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Chololoche Grooves: Crossroads and Mestizaje in Chicano Soul of San Antonio

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Abstract

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Historically, Chicana/o popular music artists in the United States have not been recognized by the music industry, popular music scholars and critics, and mainstream audiences because they have viewed “American” popular music in very “Black” and “White” terms, and for this reason, their experiences and contributions largely remain undocumented. This binary thinking about race, called the Black/White paradigm by critical race scholars, produces narratives about “American” identity and culture that are obsessed with the interdependent and antagonistic differences between Europeans and African Americans. The paradigm overshadows, and often times, excludes nonwhite and nonblack communities from these narratives which ultimately define what is “America” and who is not “American.” If Chicanos, Nuyoricans, Native Americans; and U.S.-born Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and Filipinos are not true Americans, then scholars engaging in social inequalities or politicians creating social policy will not take their issues seriously, or consider them at all. These

communities then fall outside of the physical and conceptual borders that define the U.S., further barring them from social mobility and well-being.

This interdisciplinary study recovers Chicano soul histories in San Antonio, Texas from 1954 through 1970 and uses these findings to critique notions of racialized difference that exclude them from membership and agency in U.S. popular culture. To do this, I investigate the production of the Black /White paradigm and examine how it informs the structure and representation of the popular music industry. Then drawing from Chicana/o theories of subjectivity, I propose a framework that accounts for the ways Chicana/o music making has intersected with African American music making, and apply this framework to Chicana/o histories in the development of jazz in New Orleans, Louisiana and in swing and jump blues music of Los Angeles, California. These histories also show that Chicanas/os and African Americans have engaged in a centuries-long musical dialogue. Chicano rhythm & blues, referred to in this study as “Chicano soul,” demonstrates another meeting point in this dialogue and the intercultural exchange that goes beyond the Black/White paradigm in U.S. popular music narratives.

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Introduction

Opening: The Royal Jesters Reunion Show

It's Saturday, October 16, 2010 and I just arrived at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center on the west side of downtown San Antonio. It is about four o'clock, two hours before the doors open for the Royal Jesters Reunion Show. The Royal Jesters were one of the most popular bands in San Antonio in the late 1950s through the late 1960s, and this is the first time the original members have come together to perform in over forty years. As I enter through the back stage area, I see two of my friends Juan Mendoza and Jesse Garcia talking with two men I have not met, and walk over to introduce myself. The first man shakes my hand, "Guedo Polcas" and the other waits for his turn, then does the same: "Bobby Galvan, good to meet you brotha'." Mr. Galvan and his wife, former councilwoman Lourdes Galvan, are the organizers of the show. I can tell Mr. Galvan is extremely scattered from overseeing the show and making sure everything is in place and on time, so I am pleased when he gives me a warm welcome and takes the time to chat with me. He asks where I was from and I tell him that, "I'm originally from California but now living in Seattle." Mr. Galvan responds "Wow! You came all the way from Seattle. Well, I am pleased and hope you like the show. This is a big night. It means a lot for us here in San Antonio; it's part of our culture."

At six o'clock people start filling the spacious plaza by the hundreds. I noticed many older men dressed in *cholo*¹ style with slacks creased perfectly down the middle of the legs and either perfectly ironed, crispy *guayaberas* or fifties-style short-sleeve collared shirts, finished off with a nice short brimmed fedora, or *stingy*, with the entire brim turned down. As I looked towards the ground, the hundreds of perfectly polished Stacy Adams shoes

¹ Refers to Chicana/o youth associated with lowrider clubs and culture.

reflecting the sunlight blinded me. I saw a group of young men and women all in zoot suits and forties style dresses. One of them was a friend, Rico Del Barrio, a young protégé of a former Royal Jester, the late Dimas Garza. Rico was invited to sing a couple tunes for the show. The announcer began to introduce the lineup of musicians. Older women from the crowd were screaming, “I love you!” as the names of their musical heroes were called out. There were roughly two thousand people in the crowd, and among them were family and friends of the musicians, people my parents’ age, grandparents, teenagers, and little kids. I felt at home. Those words, “it’s part of our culture,” said to me earlier by Mr. Galvan were reverberating in my mind.

Thinking about the Royal Jesters reunion show, and its richness and meaning to the people in the crowd, reinforces my conviction that those soulful rhythm & blues and rock & roll grooves *are* part of Chicana/o culture and deserve recognition. However, since rhythm & blues and rock & roll are usually thought of as “Black” and “White” music, making this claim “crosses” and “trespasses” heavily guarded borders that have kept Chicanas/os from making such claims. These borders have kept this and many similar Chicana/o musical histories out of the textbooks, documentaries, and other representations of U.S. popular music and culture.

For this reason, this study titled, *Chololoche Grooves: Crossroads and Mestizaje in Chicano Soul of San Antonio*, recovers this rich history of rhythm & blues. *Chololoche* is a term I created by combining the term *cholo* and *tololoche*, a tejano word referring to the acoustic bass. Together *chololoche* refers to the lowrider car, a mobile space and instrument that visually and sonically inserts a Chicana/o identity into U.S. American public life through its appearance and its music heavy on the bass (Chappell 2006; Sandoval 2003). The term

Chicano soul refers to rhythm & blues performed by Chicano musicians in San Antonio, Texas.² “Soul” not only refers to an African American music style that influenced these Chicano artists, but more so, it refers to the hard work and love that these artists put into their musical mixture of rhythm & blues, doo wop, rock & roll, soul, *canciones románticas*, and *polcas*. For generations Chicano artists and teen fans have jumped into the shoes of their African American musical heroes, the ones that provided them with a sonic shield that protected them from a world that could be harsh at times. Their desire to be “cool,” and more importantly to feel accepted and human, was consistently crushed in a hostile environment where being “Mexican” gave European American society a license to inflict violence on those deemed “Mexicans.” To combat this hostility produced by ideas of racialized superiority and purity, and carried out by segregationist social policy, Chicanas/os, African Americans, and other allies engaged in a physical and sonic space built on inclusion and hybridity.³

E-racing Chicana/os from “America”

Historically, Chicana/o artists who perform jazz, rhythm & blues, rock & roll, doo wop, and soul music have not been taken seriously by popular music scholars, cultural critics, and mainstream audiences because they have viewed “American” popular music in very “Black” and “White” terms. Their ensuing absence in representations of anything “American” is the work of a deeply held racial ideology, as Paul Gilroy explains, born from:

² This term was popularized by Ruben Molina in his book, *Chicano Soul* (2007) in which he uses it to refer to Chicano’s engagement with rhythm & blues and rock & roll in California, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Other writers and musicians also refer to San Antonio Chicano Soul as the “West Side Sound” because it emerged from the predominantly Chicana/o west side of town.

³ I use hybridity in respect to Homi Bhabha’s use in *Location of Culture* (1994).

an antagonistic relationship marked out by the symbolism of colours which adds to the conspicuous cultural power of their central Manichean dynamic – black and white. These colours support a special rhetoric that has grown to be associated with a language of nationality and national belonging as well as the languages of race and ethnic identity” (Gilroy 1993: 1).

Chicanas/os are caught in an unstable middle ground between the rhetoric of dueling ideologies of White racism and Black nationalism, which deny Chicana/o presence in the production of “America.” Chicanas/os and nonblack minority groups’ exclusion from popular discourse is detrimental to these communities because how we talk about popular culture, music, art, literature, or history shape what “America” is, and ultimately defines who is not “American.” If Chicanos, Nuyoricans, Native Americans; and U.S.-born Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and Filipinos are not considered true Americans, then scholars engaging in social inequalities or politicians creating social policy will not take their issues seriously – or not consider them at all. These communities fall outside the physical and conceptual borders that define the U.S. and what it means to be “American,” thus becoming further barred from social mobility and well-being.

In the 1990s, Latino and Asian American academics in law began to question the framework we use to think about race and racial problems. They identified a paradigm that structures racial discourse to favor African American and European American experiences as the standard by which to measure all others. Through what they call the “Black/White paradigm,” they examine how this racial dichotomy operates and how it limits social movements, legal scholarship, and state and federal policy in order to address the need for racial discourse to go beyond the paradigm.⁴ They argue that legal discourse that only focuses on “Blacks” and “Whites” makes African American equality solely dependent on

⁴ For a general overview of this movement, see Richard Delgado (2001).

European American approval, weakens solidarity between marginalized groups, hides the ways marginalized groups have worked together and how they have been pitted against one another, and further marginalizes nonblack minority groups by giving them only two options to participate in racial discourse; either frame themselves as “White” to avoid being treated as “Black,” or align themselves with African Americans to gain access to discourses that produce social policy (Delgado 2001: 67-74).

Race ideology is shaped by actual race relations in a given historical period (Omi & Winant, 1994), making the period from slavery to the Black Civil Rights Movement suspect in the production of the Black/White paradigm. When Europeans arrived in the Americas in search of wealth and new opportunity, they encountered others in their pursuits. First it was Indigenous people and then African slaves as they were brought to the Americas to fulfill labor demands. The push westward brought them into conflict with Mexicans, and again the need for cheap agricultural labor brought Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos to the U.S. (Takaki 2008). The events that took place during these encounters together with European colonizers’ need to protect their wealth and power shaped the racialization of each group. With increasing diversity, the African American experience continues to overshadow others and the paradigm continues to dominate discourse on national identity and culture. This brings me to question the relationship that formed between African and European Americans.

The Black/White paradigm informs the production of the U.S. popular music industry, and shapes how we think about it. A familiar narrative found in both popular and academic literature is one of African American musical innovation and European American commodification of these innovations (Kelly 2002:112; Macias 2008: 13-14). European Americans become the “fine tuners” of the African American music making. For instance,

today we learn about Paul Whiteman as the “King of Jazz,” Benny Goodman as the “King of Swing,” Elvis Presley as the “King of Rock & Roll,” and there has been a lot of talk about Eminem as the “King of Rap.”⁵ Books that attempt to give a more equal representation of the history of popular music, such as Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman’s *American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to the MP3* (2007) still give little to no attention to the details of U.S. Latinas/os’ or Asian Americans’ music culture. Others that explicitly uphold the paradigm include Vera Lee’s *The Black and White of American Popular Music: From Slavery to World War II* (2007) or Charlie Gerard’s *Jazz in Black and White: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Jazz Community* (1998).

Thanks to recent scholarship by Chicana/o academics, we are beginning to understand the depth of Chicana/o music and its impact on U.S. popular music, but these studies are still few compared to the amount of research and publications on African and European American music histories. This literature includes Manuel Peña’s *The Texas-Mexican Conjunto* (1985), David Reyes and Tom Waldman’s *Land of a Thousand Dances: Chicano Rock 'n' Roll from Southern California* (1998), Maya López-Santamaría’s *Música De La Raza: Mexican and Chicano Music in Minnesota* (1999), Anthony Macias’ study of Chicana/o jazz in *Mexican American Mojo: Popular Music, Dance, and Urban Culture in Los Angeles, 1935-1968* (2008). Other non-formal writings exist on the internet and in local magazines, but the majority of these histories remain in the memories of the people who lived them.

