza 1993).

Pérez-Torres also notes the manner in which Chicano hip-hop artists incorporate various expressive modes of *mestizaje*. He notes that

the multiracial rap group Delinquent Habits make it a point to highlight the hybrid nature of their cultural and racial identities. Employing caló, English, Spanish, and street slang, the rappers Ives, Kemo (called “blaxican” due to his combined black and Mexican heritage), and deejay O. G. Style employ code-switching and bilingualism as both their linguistic and personal identities are foregrounded.

(Pérez-Torres 2000, p. 218)

Other musical enterprises that have developed in recent years continue the eclectic mix of musical *mestizaje* that has been identified as an essential factor of culture and creativity throughout this chapter. Incorporating diverse styles from hip-hop to Mexican folk forms, from rock to jazz, and from Afro-Cuban forms and cumbia to R&B have been groups such as Rage Against the Machine, Goddess 13, Grammy awardees Ozomatli and Quetzal, and A.B. Quintanilla y Los Kumbia Kings, the latter from Texas and also a Grammy winner. For some time the innovative, multiracial rock group Rage Against the Machine was fronted by lead singer Zack de la Rocha who wrote prolific hip-hop/rap styled lyrics with potent political and social messages. Especially provocative is his “People of the Sun” from the group’s *Evil Empire* album.

Los Angeles-based groups such as Ozomatli and Quetzal also represent the musical *mestizaje* referred to by Pérez-Torres. The Indigenous names of the groups, of Aztec heritage, are reinforced by the incorporation of a multitude of musical styles, reflecting a multicultural and multiracial world in which these multiracial group members live. Ozomatli makes use of forms including hip-hop, cumbia, salsa, Afro-Cuban son, merengue, flamenco, tango, and Mexican genres such as *son* and *ranchera*. Quetzal juxtaposes compositions ranging from Latinized R&B to funkified Mexican *son jarocho*. Pérez-Torres makes a significant point in noting that

the face of Chicano music continues to undergo a profound transformation as the Latino population in the U.S. – and in traditionally Chicano communities – comes to be increasingly diverse. The great continued flows and fluxes of transnational movements signal an ever-shifting musical landscape.

(Pérez-Torres 2000, p. 225)

The musical duo Goddess 13 has received much attention in both the academic press and the media, although not the record industry, as the group has never recorded on a major label.

Teresa Covarrubias and Alicia Armendáriz epitomize what George Lipsitz has conceptualized as a postmodern musical enterprise. In place of the electric, raging punk ambience of their former years, they have recently composed and performed songs on acoustic guitars and intricate two-part vocal harmonies flavored by rock, folk, jazz, and Latin styles, and backed up by a versatile rhythm section. Their songs are in both Spanish and English, and cope with the contemporary issues of romantic love, domestic violence, multicultural themes, and misogyny. In the following passage, Lipsitz makes an eloquent observation concerning not only Goddess 13, but the musical culture of the Chicano people:

In their insistence on being Chicanas in their own way, Armendáriz and Covarrubias grapple with the historical invisibility of their community in the mass media as well as with their determination to avoid being reduced to their race to the point of erasing their experiences as women, as workers, and as citizens. Chicano artists have long grappled with these problems, and they have often found solutions by taking on unexpected identities in order to make visible the hybridity and heterogeneity of their own community.

(Lipsitz 1994, p. 90)

The African memory

How do African equations survive or reinterpret themselves or create anew in the realm of the Chicano Southwest, a sector of land, culture, and history that was once part of official Mexico? There also exists the contention that the Mexican cultural diaspora does not stop at the U.S.-Mexico border, and that the binational, and now bi- or multicultural fluidity of creative work in “Greater Mexico” has never ceased since the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. Two examples of contemporary Chicano musical expression not only continue the African diaspora inherent in Mexican musical culture, but also adopt and adapt to African American culture. The reasons are complex yet a simple equation of two cultures considered more different in the United States than they would be in Latin America, due to that country’s historical and pathological consistence in compartmentalizing cultural product, behavior, and civil rights. Although Mexicans and African Americans in the American Southwest have been told they are different cultures, the musical expressions created by these two groups have defied such contentions and limited definitions (Loza 2011).

During the past 50 years, Carlos Santana has emerged as a consummate artist, a spiritual leader, and an icon of global pop culture. Born in Jalisco, Mexico, his father was a mariachi musician. He moved with his parents and siblings to Tijuana, Mexico, and finally, as a teenager, migrated to San Francisco, California, where he rapidly rose as a talented young blues guitarist, and by 1969 had recorded his first of many LPs featuring his signature guitar virtuosity along with his innovative, mestizo blend of Latin, blues, and rock; as cited previously, a mixture that would be credited to him as the beginning of Latin rock. He proceeded to work with some of the highest acclaimed blues and jazz musicians of recent times, including Muddy Waters, B.B. King (the latter two both major influences in his music), Wayne Shorter, John McLaughlin, Ndugu Chancellor, and McCoy Tyner. African American music has been his dominant music teacher. After receiving the previously cited Grammy Awards for yet another progressively changing, yet unchanging, blending of Latin, blues, and rock, that of his youthful album *Supernatural*, Santana was asked for his reaction. He responded by thanking West Africa for its profound musical influence in his music. He did not thank Latin America or the United States or any other region of the world, only and specifically West Africa.