⁵ Examples are: Thomas A. DeLong’s *Pops: Paul Whitemen, King of Jazz* (1989) or Joshua Berrett’s *Louis Armstrong & Paul Whiteman: Two Kings of Jazz* (2004), Ross Firestone’s *Swing, Swing, Swing: The Life & Times of Benny Goodman* (1994), Liz Gogerly’s *Elvis Presley: The King of Rock and Roll* (2004), and a discussion about Eminem interviewed as the “King of Rap” in Bakari Kitwana’s *Why White Kids Love Hip Hop: Wankstas, Wiggers, Wannabes, and the New Reality of Race in America* (2005); Greg Tate also critiques the crowning of these artists, adding in Eric Clapton to the list, see Tate (2003: 3).

Dissertation Purpose

This dissertation recovers the history of Chicano soul in San Antonio from the 1950s and 1960s and frames it as an example of the many musical histories ignored by U.S. popular music writers because they do not fit within the Black/White paradigm. As the first extensive study on Chicano soul in San Antonio, I fill a gap in research on Chicana/o music. The existing literature on Chicana/o music is very recent and mostly focuses on southern California jazz and rock & roll, and tejano music in Texas. There are only a few general publications on Chicano soul which include a short article written for the *Journal of Texas Music History* by Alan Olsen titled “San Antonio's West Side Sound” (2005), and two short interviews of musicians published in *Texas Blues: The Rise of a Contemporary Sound* (2008) by Alan B. Govenar. Lastly, the most extensive to date is Ruben Molina’s book *Chicano Soul: Recordings and History of an American Culture* (2007), which includes a nineteen page chapter on San Antonio and a chapter that briefly touches on Dallas, Houston, El Paso and South Texas.⁶

In addition to its implications for Chicana/o cultural history, my research has broader theoretical implications for the study of the production, maintenance, and transformation of identities through the intersections of popular music and race discourse. Prominent scholar George Lipsitz contends that popular cultural expressions such as music reflect and shape important historical realities and stresses that we need to know how to “read them” to understand their importance and impact on society (Lipsitz 2007: vii-xxv). Accordingly, my work reads (and writes) this history of Chicano soul as an agent of identity politics in the 1950s-60s that established a space for sonically enacting a Chicana/o identity within

⁶ I had the pleasure of working with Ruben Molina on the 2007 exhibit *American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music*. The chapters are very general, but a good starting place. See Ruben Molina (2007: Chapter on San Antonio, p. 21-40 and Chapter on other Texas cities, p. 80-102).

“America.” In this respect, this work is an extension of the Chicana/o Movement which continues the struggle for space and equality in American society. This work also adds to a growing body of popular music literature that dismantles the Black/White paradigm and questions the racialized constructions of Chicana/o, African American, European American; and Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Native American, etc. Such publications include *Footsteps in the Dark: The Hidden Histories of Popular Music* (2007) by George Lipsitz, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (2005) by Jeff Chang, *Speak it louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (2004) by Deborah Wong, and *New York Ricans from the Hip Hop Zone* (2003) by Raquel Rivera.

Term Definition

Before outlining chapter content, it is important to clarify some unconventional terms used in this study. Up to this point, I have used the term *Chicano* and *Chicana/o* to refer generally to Mexican Americans of both sexes. From here on, I will use *Chicanao* to refer generally to Mexican Americans – those born in the U.S. with Mexican heritage. I am proposing this new term, utilizing the ending “ao” or “aos” (plural) to be gender inclusive, but in a different way. For many years now, activists have argued that *Chicano* is a gendered term that excludes women, and scholars and activists have responded by spelling it *Chicano/a*, *Chicana/o*, *Chican@*. The usage of “/” reminds me of, social boundaries, the politics of the border and horrid actions against Mexican immigrants, and of continued and unnecessary gendered divisions. For this reason, I omit the “/” to continue dismantling borders and visually and verbally bring the female and male closer together.

When I wish to speak generally (which often includes both male and female presence), I will use *Chicanao*, for example: *Chicanao* music making, *Chicanao* culture, or simply *Chicanaos*. When I want to specify gender, I will use *Chicano* (male) and *Chicana* (female). Furthermore, I will continue using “Chicano soul” in this study since all of the musicians in this scene were men. Historically, women instrumentalists have been excluded from many styles of popular music, limited to participating as singers and dancers. The one exception in Chicano soul is a Chicana vocal group called The Dreamliners. The group was short lived, and unfortunately after searching for months, I was not able to track down any of the members for this study. Therefore, this is a study of male performativity within rhythm & blues. Further research on Chicano soul will require specific attention on audiences, which include both males and females.⁷ Occasionally, when speaking about the scene generally, including artists and audience, I will use *Chicanao* soul.

By omitting the “/” and using “ao” serves a secondary purpose. The ending “ao” also suggests the Spanish past participle “ado” as though *Chicanar* (to make Chicano) were a verb. *Chicanao* translated in this sense as “Chicano-ized,” draws attention to its constructed-ness. In other words, *Chicano* or *Chicanao* are social constructions and something a group becomes through a process of identity formation tied to relations of power. Furthermore, I use the term to acknowledge that not everyone I call Chicano identifies as such. In a sense, I am Chicano-izing the music and musicians in New Orleans, Los Angeles, and San Antonio even if they do not identify as such. In Texas, many *Chicanaos* refer to themselves as Hispanic, Mexican American, or Tejano, while some may identify with *Chicano*. When

⁷ Marie Keta Miranda argues that studies focusing on music scenes dominated by male musicians, disregard the connected space of the audience where women play an important role in shaping the music and the scene. See “The East Side Revue, 40 Hits by East Los Angeles’ Most Popular Groups!”: The Boys in the Band and the Girls Who Were Their Fans” (2005).

Texan Chicanaos use the term “Chicano,” it mostly references Spanish language music that emerged in the late-1960s and early-1970s.

What I have outlined for Chicanao also applies to the term *Latino*, which refers to a person born in the U.S. who traces their heritage to any Latin American and Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries. The “ao” ending for *Chicanao* and *Latinao* brings a third reason for using this ending; it symbolically links people of Spanish-speaking heritage together. Some who identify under this term (such as Mexicans) pronounce the d in “ado” and others (particularly the Caribbean) drop the d and pronounce it “a’o.” *Latinao* in this study refers to four groups who have tremendously influenced U.S. popular music: Chicanaos, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans.

Representing Chicanaos and Latinaos in this way brings into question whether Blacks and Whites should be treated the same way; however, I do not use the past participle for the terms *Black* and *White* (which would be *Blackened* and *Whitened*) because they do not translate well into English. Treated in this way, the racist connotations within them are amplified. Instead, I use the terms *African American* and *European American* to break away from the language and symbolism of colors that empower the Black/White” paradigm. To continue using the terms *Black* and *White* perpetuates their interdependent and antagonistic relationship that marginalizes African Americans and excludes other racialized groups from conversations on race and national identity. Occasionally I will interchange African American with Black and European American with White to remind how these particular racialized identities are talked about generally.

Chapters Outline

The outline of this study begins with chapter one, which discusses the existence, the production, and the problems of the Black/White paradigm. I draw from Critical Race Theory to chart the paradigm's existence in social policy, academic scholarship, and the media. I then use Omi & Winant's theory of racial formation, and in particular, the concept of "racial projects" to examine the production of the paradigm from the period of slavery to the rise of the popular music industry in the early 1900s. In this examination, George Fredrickson's book, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (1972) and ethnomusicologist Ronald Radano's book, *Lying Up a Nation: Race and Black Music* (2003) provide historical accounts that link the production of "Whiteness" and "Blackness" in political discourse to racist ideas about African American musicality.

In Chapter two I argue that Chicanao music making encompasses a broad spectrum of music styles and mixture; therefore ethnomusicological analysis alone – which depends on racialized difference – is insufficient to examine Chicanao music. In order to create a flexible method of analysis for the Chicano musical experience, one that accounts for the ways it has intersected with various musical traditions and racialized identities, I advance ethnomusicological analysis with Chicanao theories of subjectivity elaborated by Gloria Anzaldúa's in *Borderlands: The New Mestizo* (1987), Mary Pat Brady in *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space* (2002), and Raphael Perez-Torres in *Mestizaje: Critical Uses of Race in Chicano Culture* (2006). In staging such a conversation between ethnomusicology and Chicanao studies, I propose a framework for

thinking about Chicanao music making as a multi-cultural, multi-layered, and multi-experiential process.

Chapter three offers descriptive research on the participation of Chicanaos in jazz music. I review the recent literature that examines the role of Chicanaos in the development of jazz in New Orleans (1850-1920), and in the popularity of swing and jump blues in Los Angeles (1930-1950). I look at these historical periods for two reasons: to establish that Chicanaos have participated in American popular music from its beginnings, and to understand the social, historical, and spatial context of Chicanao music making that leads to rhythm & blues in the 1950s.

In Chapters four and five, I present my research on Chicano soul in San Antonio during the time period of 1954 to 1970, which marks its beginning and its transition into *la Onda Chicana* (the Chicano Wave) what we now call *tejano* music. My research includes roughly thirty oral histories from musicians involved in the Chicano soul scene. Some of these interviews were conducted in connection with the exhibit *American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music* (2007), for which I was Associate Curator, and the rest were part of my fieldwork in San Antonio between 2008 and 2010. Historical research was conducted in the archives of local newspapers such as *La Prensa*, the *San Antonio Light*, and the *San Antonio Express and News*; *Billboard Magazine*, the library at University of San Antonio, and The Institute of Texan Cultures.

Lastly, the study concludes with a summary of theoretical frameworks and thinking points concerning the consequences of this study.

Chapter 1: The Racial Dichotomy in Popular Music

In this chapter I discuss a deeply embedded racial dichotomy, rooted in White supremacy and racism, which excludes “nonblack” and “nonwhite” communities from discourses about things “American.” Taking from the work of law scholars in Critical Race Theory, I call this the Black/White paradigm. Their work gives us an example of paradigm’s scope and operation in scholarly literature, social policy, and media; and provides some framework to problematize and understand the inequalities the paradigm produces and maintains. I then take Omi & Winant’s theory of racial formation, and their concept of “racial projects” to provide a framework for understanding the process of racialization that has constructed “Whiteness” and “Blackness” as a dichotomy (Omi & Winant 1994: 53-76). The most plausible place to use this framework is in the debates among European American politicians and intellectuals concerning slavery and emancipation. Here we see the process that constructs “Black” and “White” racialized identities, polarizes them, and creates an interdependent and antagonistic relationship between them.

The Black/White paradigm is reproduced in the structure of the recording industry that developed in the 1920s. The establishment of “race” and “hillbilly” records created two distinct music styles to cater to the tastes of working-class African and European Americans, but the music recorded under these marketing labels had already gone through a process of cross-pollination between different racialized groups. As time went on, consumers of these records did not follow racial lines, especially for race records. In the 1940s, race and hillbilly categories were renamed “rhythm & blues” and “country and western” because record executives realized their profit potential and wanted to shift more resources into production and sale of recordings under these categories. Although race was not explicit in the names,

both categories still represented African and European American music and sold through segregated markets. Chicanao and other U.S. Latinao recordings, labeled under “foreign-language” and “ethnic” categories, reflected European American attitudes about them – that they were “foreign,” “alien,” and “un-American.”

Entry Point: Race and Racism in Black and White

Writings on race and racial issues in the United States are vast, spanning several years from racist doctrines written after the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, to the counter narratives during the Civil Rights Movement, to the numerous current writings from Scholars of color. Race is also a topic written about by scholars from diverse disciplines such as anthropology, biology, sociology, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and others.

Overwhelmingly, there is a common pattern in which scholars weave in and out from theorizing generally about race and racial issues, then give specific examples of only African American and European American experiences, and then apply those examples back to theories that try to solve issues about race and racism in the U.S. Our inability to go beyond the Black and White creates many problems in understanding racial identities and makes it difficult to find sustainable solutions to racial issues. Scholarship is too vast to retrace and discuss its development in different fields and perspectives, and from its beginnings to the present day. As an entry point, I choose the work of Cornel West.

Cornel West represents the “minority,” the controversial “left,” but at the same time he is extremely popular in academia and as a national figure. His most popular book “Race Matters” (1993) is a heart-felt work that is insightful and offers powerful critiques and suggestions on the struggle for racial equality. The title and introduction make it clear that he

is directing attention to racism and equity in the U.S., to what he calls the problem of the “color line”⁸ or racial stratification. West recognizes the diversity of racial problems, but his insight and solution to deal with the issue is telling of the Black/White paradigm that frames it. One only has to read the preface to get a glimpse:

Black people differ from all other modern people owing to the unprecedented levels or unregulated and unrestrained violence directed at them. No other people have been taught systematically to hate themselves... The unique combination of terrorism – Jim Crow laws and lynching – as well as American barbarism – slave trade and slave labor – bears witness to the distinctive American assault on Black humanity. This vicious ideology and practice of white supremacy has left its indelible mark on all spheres of American life – from the prevailing crimes of the Amerindian reservations to the discriminatory realities against Spanish-speaking Latinos to racial stereotypes against Asians. Yet the fundamental litmus test for American democracy... remains: how broad and intense are the arbitrary powers used and deployed against black people. In this sense, the problem of the twenty-first century remains the problem of the color line (West, 2001: vii).

His argument is problematic because he asserts that the key to combating racism is only a matter of understanding European American racism towards African Americans. First and foremost, West claims that African Americans have experienced a kind of racism distinct from other racialized groups. Yes – he is right – but Native, Latino, Asian, and other nonblack people have also experienced distinct racisms. The examples he provides for “a unique racism” such as self-hatred, Jim Crow law, and lynching⁹ arguably have been experienced by all racialized and marginalized groups; but in different ways depending on sociohistorical context. He does recognize nonblack experiences of racism, but only to allude that these experiences are not as valid as the African American experience. He seems to take

⁸ This term was referenced and made popular by W.E.B. Du Bois in his writing *The Souls of Black Folk*.

⁹ Richard Delgado (2009) argues that the noose has become a symbol associated with Blacks, but many do not know that an equal amount of Mexicans were lynched during the period of the Mexican-American War to the 1920s. When nonblack persons were lynched, they were recorded as either Black or White. Also see William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb (2003). They found that people lynched and recorded as “White” were Mexican, Chinese, Native, and Jewish.

an evolutionist perspective on racism with his conviction that African Americans were the first to experience racism and a kind that provided the fundamental basis for racist ideology that evolved over time and was applied to other nonblack groups. If so, one could argue that the encounter between Indigenous people and Europeans produced some initial racist ideas in the Americas, but it would be unhelpful to argue who experienced racism first.

West's suggestion that the key to understanding and combating racism against all groups is to understand the African American experience of racism, comes close to asserting that only African Americans suffer "real" racism. This logic assumes racism exists within a hierarchy in which some racism is better or less than other kinds. I stand by him and denounce the horrors of taking people from their homeland and forcing them into slavery, but consider Mexicans who also were colonized, had their land taken away through war and the slight-hand of U.S. law, have also suffered tremendous violence against them, and forced into menial labor. One could argue that agricultural labor that many Mexicans and Asians have been involved in over the last hundred years is a form of slavery if one considers the extremely low pay, working conditions, lack of rights, and all the financial problems and stress that arise. As powerful and insightful as West's observations are, they are primarily a strategy for African American equality, which unfortunately does not always trickle down to other marginalized nonblack groups. His strategy then is misleading when he claims to examine "race" or "racism" in the U.S. when in reality he is only looking at part of it.

My point is not to scapegoat West, nor is it to take away the importance of the African American experience. I want to point out the depth to which our framework for understanding and representing race is polarized, even among our most innovative scholars who represent the struggle. I argue that race is extremely complex and racism – in all its

forms – is linked to a fundamental notion that one’s physiology is a marker for being “less-human” and therefore justifiably treated as such, in whatever form that takes to benefit the group in power. When thinking about race, it is important to understand how different groups become racialized and how they have experienced racism without putting more or less value on one kind of experience. Furthermore, it is important to understand how racialized identities and experiences intersect and depend on one another. In this way, there can be a more holistic discussion on solutions that benefit all.

The Black/White Paradigm...What is it?

In the 1990s, Latino and Asian American law scholars affiliated with Critical Race Theory began to question the binary framework we use to think about race, which they term the “Black/White Paradigm.”¹⁰ They argue that the paradigm oversimplifies a complex reality of U.S. racial relations by reducing them to matters between two polarized identities, Black and White. These two identities are overrepresented in politics, scholarly analysis, and the media thus making Latinos, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans invisible and ultimately un-American. Adding to their invisibility, when the latter groups do enter the discourse on race, they tend to be understood only to the extent their experiences can relate to that of African Americans or European Americans. Scholars further argue that the paradigm extremely limits the struggle of equality by making African American equality solely dependent on European American approval (and by extension making nonblack group’s equality dependent on African American equality), by weakening solidarity between

¹⁰ The Critical Race Theory movement began in the 1970s among lawyers, law students, and activists concerned with the reversal of many civil rights policy made during the 1960s. See Delgado (2001; 1996) and Crenshaw (1995). For key literature on this Black/White paradigm see: Robert S. Chang (1993); Angela Harris (1994); Deborah Ramirez (1995); William R. Tamayo (1995); Frank Wu (1995); Elizabeth Martinez (1993); Juan F. Perea (1997).

marginalized groups, and by hiding the ways marginalized groups have worked together and how they have been pitted against one another (Delgado 2001: 67-74).

These scholars have produced a body of literature that examines the operation of the paradigm as “common sense” in scholarly literature, education curriculum, social policy, and national debates; and its limitation on the success of social movements, critical scholarship, and state and federal policy dealing with racism. By highlighting some of their critiques, I show that a White/Black Paradigm does exist in people’s thinking about race. Juan Perea in “The Black/White Binary Paradigm of Race: The ‘Normal Science’ of American Racial Thought” (1997) shows that scholarly literature on race perpetuates the paradigm. He reviews three decades of literature on racism by European American scholars and finds that they focus on European American racism towards African Americans. In his critique of leading, nationally recognized scholars such as Andrew Hacker, not only do they perpetuate the paradigm, they defend it. He quotes Hacker, "In many respects, other groups find themselves sitting as spectators, while the two prominent players try to work out how or whether they can coexist with one another" (quoted in Perea, original in Hacker 1992: xiii). These quotes illustrate a belief that nonblack groups have been passive in the struggle for equality because the issue of civil rights belongs exclusively to the African American struggle against European American racism. These sentiments also echo in leading casebooks of constitutional law. Perea explains, “To the extent that the legitimacy of claims for civil rights depends on a public perception of having engaged in struggle for them, the omission of this [Latinos] legal history also undermines the legitimacy of Latino/a claims for civil rights” (Perea 1997: 1257).

The exclusion of Latino and other nonblack groups from civil rights narratives lies

within the U.S. Constitution, which scholars argue, has historically excluded these groups from equal protection by not recognizing them as races or loosely interpreting them as “near-Black” or “near-White” (Lopez 1997). Scholars assert that the constitution is a legal document that first and foremost protects the power and privilege of those deemed White. Following the Civil War, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were added to abolish slavery and incorporate African Americans into European American society. These amendments produce a social good, for those who fall under it, but at the same time created inequality for those who did not. (Delgado 1996: 1189) An example is the 1951 court case in Texas where Pete Hernández was convicted of murder under a European American jury. Hernández’ lawyers argued that the case was discriminatory because there were no “Hispanics” on the jury. The court ruled that Hispanics were “White,” therefore it was okay. After his conviction, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) appealed the verdict under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, but the court then ruled that the clause did not apply to Hernández because the court only recognizes two races – Black and White – and Hernández was a, “nonwhite.” Classified as such, the court defined Chicanos as race-less and unrecognizable under the constitution. The case eventually reached the Supreme Court in 1954 where Hernández finally won, but under the court’s understanding that other factors outside of race can cause discrimination. (Lopez 1997: 1143-1145; Alcoff 2003: 11).

Perea and other scholars reexamine the history of U.S. law and civil rights to show that different marginalized groups have contributed important pieces to civil rights history. For example, take the 1954 case of *Brown vs. The Board of Education* in which the Supreme Court declared that segregated schools were unconstitutional and which overturned the

Plessy vs. Ferguson decision of 1896 that allowed states to implement segregation laws. This case is often cited as a milestone for the Civil Rights Movement. Juan Perea cites a 1946 case of *Mendez vs. Westminster* in Orange County, California where Gonzalo Mendez and other Chicano parents challenged the segregation of their children in the school system and won. The presiding judge declared it was unconstitutional according to the Equal Protection Clause. Other similar cases in other states followed. What many don't recognize is that the NAACP filed an amicus brief to support the desegregation on appeal of the Mendez case because they knew if it went through, it would provide legal precedent for a Supreme Court case, which did happen in 1954 (Perea, 1997: 1242-1247). This example is not to claim Chicanos were first in the achievement of desegregation law, but to show the collaborations between the NAACP and Chicano communities to fight against segregation. Furthermore, this case and others like it that occurred before 1954 debunk the notion of Chicano passivity in civil rights.