Santana thus represents the schematic constructed here, for he emerged from a mestizo world and came to another where the word mestizo did not even exist, and where mixtures

had occurred, as with African American culture, but where there was a strong and dominant fracture between Black and white. His constant changes and adaptations in style parallel the process of *mestizaje* in Mexico and Latin America, where old traditions take on new forms and meanings; that is, where old meanings do not die with such change, and where West Africa, instead of implying a wildly distant and idealistic idea, can be taken as a relative to everyone.

The other example of the Chicano experience as related to its closeness to African American, and thus, African culture, is one representing a whole movement in the Southwest in the city of Los Angeles – that of Latino hip-hop. The artists to focus on are the Grammy-nominated duo Akwid, which has become highly popular in the United States, Latin America, and Spain. These two hip-hop artist brothers (Sergio and Francisco Gómez) raised in South Central Los Angeles, sons of Mexican immigrants and born in the state of Michoacán, rap in Spanish to yet another mestizo blend of African American hip-hop and Mexican regional styles. In their “No hay manera” we can hear the interface of rap, hip-hop grooves and stylizations, Chicano and African American actors, and perhaps most unexpectedly, the Mexican *banda* brass musical style from Sinaloa, Mexico, and popularized through the past 10 years in northern Mexico and the American Southwest – and intensely so in Los Angeles. Also of interest is that one of the brothers makes note that this performance is similar to the Mexican *corrido* song tradition, where a story is told in poetic verse. As evident in the DVD version of the piece, the negative stereotypes are part of a story, of things that actually, fortunately or not, happen in society, not necessarily suggestions for how to live life. These issues include images satirizing the iconization of money, sexism, violence, materialism, fashion, and the contemporary racial intermix (especially that of Latinos and African Americans) in urban complexes, such as Los Angeles.

Conclusion

Is there an essence, a centrifugal force or character of Chicana/o musical expression? We might at this point reflect on some related issues conceptualized by José Antonio Robles Cahero (2003, 2005a, 2005b), that of multiple identities, and the manner in which we can certainly observe various dimensions of life experiences, expression, and their related identities in the making of a musical culture that has so many diverse historical and personal referents. Robles Cahero makes specific reference to the theories of Serge Gruzinski (2001a, 2001b), who, developing a Gramscian model (based on Gramsci’s [1971] “wars of maneuver” concept between social classes), perceives a historical and cultural process in Mexican iconography and art that he describes as a “war of images.” Robles Cahero extends this idea to the Mexican musical context, which he conceptualizes as a “war of sounds.” As Gruzinski sees both conflict and co-optation of visual symbols as a battle of cultural ideologies that ensued during colonial, mestizo Mexico, Robles Cahero sees the same with the interactions, both fluid yet conflictual, of musical development and creativity as did the Mexican anthropologist Aguirre Beltrán (1946 [1972]) in his observations of the “give and take” between the Spaniard and African in music and dance. Robles Cahero also looks at mestizo expression in the arts as having been to a large extent an elixir to the colonial chaos disrupting cultural stability among Indigenous, African, and European family and social structure. In line with Gruzinski and Robles Cahero, Alvaro Ochoa Serrano has also proposed a historical rationale on how and why mestizos formulated musical expression of the three general cultures at work – Indigenous, African, and Spanish – as a mode of resistance against the colonial framework and cultural hegemony, and against conformity and inequality (1999). Does this all not ring a bell of thought, memory, reflection, as or in a consciousness of *Chicanismo* and its own road of images, sounds, and war?

Upon reflecting on the African-based songs and dances of eighteenth-century Mexico and the censorship by the Spanish Inquisition, we can also reflect on the contemporary hip-hop artists and their similar predicament concerning censorship and the conflict of values as expressed through art. At present, in California, from San Diego to San Jose, and from Los Angeles to San Francisco, and throughout the United States, there exist thriving musical movements among Chicanas/os based on the Mexican *son*, African American hip-hop, and the combination of these and numerous other forms, all sharing elements of the Mexican Afro-mestizo legacy. I can remember a performance where the Mexican, Veracruz-based *jarocho* group Chuchumbé was joined on stage by African American and Chicano rappers – in a sense, a triangular cycle. The same three elements defining in part the eighteenth-century Mexican mestizo *son* still personified this very contemporary, improvised setting: social criticism, cultural satire, and human metaphor. The musical *mestizaje* that has developed in Mexico and the Chicano United States, from *son* to symphony to contemporary, are examples of a global aesthetic, even though much of the globe looks at it as small local views of the world. Such a view, however, is questionable by recognizing that Chicana/o artists and their music have traveled further than many other past or contemporary citizens of the globe, and without cars, planes, space shuttles, or even cyberspace.

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