Another telling example of how the Black/White paradigm operates in policy making is in the first meeting of Bill Clinton's "Race Relations Commission" in 1997 that was to create new channels for discussions on race and new federal policy. In this meeting, nationally known scholars and activist splintered into two factions, one arguing to go beyond the paradigm and the other defending it. One of the interesting comments in its defense was made by renowned professor John Hope Franklin who suggested "for the sake of simplicity" to limit the conversation to African Americans (quoted in Delgado 2001: 69). When others protested, he argued that racism started in 1619 with the arrival of African slaves in the U.S. colonies and "cut its eyeteeth" on prejudice and racism against African Americans (quoted in

Frank Wu. 2002: 32-35).¹¹ This argument echoed elsewhere, for example, Mary Francis Berry, former chair of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, stated that the U.S. is made up of “three nations, one Black, one White, and one in which people strive to be something other than Black to avoid the sting of White Supremacy” (quoted in Alcoff, 2003: 8).¹²

The Media also perpetuates the Black/White paradigm. For instance in 1992, a year after the Rodney King beating, the nation witnessed the Los Angeles riots via the mass media. The aftermath of the riot showed it was overwhelmingly an eruption of discontent between many racial groups, but what the nation was bombarded with in the media was a video of European American truck driver, Reginald Denny, being beaten by a group of African American men. Out of the thirty people beaten at that same spot; only one other person was European American, while others were Latinas, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese Americans (Sanchez, 1997: 1010). Those arrested during the riots, Latinas comprised 51 percent of the arrest (African Americans 36 percent). Lastly, some 2,300 Korean owned businesses were destroyed in the riots (Alcoff, 2003: 14). Yet in the face of these figures, news media represented it within explicitly Black and White terms.

Understanding the Production of the Black/White Paradigm

Why does this Black/White paradigm exist? Law scholars point to possible reasons such as that African Americans have been the largest racialized group until recently, or that the relationship between African Americans and European Americans is longer than the one between European Americans and other nonblack groups (Martinez, 1993: 5). These are very

¹¹ Dr. Franklin was asserting that racism started with slavery and therefore needed to focus on black struggles. Also see <http://clinton3.nara.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html> to read a collection of reports.

¹² Original article: Mary Francis Berry. 1997. “Pie in the Sky? Clinton’s Race Initiative Offers Promise and the Potential for Peril.” *Emerge* (September 1997): 68.

likely part of the reason, although I would argue that for Latinas, their numbers have been undercounted because tools to capture these numbers have been inadequate. Furthermore, in the U.S., relations with Native Americans are even longer. Something else exists within the relationship between European Americans and African Americans that developed during slavery that has made the paradigm pervasive in our thinking about race. To explore this, I turn to frameworks within sociology as a guide.

To understand the production of the Black/White paradigm and its dominance more thoroughly, I use sociologists Michael Omi & Howard Winant's theory of racial formation and their concept of *racial projects* to make apparent the linkages between racial ideology, social structure, and representation that produce the paradigm. In their influential book, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (1994) they argue that race in the U.S. is a fundamental axis of social organization and will continue to be so. Although race definitions are unstable and full of contradiction, Omi and Winant assert that race has profoundly shaped the world we live in and that we cannot simply throw it away; rather we must understand that race is an element of social structure that is continuously transformed by political struggle. Racial meanings are never static and never simple illusions; but part of a long sociohistorical process. Accordingly, they define racial formation as the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed through a process of historically situated *projects* (racial projects) in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized. Racial formation is linked to the evolution of hegemony, the way in which society is organized and ruled (Omi & Winant 1994: 55-56). Thus historically situated events such as segregation, civil rights, or "colorblind" policy (anti-affirmative action) are defined as racial projects because they create

the linkages between what race means and how society is structured and represented based on those meanings. For instance, segregation as a racial project views skin color as a signification of biological and cultural difference, therefore making it necessary to keep “the races” separate to maintain hegemony – in this case White supremacy. This project includes macro-level processes such as Jim Crow legislation that force the organization of human bodies based on racial meaning, and micro-level processes, how everyday experiences are informed by a common sense understanding of racial cues – such as physical features.

Omi and Winant acknowledge the dichotomy of race relations which they say is “endemic in the U.S.” and point to its perpetuation through politics, the media, and scholarly analysis. They offer a list of problems created by thinking about race in a dichotomy, and hope that racial theory begins to address these issues (Omi & Winant 1994: 153-154). Unfortunately they do not provide any deeper analysis of the racial dichotomy; they only acknowledge its existence and hope for its end. Therefore the following attempts to make apparent the patterns of racial thinking that produced the Black/White paradigm. Once these are made clear, then we can understand why certain ideas of African American musicality exist and how they produce disadvantages for African Americans and other groups.

Our modern-day awareness of race in the U.S. can be understood in terms of the “discovery” of the Americas by Europeans, which Omi and Winant refer to as, “perhaps the greatest racial formation project” (Omi & Winant 1994: 62). Europeans encountered Indigenous people whose existence challenged their worldview. The conquest that followed presupposed Europe as the center of all civilization and at each historical event after the so-called “discovery,” different non-European groups were racialized and marginalized according to the context and needs of the European colonists. Indigenous people were

constructed as savages to satisfy the colonists' need to secure land and resources. Linking their physical appearance and ways of living to that of savages (and later "noble savages") made them inferior to Europeans, thus making it possible to justify the use of violence to remove them from their lands, and when they did not cooperate – to literally exterminate them (Takaki 1993).

The push westward by colonists in the 1800s brought them into contact and conflict with other indigenous peoples but also with Mexicans as they tried to settle in Mexican territory. The racial formation process of Mexicans was different and conflicted because Mexicans were a mixed-race society that included European, Indigenous, African and groups from Asia. Physical traits that marked difference were not always there because some Mexicans looked European, while others looked Native American or African American. Although European American colonists were uncertain what to think of Mexicans, the years preceding the acquisition of the southwest in 1848 changed that uncertainty. European Americans referred to Mexico as an example of the ill-fated happenings when races mix. Mexicans were inferior and called "dark and shiftless," "mongrels," and "greasers" (Fredrickson 1972: 135-136, Gómez 2007: 19). European Americans raided Mexican land, raped and murdered, and declared war on Mexico in 1848 which won the U.S. lands that are now part of the southwest and California. Mexicans who stayed in newly claimed U.S. territory were lynched and subject to racist laws to contain them and limit their economic competition with European Americans (Takaki 1993). This kind of harassment and exclusion continues today in recent anti-immigrant movements such as those in Arizona.

Africans were brought to the U.S. in the 1600s as indentured servants, but the demands for labor in the 1700s brought more Africans as slaves. The slave trade produced

racialized difference that justified the business of human chattel. I will not discuss the whole history of slavery here because there is already a large body of literature that details this terrifying history. I assume that overwhelmingly literature agrees that it was a horrible and shameful endeavor in U.S. history, so there is no need to revisit that argument.¹³ Rather than revisit and reconfirm the atrocities of slavery, it is more important to look at the racial ideology of difference that developed in the European American mind during that period. The debates on African American racial difference are complex; piling contradictions upon contradictions to both justify and negate slavery and the place of African Americans in society. What remains constant throughout these debates is the dichotomizing of the two racial identities to produce and transform social structures – hence a racial project.

The debates on African American character emerged from European American's growing fears of the consequences of slavery and possible revolts. Especially southern slave owners faced an immense difficulty dealing with the reality of slavery and the contradictions it imposed on their Christian morality. Slavery grew tremendously at the turn of the nineteenth century, bringing more slaves to the U.S. where they lived in close proximity to European Americans, and even in the same house. These kinds of situations created an environment for intercultural exchange, and therefore always posed a threat to the purity of constructed Whiteness. For these reasons, European Americans constructed ideas and awful stereotypes of African slaves to create a deep and untraversable divide between the two groups. Furthermore, European Americans feared that brewing discontent from the abuses African slaves suffered would explode any day. Slave owners were aware of successful slave revolts in Mexico (the first in 1570, Rowell 2008; Davidson 1966) and Haiti (1790s) and

¹³ For a history on slavery, see Franklin (2010).

many smaller unsuccessful ones that happened in the late 1700s and early 1800s. This possible reality pushed many to argue against slavery and call for its abandonment (Fredrickson, 1971: 2-12).

The debates between the north and south on the “Negro problem” produced many ideas against and for slavery, but between 1790 and 1830 these ideas coalesced into persuasive ideologies and formal societies. Among them was the American Colonization Society formally established in 1816. Colonizationists, as they became known, wanted to gradually free African slaves and send them back to Africa to establish colonies (Winthrop 1977: 566). Thomas Jefferson reiterates the idea in colonizationist thinking, saying it was impossible to:

incorporate the blacks into the state...deep rooted prejudices entertained by whites; ten thousand recollections by blacks of the injuries they have sustained; the real distinctions nature has made; and many other circumstances will divide us into two parties (quoted in Fredrickson, 1971: 4).

Colonizationists did not favor slavery because they believed it was inherently detrimental to the prosperity and safety of the nation. Their belief – which was radical at the time – was that African slaves were inferior or “degraded” not because of the innate character of their race, but because of the environment they had been a part of under slavery. To set them free would only lead to ruin of both races because European American’s inherent repulsion to Africans was a result of the differences in social background. African skin color was a marker of that historical subjectivity and a barrier for European Americans to see African Americans as equals (Fredrickson 1972: 18). The solution to send them to back to Africa as missionaries was proven too costly by Thomas Jefferson (Takaki 1993: 71).

By the 1830s another faction, known as the abolitionists, gained ground. Abolitionists

refuted the colonizationists' idea that European Americans had an inherent prejudice. They argued that the impossibility of an egalitarian society due to European American's inherent prejudice was a perverse denial of the Gospel and the Declaration of Independence, thus un-Christian. Essentially it was a defense of European American Christian morality. The abolitionists did agree with the colonizationists that the inferiority of African slaves was not inherent but the cause of slavery institution. They believed that Africans had not been given the chance to prove themselves as Christians. Their solution was to take them out of the environment of slavery, teach them the ways of true Christianity to break them from their vices, and then set them free. In this solution, we see the ideological thread of individualism at work. Even if the abolitionists recognized sociological factors of African "inferiority," they were setting them up for failure. By calling on the individual slave to fix themselves through Christian doctrine, the abolitionists washed their hands clean of any responsibility if their situation did not change. It would be the fault of African slaves themselves, thus turning full-circle to the inherent faults in African character (Fredrickson 1971).

In the 1830s, southern plantation owners fiercely defended slavery through a racist ideology that further polarized the two races, but also strengthened the interdependency between them. This antagonistic relationship would endure through the Civil War and into the twentieth century. Professor Thomas R. Dew in 1831 wrote an extensive paper in defense of slavery arguing that it was a "necessary evil." He argued that African Americans were biologically inferior and setting them free would only lead to their ruin. According to Dew, African Americans were naturally given to idleness and "the free Black will work nowhere except by compulsion" (Fredrickson 1971: 46). A few years later in 1833 Richard Colfax published a document containing "scientific evidence." He argued that the physical shape of

an African man's head, particularly his "facial angle" was that of a brute. The head shape was a sign that African American intellect had not evolved therefore they represented the opposite end of the chain of civilization while European Americans represented the other end. He believed this made them incapable of being civilized, no matter how much their environment improved (Fredrickson 1971: 49-50). He was aided with "scientific" evidence in 1839 by Dr. Samuel George Morton's study on cranium size. He concluded that the size of African American skulls had not changed from ancient times, which to him signified their mental capacity had not changed either. He later argued that Black Africans in Egypt were also slaves, which explained why they continued to be so. This so-called scientific evidence provided proslavery advocates like Dew the upper hand in the debates that further persuaded colonizationists and abolitionists to accept the biological inferiority of African Americans.

By the 1850s, proslavery thought evoked a paternalistic view of slavery that deepened the interdependency between notions of blackness and whiteness. Difference between races continued to be polarized, but what paternalists focused on in their arguments was the crudeness of African American character that had been tamed by the "tender care" of their masters under slavery. Paternalists believed that African Americans did not have the intellect to take care of themselves and needed the guidance of European Americans to keep them from reverting to "barbarity" (Fredrickson 1971: 54-55). This logic perpetuated slavery as a necessary evil, making European American slave owners heroes fulfilling good deeds that resonated with Christian doctrine.

The interdependence between African Americans and European Americans continued to deepen as European Americans framed slavery as a means to fulfill their "God-given destiny" to rule or secure political agendas. In any case, European American identity and its

privilege and power grew to depend on the construction of blackness. For example, Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia warned that European American equality only existed where there was Black servitude while another proslavery advocate in Georgia echoed Wise, arguing that slavery eradicated the social classes among “White men,” making both slaveholders and the poorest European Americans equal (Fredrickson 1971: 62). On the other end, liberal northern republicans advocated for African American voting rights only to the extent that politicians could gain their favor and more votes for office. Increasingly both free and enslaved African Americans became political pawns in the struggle between the north and south for control of the union, which led to the American Civil War in 1861.

Well after the Civil War and slave emancipation, policy to incorporate African Americans into the union continued to be informed by past debates on African American character, which ultimately led to legal segregation. The Fourteenth Amendment enacted after the war guaranteed equal protection under the law to free African Americans, however southern states were intent on making African Americans a different class of citizen. Towards the end of the Reconstruction in 1877, southern states enacted laws that undermined African American civil rights, contending that equality could be achieved in a manner that kept the races separate. The federal government complied with the Morrill Act of 1890 which legally accepted the concept of “separate but equal,” thus leaving racial segregation up to the individual southern states. Again in 1897 the landmark Supreme Court case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* legitimized segregation policy which allowed any state to enact such policy. As large numbers of African Americans migrated north and west, many of the states adopted segregation policy for fears of living among African Americans.

Whether good, bad, or somewhere in between, European American beliefs about

African Americans continued to be contradictory and fundamentally racist because they presumed an inherent difference in African American people. This presumed difference led to fantasies about African American character, particularly around sexuality and musicality.¹⁴ The notion of African American musicality worked in the same way; it marked an oppositional and inferior difference to European American music making and became simultaneously feared and desired.

Constructing Musical Difference

Parallel to the debates about the political consequences of slavery and emancipation in the 1800s, writings concerning African American musicality were circulating in the debates to defend ideological positions on both sides of the slavery issue. These writings and debates often described African American musicality in stark difference to European American musicality, which further perpetuated the polarization of the two groups and wiped away their long history of intercultural exchange. On the contrary, in the 1700s African American music became part of the musical life in the colonies. Both African Americans and European Americans participated musically in social gatherings such as house raisings and cornhuskings, in the taverns and social dances, and within the church. In the northeastern states European Americans witnessed and participated in African American festivals such as “Lecture Day” or “Pinkster Day” (Southern 1997: 42-55).

In the south, references to African American musical skill appear in the mid-1700s in printed “slave for sale” and “runaway” ads. Many of these ads reference the musical skills of slaves who played the fiddle “exceedingly well” or who had “a mighty voice” (Southern

¹⁴ On musicality see Radano (2003), on sexuality see Lemire (2002).

1997: 25-26; Radano 2003: 71). European Americans sought out African American musicians and dancers and coerced performances from them by the throwing of coins or the giving of whiskey to experience firsthand their “peculiar” ways (Radano 2003: 152-156). Accounts in the 1770s describe plantation dances where slave musicians played fiddle and banjo. These accounts describe slaves playing European dance music well, and also mention them playing “Congo minuets” or “Negro jigs” and other music “according to slave tradition” for European American dancers (Radano 2003: 112-115).¹⁵ This is evidence that slave musicians were an important part of the southern leisure and entertainment economy. Slaves provided a cheap source of entertainment for European Americans, and the dances they played for became a space where they honed their skills in European-American dance music, and exposed European Americans to new approaches to music. European American participation in these songs, even when they deviated from European standards, shows there was some level of acceptance.

Although accounts about African American music existed earlier, a new discourse about African American musicality and difference emerged in the 1800s that would further open doors for African Americans to become entertainers. In 1830 Alexander Kinmont, an advocate of swedenborgianism – a religious movement born from the writings of Swedish theologian Emanuel Swedenborg – gave a series of lectures in Cincinnati arguing that African Americans were inherent Christians partly because of their “natural musical talent.”¹⁶ As he believed, it was destiny for European Americans to fulfill human expansion of intellect and develop the arts and sciences, and for African Americans to create a divine civilization because they possessed “light-heartedness, a natural talent for music, and the willingness to

¹⁵ See Rick Petreycik’s (2008: 23-30).

¹⁶ For more on swedenborgianism, see Marguerite Beck Block. *The New Church in the New World-A Study of Swedenborgianism in America* (2007).

serve, the most beautiful trait of humanity.” (quoted in Fredrickson 1971: 105). Kinmont was trying to explain African Americans’ situation more nobly, but in doing so, he reinforced the polarization of the two groups by arguing that African Americans had inherent traits that European Americans had lost. In his view, African Americans were closer to nature because they had kept certain traits associated with nature and Godliness, and European Americans had lost those traits as they became more developed in intellect and more “civilized.” Still fundamentally racist, his lectures gained popularity and publications of them circulated widely among supporters of abolitionism, especially his claims to natural musical talent. By 1849 the idea of natural musicality was widespread. A New York reporter, George G. Foster, writes:

colored people are naturally strongly addicted to music and dancing... the stage... will be eventually occupied by colored actors and actresses, singers, dancers and instrumental performers,[as]...the African race [finds its] power to rise to its natural level” (quoted in Radano 2003: 147).

By the onset of the American Civil War, notions of African American natural musicality were well established in both camps. Faced with slave emancipation, southerners fiercely protested through demeaning caricatures in blackface popularized by the minstrel show in the 1840s.¹⁷ European American performers echoed Kinmont’s ideas through characters such as Sambo the “happy singing darky” always depicted playing music, singing, or dancing; but in excess which often got him in trouble. Sambo promoted the arguments of proslavery advocates by depicting the plantation as a tranquil place where slaves had plenty of leisure time, but that needed the helping hand of the master to keep them productive. Opponents of slavery circulated a similar stereotype, for instance school teacher Lewis W.

¹⁷ For more on minstrelsy see Lott (1993), Du Bois (2003).

Paine asserted, “If there is a people whom, above all others, the gods themselves have made musical, [African Americans] are entitled to the distinction.” Another person commenting on their fine voice and ear for music asserted that they were the “most happily constructed human beings I have ever seen.” Others commented on the emotive power of slave music, “When you hear them you are half inclined to laugh at their queerness, and yet cannot but be affected by the sincerity and thrilling tones of the singers” (all quoted in Radano 2003: 146-147; 154).

With the rise of the jubilee movement in the 1870s and the concert given by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, natural talent and supernatural power in African American song was confirmed in the minds of European Americans, but to except that challenged previous notions that African Americans did not have the intellect to produce art. One writer asserts in the *New York Journal*, “They are all natural musicians, and doubtless have sung from childhood, like mocking birds because they could not help it” (Radano 2003: 261). Simultaneously, the writer uses the natural musical talent stereotype to acknowledge the singing skills of the Jubilee Singers while also downplaying it by alluding to the absence of intellectual thought and work that went into such a production. The emergence of other jubilee singing groups after the Fisk concert had conflicting outcomes. On one hand, it was a racial project by African Americans to prove their humanity and demonstrate their capacity to create art on a similar or even higher level than European Americans. On the other, it was feeding into the stereotype that constructed African Americans as natural musicians. Furthermore, the creation and institutionalization of singing groups for the purpose of performing at venues mainly for European Americans audiences fed into an economy based on selling difference, which not only further perpetuated the Black/White paradigm, but

established a space for African Americans to influence American popular culture.

Through the minstrel shows, sheet music industry, and Jubilee movement, African Americans found inclusion, but under an economy based on the selling of racialized difference made possible by European American fantasies of blackness and natural talent. At the turn of the twentieth century with the technology of recording, this set the stage for African Americans to become the vanguard of the recording industry to follow.

The Recording Industry and the Economy of Difference

Technology to record and reproduce sound was invented in the 1870s, but it was in the 1890s that recorded music became commercially available. Between 1890 and 1920 recording companies such as the Berliner Gramophone Company and Victor Talking Machine Company recorded a wide variety of music. In these years, military brass and woodwind bands appealed to a broad audience, mainly middle-class America. Other marginal recordings were made of vaudeville singers, comedians, and minstrel songs. With an attitude of bringing “civilization” to the masses, companies like Victor considered these types of recordings as lowbrow music, and in the 1900s began selling more “serious” music such as classical ensembles and opera singers. The look of phonographs changed to resemble pieces of fine furniture, with cabinets made mahogany and gold plated metal hinges, making them more expensive. Companies also produced special label recordings, for instance, Victor’s prestigious Red Seal records of popular concert hall groups or opera singing stars such as Enrico Caruso, Emma Calve, and Pol Plancon, which sold for as much as \$7.00 each. Before 1920, race was signified in “minstrel specialties” and occasionally in recorded vaudevillian acts, but not explicitly marked as a record category. Classifications tended to be based on the

source of sound; such as “cornet solos and duets, soprano solos, and male vocal duets;” or by functionality like “dance music,” and by economic class such as the Red Seal records (Roy 2004: 269-270).

During this time, the closest classification that signified race or ethnicity was in “foreign language” records such as “foreign language-French” or “foreign language-Spanish.” By 1900 record companies realized the potential of selling foreign records as some nine-million Italians, Russians of Jewish origin, Austrians, Hungarians, and Germans came to the U.S. from 1900 to 1930 (Kenney 1999: 67). One trade journal claimed that immigrants were “longing for the beloved airs of their native land, sung in their mother tongue” and another claimed “you would do a far bigger business in records and Victrolas with foreigners than with the Americans” (Kenney 1999: 74-75). Their predictions were right when sales peaked during World War I. Record companies quickly took advantage of the opportunity by setting up studios and pressing plants in Europe, Asia, and Latin America to expand their selection and volume.

Because of racist policies such as Jim Crow law and racist attitudes, most African American artists were denied access to the industry. For the most part, European American record entrepreneurs did not want to associate with African Americans or their music (in Kelly, Calt 2002: 86-87) which comes to a bit of a surprise since coon songs, rags, and jubilees were top sellers of printed music, proving that representations of African American music could be profitable (Starr & Waterman 2003). Most music that represented African Americans during 1890 and 1920 was recorded by European American artists such as Sophie Tucker, Marion Harris, Billy Golden and Bill Murray who sang minstrel specialties, and European American orchestras who recorded songs by African American composers, such as

the New York Philharmonic recording of W.C. Handy's "Memphis Blues" (Kenney 1999: 112). Few African American artists entered the industry, for example George W. Johnson, the first African American recording star, recorded a handful of "coon songs" in 1892. Bert Williams made similar recordings in the 1897. James Reese Europe's Society Orchestra made history when he was contracted by Victor. This was partly due to his association with the famous dance couple, Vernon and Irene Castle. In 1913 he recorded a mix of musical styles popular in the dance hall at the time which included rags, waltzes, tangos, and one-steps (Kenney 1999: 110-112).

During this first phase of the recording industry, early jazz music was developing in the multicultural climate of New Orleans in the 1890s and quickly spread to other major cities in the northeast and west coast in the 1910s as New Orleans musicians traveled the country looking for better opportunities. Jazz performances in hotel dance halls and small clubs became a space for interracial mingling among African Americans, Latinos, and poor European Americans (mainly eastern and southern European). In times of legalized segregation, the increasing popularity of jazz music threatened European American power and privilege, making it viciously attacked by defenders of the racial divide. These attacks assumed that jazz was dangerous because of its "African" elements. Critics argued that it was "savage," "primitive," and nothing but "noise" (Evans 2000: 95). Jazz music's "hot" rhythm, as critics called it, represented the bestial drumming of Africans, and went as far as to call its popularity an "epidemic" because this hot rhythm could get into the blood of any respectable European American person and incite them with sexual desires and excess behavior (Radano & Bohlman 2000: 459-480). By making it an issue between African American and European American, these attacks striped jazz of its richness and complexity and perpetuated the

antagonism between the two groups.

Conversely, for the similar reasons many European Americans saw jazz music as a space to break away from the restraints of whiteness and act out their fantasies of freedom through blackness. Paul Whiteman, who began to incorporate jazz elements into the symphonic style orchestra in the late-1910s, is representative of this kind of thinking. The success of his recordings in the 1920s ironically billed him as the “King of Jazz.” In an interview in 1926, Whiteman defended jazz music with the statement, “In America jazz is at once a revolt and a release. Through it, we get back to a simple, a savage, if you like, joy of being alive. While we are dancing or singing or even listening to jazz, all the artificial restraints are gone. We are rhythmic, we are emotional, we are natural” (Hersch 2007: 77). This yearning to experience one’s “natural” or “savage” self was a very common perception among European American jazz aficionados who perceived African American culture as a means to their salvation.

Natural musical ability continued to be a marker of inferiority as well. As an observer of James Reese Europe’s Clef Club performance at Carnegie Hall writes,

They have “picked up” the ability to play an instrument, and like the Hungarians and the Gypsies, when they have caught the melody they are quick to catch by ear their orchestral parts...these Negroes in the North, almost equally untrained musically, play and sing by virtue of sheer natural ability (quoted in Glasser 1995: 60).

For a 125-piece orchestra to simply play by ear makes this comment the more ridiculous, but persuasive of the endurance of European American perceptions of African American natural musical talent. Furthermore, it is interesting that this critic equates African Americans to Gypsies, a group of people in Europe and Asia that also have been constructed as naturally musical. Further study and comparison of these histories might shed more light on racial

constructions.¹⁸

Despite the earlier success of printed music inspired by ideas of African American musicality and of jazz that was increasing in popularity, African American musicians were still denied access to the recording industry. When jazz was first recorded in 1917, a European American group called the Original Dixieland Jass Band was asked to record before Creole or African American bands were given the opportunity. The chance for African American artists to record came in the 1920s, when categories explicitly marking race appeared. The “race” and “hillbilly” records (also called “old-time”) that emerged reflected segregated social policy that was legalized by the 1896 case of Plessy vs. Ferguson, but it was not a simple mapping of that racial project onto the recording industry. Although these categories drew upon popular notions of race and culture, they did not represent the same power relation. This would evolve over the next twenty years. Hillbilly recordings, which represented the rural European American, were also marginal and looked down upon by northern record executives. Also race records appeared first in 1921 and only on the success of these records did hillbilly recordings follow two years later. Another factor is that foreign and ethnic records sales continued to grow, pushing record companies to record more folk traditions from various nations. Interestingly, in the 1920s Mexican recordings outnumbered any of the other ethnic categories, but these were mainly songs highly influenced by Spain, Europe, and the U.S. (Kenney 1999: 74). Lastly, record companies were prompted to record rural folk traditions from the U.S. from the need to find new markets after the emergence of radio cut into record sales (Kenney 1999: 116).

Otto K. E. Heinemann, a German immigrant, took the first chance to invest in African

¹⁸ Ethnomusicologist Mathjis Van De Port examines a similar situation in Serbia and brings up this connection. See Van De Port (1999).

American artists. He had already been involved in recorded folk and popular tunes from all over the world before moving to the U.S. and starting the Okeh record label. U.S. companies had been recording foreign rural traditions as well, but not any of its own. What finally convinced Okeh Records to invest in African American artists was the testimony by Perry Bradford, an African American musician and songwriter. Bradford explained in a meeting that northern urban African Americans would buy a record from one of their own, but “not to expect any fast sales.....but the southern whites will buy them like nobody’s business” (Kenney 1999:117). The following recording of Mamie Smith, a vaudevillian performer, singing “Crazy Blues” in 1920 debunked both European American and Bradford’s predictions. The record sold enough to prove there was an African American market, and surprisingly rural southern African Americans were the largest consumers. This population was previously assumed too poor to afford recordings let alone the machines that played them. From this discovery, Okeh made a big push to tap into this market, releasing its first series of race records in 1921.

Other companies followed to cash in on the success of Mamie Smith, releasing their own series of race records. These include Victor (1923), Columbia (1921), Paramount (1922), Vocalion (1923), Brunswick (1926), Gennett (1923) Champion (1925), Ajax (1923), Edison (1923); and Black owned labels Black Swan (1921), Meritt (1925), and Black Patti (1927); and many other into the 1930s. At first, European American owned companies insisted on recording women vocalist singing the blues to follow on the success of Smith, but eventually expanded to record “bluesmen” of the south. These so-called bluesmen (more commonly called songsters) played many styles of music besides the blues, such as European-American ballads, jigs, waltzes, and even Mexican music (Narvaez 1994), but

European American owned companies only wanted the blues. Arguably this focus on blues began the mediation of African American music to fit within European American perceptions of African American difference (Waterman, in Radano & Bohlman 2000). Many Black string bands, which were plenty in the south, could not make a race record.¹⁹ Record producers required Black artist to have at least four original blues tunes ready to go, if they didn't they were sent away or the European American producers helped compose four different pieces. Probably taking its cue from Tin Pan Alley producers, record producers preferred that blues artist use the 12-bar form and the AAB lyrical form (Kenney 1999: 132-135).

Even when Harry H. Pace and W.C. Handy tried to challenge the stereotypes created by the European American record producers, they were unsuccessful. Together, they started the Black Swan record label in 1921 hoping to appeal to African American middle-class buyers. Arguing that African Americans also appreciated non-blues music, they recorded other musical styles, such as African American opera singers. In the end, their best-selling recordings were blues songs. Eventually the company could not compete with the bigger and more powerful European American owned companies and went bankrupt in 1923. Their recordings were bought by Paramount Records in 1924 (Kenny 1999:124).

The molding of a distinct African American musical genre was also enhanced by the presence of hillbilly recordings. By only recording and selling a narrow cross-section of African American music making and repackaging it as “authentically” African American, and then doing the same with hillbilly recordings as authentically European American, companies reinforced divisions between African and European Americans. As they did with race records, record producers only recorded European American artist that they thought to be

¹⁹ For more on African American string bands, see Petreycik (2008).

representative of rural European American southern taste. Some producers prohibited the banjo – an instrument associated with African American music²⁰ – or avoided certain types of songs (Kenney 1999: 135). The music of the Appalachia, where many producers went to make recordings, was a result from a long history of African and European American intercultural exchange.²¹ For example, Maybelle Carter of the popular recording artists, the Carter Family, noted that her finger picking style was learned from an African American banjo player, Leslie Riddle, who taught the family many songs (Hay 2003: 8).

Other business practices also reinforced the racialized divide. Selling records had to go through segregated retailers such as furniture stores. Record companies worked with these retailers that didn't want "hoards of Blacks" in their stores to create a catalog and mail ordering system for African American buyers (Kenney 1999: 129). Not only did they keep them from going to stores, but record companies made bigger profits since they cut the middle person out. Companies also scheduled separate recording sessions for African American and European American artists, with the latter getting paid an extra 25-50 percent royalty payment that race record artists did not get.

By the end of the 1920s, the recording industry was organized in a way that mirrored the racialized organization of society. There existed "popular" or "serious" categories of music that included opera, classical music, dance music, and other types that represented the dominant, largely European American, and middle-class and the affluent. Then there were foreign-language, ethnic, race, and hillbilly categories that represented the marginal, people of color, and the poor and working-class. Furthermore, whiteness in the popular categories was not explicit, but assumed as the norm and the universal. The marginal categories marked

²⁰ More on the history of the banjo see Winans (1976) and Conway (1995).

²¹ For more on this history, see Otto & Burns (1974), and Turner & Cabell (1985). Also see Radano & Bohlman (2000), and Tagg (1989) who argues against recording categories.

the “other,” with race and hillbilly explicitly marking race and class in America, and ethnic recordings representing the “foreign.” Ironically artists under this label included U.S Chicanaos, Latinaos, and Native American artists.

As the recording companies entered the depression of the 1930s, recordings for these marginal categories were significantly reduced. The overlapping “swing” era that began around 1935 helped pull record companies through the depression and helped African American jazz artists get national attention (Kenney 1999: 160-175). Swing was a marketing term for jazz music that merged the sounds of the African American big bands and the European American ballroom orchestra, targeted at the larger European American audience. With great success, swing attracted many kinds of people and over the years became a space for interracial mingling on and off the stage. This was nothing new, but something that became more public with the rise in popularity of swing. However segregation still existed, which made swing music a target for protectors of the racial divide. Many of the same arguments discussed before took center stage in these clashes between European American swing aficionados and segregationists. It is not my intent to go into the details here because for the most part, both sides drew from the same fundamental racist stereotypes of African American musicality.²²

By the late-1940s, a series of economic and technological changes had taken place in the industry that created the right environment for the re-emergence of race and hillbilly records under new names. During the depression, the major record companies swallowed up the smaller record labels. Two of the most powerful companies were bought by radio corporations such as the Victor Talking Machine Company, bought by the Radio Corporation

²² For an overview of swing music, see Gunther Schuller (1989), unfortunately he perpetuates the Black/White Paradigm.

of America in 1929, and the Columbia Phonograph Company, bought by the Columbia Broadcasting System in 1938 (Kenney 1999: 184). As part of big media conglomerates, record companies grew more powerful and had greater access to new media technology to shape musical tastes and increase record sales. Technological advances included the introduction of magnetic tape that made recording cheaper and better quality. The affordability allowed smaller business to purchase recording equipment that caused a rapid growth of independent recording labels. Another was the introduction of FM radio that provided better sound quality than AM radio. By the late 1940s there were approximately 700 FM stations and another 1000 AM stations (Starr & Waterman 2003).

Race and hillbilly records that were dropped by the majors during the depression increased in popularity on the radio and independent record labels. Billboard Magazine took note and began publishing hits from these two categories in the early 1940s. By 1949, 650 radio stations were broadcasting hillbilly music (Starr & Waterman 2003: 81). The major companies also found that a third of their buyers were under the age of twenty one, and that European American's taste for African American music was increasing (Starr & Waterman 2003: 152; Kenney 1999: 172). Race and hillbilly categories were renamed to cash in on the growing trend. "Rhythm & blues" became a catch-all term for African American music that included jump blues, urban blues, doo-wop, and gospel; and "country & western" a catch-all term for European American music such as country, bluegrass, and honky-tonk.

Deeply embedded racist practices continued to operate within the recording industry. Rhythm & blues still meant "Black" and country & western still meant "White," and getting plugged into the European American market continued to be difficult for African American artists. Although some rhythm & blues songs did enter the pop charts, if an African American

artist wanted to record outside of the category, for example in country music, they would not get the support they needed. Since the 1920s there have been African American artists in other genres, for instance DeFord Baily, a country artist who performed at the Grand Ole Opry in 1926, and recorded both race and hillbilly records in 1928-29, but never got the credit he deserved (Morton & Wolfe 1991). It was not until 1962 when Ray Charles recorded a country album that the idea was taken seriously. Keep in mind he was able to do so after becoming a successful rhythm & blues and pop artist, and receiving an unusual record contract that gave him such freedoms. On the other hand, European American artists were able to record under any genre they wanted, including rhythm & blues. Whatever direction they took, European American artists were more likely to get better financial backing and better pay. African American artists were also cheated out of their fair share for their compositions in numerous ways. One example was the practice of “cover songs” that flooded the market in the 1950s. White pop artists were quick to cover songs by African American artists that hit the rhythm & blues charts. Because European American artists belonged to bigger and more powerful record companies, their recordings sold better than the originals. Pat Boone was notorious for this kind of practice.

Despite the continuing essentialization of African American and European American musical categories, record producers and artists experimented with musical styles to create something distinct that would bring them fame and fortune. Rhythm & blues, although thought of as distinctly Black, continued to be mediated by White producers and composers such as Ahmet Ertegun, the Chess brothers, and Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. To various degrees European Americans made decisions on arrangements, use of instruments, and compositions to make their recording artists more “marketable,” which meant to appeal to the

larger European American audience. The influential African American guitarist Chuck Berry found a balance between rhythm & blues and country to make his music marketable to European American teenagers (Interview in Espar 1995). Conversely, European American country & western artists such as Bill Haley and Elvis Presley became pop stars mimicking African American artists. Record producers and deejays were quick to take note of this mixing and the growing tastes for rhythm & blues and began tailoring their radio shows to European American teenage fans, which eventually led to the marketing term “rock & roll.”

The most popular deejay, Alan Freed of Cleveland who coined the term “rock & roll,” made a lot of money by working closely with radio stations, dance halls, theaters, and television, and probably made considerably more than the young African American bands he featured (The Cleveland Press, April 13, 1957). In his early years, he played exclusively African American bands as a way to bring some recognition to African American artists and make a statement against the practice of cover versions. As he started to promote rock & roll concerts in the early 1950s, he featured African American rhythm & blues bands for an audience that was mixed but predominantly European American. Over time as rock & roll gained popularity, the number of European American bands he featured increased. It is hard to determine what it was about rhythm & blues that caught Alan Freed’s attention. Freed claimed to be giving what the bands deserved, recognition, and what his audiences wanted, to dance, but he was also a keen businessman who saw the growing tastes for African American music and found his “niche” packaging it for European American teens.

Deejays like Alan Freed and European American teens often championed African American artists because they heard something different in their music that appealed to them and provided a means to break away from conservative and segregated society. In this

rebellion we see the same stereotypes of African American musicality and character that I have laid out so far. Representative of this is the writer Norman Mailer's publication called "The White Negro" (1957). As scholar Nelson George notes, although he refers to jazz music of the 1940s and early 1950s, his views were embodied in the European American teenage rebellion of the 1950s (George 2003: 61-63). Mailer writes:

Knowing in the cells of his existence that life was war, nothing but war, the Negro (all exceptions admitted) could rarely afford the sophisticated inhibitions of civilization, and so he kept for his survival the art of the primitive, he lived in the enormous present, he subsisted for his Saturday night kicks, relinquishing the pleasures of the mind for the more obligatory pleasures of the body, and in his music he gave voice to the character and quality of his existence, to his rage and the infinite variations of joy, lust, languor, growl, cramp, pinch, scream and despair of his orgasm. For jazz is orgasm, it is the music of orgasm, good orgasm and bad, and so it spoke across a nation... So there was a new breed of adventurers, urban adventurers who drifted out at night looking for action with a black man's code to fit their facts. The hipster had absorbed the existentialist synapses of the Negro, and for practical purposes could be considered a white Negro (Mailer 1957).

Here we see the same stereotypes of savagery, hyper-sexuality, and musical power used to describe European American's appropriation of "Black codes" for their own kind of freedom from 1950s society. Further reading of Mailer's theory of the "White Negro" shows the perception of blackness in the European American mind that made Elvis' hip gyrations so powerful and rock & roll so successful.

We also have to acknowledge that rock & roll has blurred racial lines and for this reason became a threat to protectors of racial segregation. While institutional segregation was beginning to breakdown by cases like *Brown vs. The Board of Education* in 1954, rock & roll was closing the divide between rhythm & blues and country & western, and venues were providing space for intercultural exchange. Especially in the south, European American critics attacked rock & roll and rhythm & blues on the same grounds that other European

Americans were defending it. For instance, a spokesperson from the Alabama White Citizens Council asserts “the obscenity and vulgarity of the rock & roll music is obviously a means by which the White man and his children be driven to the level of the ‘nigger,’ it is obviously nigger music” (Espar 1995). Here the council member conjures up references to the sexual power in rock & roll. Its “obscenity and vulgarity” refers to the fear of racial intermixing, and more so, to the thought of European American women getting together with Black men. He also asserts that rock & roll is “obviously” African American because of its power to “drive down” a person to a lower level of humanity, which is in reference to the so-called savageness of African American culture.

As rock & roll entered the 1960s, record companies continued to invest in European American performers, separating it from the African American artists who took part in its creation. The British invasion that began with The Beatles in 1963 only helped to establish rock & roll as a purely European American genre. African American artists once again were exploited, but they continued making music on their own terms as African Americans entered more prominent positions within the industry and started their own record companies. New music styles emerged from African American communities that expressed a new pride and nationalism emerging from victories in the Civil Rights Movement. However European Americans maintained power within the industry and continue, to this day, to exploit African American artists.

Consequences of the Black/White Paradigm

I have traced from the debates on slavery and emancipation to the recording industry of the 1950s, is the racial formation of African Americans and European Americans into an

interdependent and antagonistic dichotomy. This relationship has profoundly shaped U.S. society on many levels, and has shaped people's thinking about what and who "America" is in very Black and White terms. The inclusion of African American artists into the recording industry opened up a public space for the nation to witness their musical creativity and innovation to make music that proved their humanity. Unfortunately it also opened the door for African American artists to be further exploited and it reproduced long-held stereotypes of natural talent, supernatural power, and liberating rhythm. The executives and producers who profited over the years – many being Jewish, German, and other eastern and southern Europeans previously not considered "White" – assimilated into "White" society by participating in the exploitation of a racially-defined labor source.

The history of exploitation and appropriation of African American music making has provided scholars and popular writers – the majority of whom are European American (Garofalo in Kelley 2002: 112; Tate 2003) – with an abundance of "artifacts" to produce a narrative consistent with the Black/White paradigm. Artifacts or tangible documentation includes recordings, copyrights, legal documents, account books, marketing studies and materials, and the countless recorded interviews of African American and European American artists. An abundance of artifacts exists for African Americans because they had a close relationship and were always "under the radar" of European Americans. Examples that produce artifacts are African American artists' struggle to receive equal treatment and compensation for their music, their balancing act between reinforcing stereotypes and challenging them through musical performance; and European American ideas about the value of African American music, which includes their fear and desire of its difference. The latter relates to the conflict European Americans had investing in African American music

and the negative repercussions of doing so when European American racism towards African Americans was strong, violent, and justified by segregation laws, miscegenation laws, and other unfair treatment. This situation produced thousands of recordings of African American music and numerous demeaning publications about the dangers of “Negro music” and campaigns by various White supremacist groups to protest the production of African American music (Radano 2003).

On the other hand, Latinas (primarily Chicanas, Cuban and Puerto Rican Americans) did not have the same connection or relationship to European Americans and the music industry as did African Americans. Historically, Latino recordings were labeled under “Spanish-language” and “ethnic” records, locating them outside the U.S. despite many of these artists lived within U.S. borders. Furthermore, there are fewer artifacts that document the participation of Latinas in U.S. popular music, and in some cases, artifacts do not exist. The history of these artists remains in the minds of those who experienced them, and many of these histories have been lost with the passing of the artists involved. Scholars and writers take this scarcity of artifacts to mean Latino artists had little impact on U.S. popular music, and therefore seldom discussed them as contributors, thus further limiting Latino claims to agency in American popular culture and identity.

Recent scholarship is changing our knowledge of popular culture by bringing Latino contributions to light. For example, in the late 1800s there were Cuban and Mexican musicians involved with a circle of Creole and African American musicians now considered the pioneers of early jazz in New Orleans (Kinzer 1996; Stewart 1991, 1998-1999; Johnson 2008). There is also research on the encounter between African American blues musicians and Mexicans and Chicanas in Texas (Narvaez 2002, Johnson 2008). And the popularity of

Latino rhythms in the U.S. such as the habanera, tango, rumba, mambo, and cha-cha (Hernandez 2010). These rhythms began to appear in rhythm & blues recordings of the northeastern cities like Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York (Ripani 2006: 68; Pruter 1996; Fileti 1995). Some of these songs include The Pelicans' "White Cliffs of Dover" (1953), The Drifters' "Honey Love" (1954), and Bo Diddley's "Bo Diddley" (1955). Southern Artists such as Fats Domino and Professor Longhair were attuned to Cuban and Chicano music. Fats Domino collaborated with Texas musician Armando Almendarez and the New Mexican guitarist Alberto Nelson Sanchez who went by the name "Al Hurricane" (Brewer 1999; Molina 2007; Narvaez 2002; Roberts 1979).

In California African American, European American, Chicano, Asian American, and Filipino artists from the 1940s-1960s were developing their musical ideas and skills together. African American rhythm & blues artist Richard Berry was a member of the Rhythm Rockers, a mostly Chicano, multiracial band out of Los Angeles. Berry became acquainted with Chicano renditions of Latin music which inspired him to write "Louie Louie" (1956). He modeled the song after the introduction of a cha-cha called "El Loco" written by Cuban composer René Touzet and performed by the Rhythm Rockers on many occasions. At first, Berry wanted to record it as a Latin song with the typical percussion found in Cuban and Puerto Rican dance bands, but the record producer said, "he could give a shit about Latin" (Reyes and Waldman 1998: 15). Berry recorded the song but had to hide the overtly "Latin" elements, for example, transferring the rhythmic pattern traditionally played by the *güiro* to the guitar. Another example is the influential White composer Mike Stoller who spent time in a Chicano neighborhood in Los Angeles where he got involved in a Chicano social club. When he was learning piano he joined the Blas Vasquez band where, like Berry, he was

exposed to Chicanao blends of Latin and rhythm & blues music (Lipsitz 1990: 140).

After the 1950s, musical styles within and outside the recording industry continued to diversify as non-European immigrant populations increased, bringing new musical sounds and ideas with them. A recent example is hip hop, which also has been represented as an essentially African American music form. Hip Hop's origins are found in poor New York neighborhoods such as the South Bronx and Harlem, where it grew from African American, Afro-Caribbean, and Puerto Rican struggles with poverty, disenfranchisement, and gang violence (Rose 1994; Rivera 2003; Chang 2005). When hip hop began to be appropriated by the industry in the mid-1980s, it was marketed as purely African American. Some Puerto Rican influences managed to stay present as hip hop became nationally popular. For instance, the rap single "Rapper's Delight" by the Sugarhill Gang that popularized hip hop, featured percussion instruments from salsa music; and Fat Boys member "Prince Markee Dee" (Mark Morales) was Puerto Rican. Unfortunately many Puerto Ricans who wanted to be hip hop recording artists were denied, for example when a Puerto Rican artist named Q-Unique was told, "Puerto Ricans just can't sell [in hip hop], it's impossible" by an industry A&R executive (quoted in Rivera 2003: 83). Furthermore, shortly after hip hop got started in New York, Filipinos adopted the culture and were a major force in nurturing and growing hip hop culture in California in the late 1970s (Leon, Mabalon, and Ramos 2000).

Chicanaos, who had been U.S. citizens since 1848, were finally "discovered" by the music industry in 1970 as indicated by Billboard Magazine (Billboard Magazine, November 21, 1970: 58). This corresponded to a larger plan brewing in the industry in the 1960s to reinvest in its Spanish language market, previously categorized under the "International" category by Billboard Magazine, that was announced in 1972 (Billboard Magazine on

September 16, 1972). Prior to their so-called discovery, Chicanaos and other Latinaos were forced to participate “under the radar.” Many artists had to hide their racial identities by anglicizing their names to appear European American, such as Ritchie Valens (Ricardo Esteban Valenzuela Reyes), Vicki Carr (Florencia Bisenta de Casillas Martinez Cardona), and Freddy Fender (Baldemar Huerta), and so many others. Chicanaos having a space in music industry under the marketing label “Chicano” or “Tex-Mex” which were under the umbrella category “Latin” recognized the Latino presence in the U.S., but perpetuated the racial project that constructed them as foreigners.

Defining musical styles in terms of race and ethnicity in the music industry has obscured the complex and rich relationships between groups that produced popular music, and has perpetuated and reproduced inequality. In his book *The Black Atlantic* Paul Gilroy questions this thinking about African American cultural productions:

How are we to think critically about artistic productions and aesthetics codes which, though they may be traceable to one distinct location [or group], have been changed by the passage of time or by their displacement, relocation, or dissemination through networks of communication and cultural exchange? (Gilroy 1993: 80).

Guided by this question, I will bring together methods of ethnomusicology and Chicano studies to build a model for rethinking music style that honors its production within a specific identity, but allows room for acknowledging its interconnections with other identities in the complex intercultural exchanges that have taken place in the U.S.

Chapter 2: Bridging Ethnomusicology and Chicanao Theories of Subjectivity

Chicanao music making encompasses a broad spectrum of musical sounds that are associated with multiple music styles, making it problematic to define exactly what constitutes Chicanao music. For this reason, ethnomusicological analysis alone – which depends on notions of difference – is insufficient to examine the multiplicity of Chicanao music making because ethnomusicological discourse is rooted in the colonial and imperial impulse to study and categorize those whom are deemed “other” and usually “inferior” to colonial powers. Ethnomusicology’s implication in this colonial past has led scholars to only identify Chicanao music in terms of its musical markers of racialized difference that distinguish it from the *Euroamericancentric*²³ “us” and from the differentiated and racialized “others.” As argued by Radano and Bohlman, the discipline of ethnomusicology maintains racialized boundaries:

[Ethnomusicology] constructs its ontologies of music by accepting – and celebrating – differences as if they were givens, as if world music were dependent on them. While it is true that ethnomusicology’s embrace of difference has broadened the landscape of musical research – which might otherwise have been left to the assumed supremacy of modern Europe – so it has reified forms of difference in ways no longer consistent with comprehensions of subjectivity and culture.” (Radano & Bohlman 2000: 9-10)

In order to create a flexible framework for analysis of the Chicanao musical experience, one that accounts for the ways it has intersected with various musical traditions and racialized identities, I argue that an ethnomusicological analysis can be advanced in combination with Chicanao theories of subjectivity. These theories are elaborated in the following texts: Gloria

²³ This term is used by Steve Loza (2006) to refer to a particular Eurocentrism in the U.S.

Anzaldúa's *borderlands theory* and the dismantling of binaries, Mary Pat Brady's examination of spatiality in the construction of knowledge and power, and Raphael Perez-Torres' *critical mestizaje* in the Chicanao arts. In staging such a conversation between ethnomusicology and Chicanao studies, I propose a framework for thinking about Chicanao music making as a multi-layered and multi-experiential process that breaks away from popular music discourse informed by Black/White paradigm.²⁴

In the U.S., we all are accustomed to identifying music style along racialized boundaries that sever the historical, social, and spatial interconnections between communities that produce music styles. It is now “common sense” that musical characteristics in jazz, country, and conjunto such as syncopation, vocal twang, or Spanish lyric, respectively, should be produced by the appropriate racialized African American, European American, or Chicanao body. This assumption is not natural but constructed through various interlinked racial projects by scholarly and capitalist narratives. Scholars, cultural critics, and other popular music writers make these correlations based on research that determines the origins of a particular music style and by musical characteristics that are traced to a particular group, place, and time. For example, we think of hip hop as African American music because of its emphasis on rhythm and beats or the rhythmic interplay of an MC’s rap. Strong “rhythm” is a practice that music scholars associate with Africa and which was carried over to the U.S. through the slave trade.²⁵ The hip hop cannon and its writers make the connection by telling us that hip hop originated specifically among African Americans in New York in the 1970s. Furthermore, media representations overwhelmingly focus on African American artists, thus

²⁴ The following authors have argued the same for Chicanao music making in Los Angeles, Lipsitz (1990) and Macias (2008).

²⁵ Olly Wilson defines a set of traits specific to African Americans and from an African past (1992) or Richard Waterman’s earlier emphasis on “Negro rhythm” (1948). Many scholars have criticized this notion such as Phillip Tagg (1989) and Kofi Agawu (1995).

reinforcing our assumption that hip hop is – and always has been – essentially “Black.” However, recent scholarship provides a better picture and analysis of the complex history of hip hop and the collaborations and conflicts between African American, Afro-Caribbean, and Puerto Rican communities that fashioned this music style and culture (Forman and Neal 2004).²⁶

Thinking about hip hop as simply “Black” leads music writers to present hip hop in terms of the Black/White paradigm. Music writers must always ask, what exactly do they mean by “Black?” Can “Black” be as homogenous as they assume when the “Black” that created hip hop was rooted in multiple and competing experiences of Blackness (African American, Puerto Rican, Jamaican, Barbadian, Trinidadian), and shaped by encounters with other racialized identities? (European American, nonblack Puerto Rican) (Gilroy 1993; West 1990; Tagg 1989). And, most importantly, who produces and profits from these constructions of Blackness? These questions point to a European American capitalist racial project that links and maps out music style and racialized difference – to put it bluntly – to sell records (and tapes, cds, mp3s). Kwame Anthony Appiah provides a convincing metaphor to make sense of the economy of difference:

To sell oneself and one's products as art in the marketplace, one must, above all, clear a space in which one is distinguished from other producers and products-and one does this by the construction and the marking of differences. To create a market for bottled waters, for example, it was necessary, first, to establish that subtle (even unpalatable) differences in mineral content and source of carbonation were essential modes of distinction (Appiah 1991: 342).

In the case of hip hop, the diversity that created it was boiled down to “Black” (a distinction that has proven profitable since the 1920s) and amplified to market recordings to African

²⁶ Although a great collection of essays, it doesn't include entries of other scholars who have been important in hip hop scholarship such as Raquel Rivera (2003) and Jeff Chang (2005).

American youth and to European American youth fascinated with “Blackness.” Music styles, then, are produced from the correlation between firmly held notions of race (fictions that have real effects in the social world) and musical taste (what supposedly appeals to a particular racialized group).

As discussed in chapter one, “race records” marked the supposed musical characteristics, taste, and culture of African Americans. In the production of a musical product targeted at this specific racialized group, race records also mirrored social policy that sought to segregate and contain the supposed inferiority of African Americans to protect “White” purity and superiority. As European Americans were increasingly drawn to African American music in the late 1940s, the new term for race records, “rhythm & blues” continued to segregate African Americans, but also produced an idea of African American authenticity (George 1988; Radano 2010). Scholars, cultural critics, and other popular music writers – which are a majority European American – continue their preoccupation with the color line between African and European Americans, further normalizing this racialized boundary (Garofalo in Kelley 2002, Holt in Stobart 2008).

Accordingly, my proposed method turns away from the *Euroamericentric* logic that racialized difference produces musical difference. My intention is not to deny race a place in music analysis, or to take a “colorblind” approach; rather, I acknowledge that race as a social construction exists and that this social construction informs people’s self-identification, their musical tastes and making, and their relationship to music styles (Roy 2004).²⁷ Race intersects with many subjectivities such as class, gender, and place that create patterns in people’s relationship to music, but these patterns do not always correlate to

²⁷ For more in-depth discussion on the social construction of race from an anthropological/sociological perspective, see Smedley (1998), and from the perspective of critical race theory, see (Lopez 1994).

constructed cultural systems, nor are they absolute (Lipsitz 1994; Gilroy 1993). As Scholars have argued, there is a need to break the habit in thinking about identities and their cultural products in essentialisms born from and which maintain the broader racial project of White supremacy (Anzaldúa 1987, Torres 2006, West 1990). To do so, the following sections critique notions of racialized difference and essentialism, and outline a strategy that foregrounds mixture to open up a space for Chicanos to reclaim agency in American popular music.

Critiques of Ethnomusicological Methods of Analysis

As mentioned, ethnomusicology alone is insufficient to examine Chicano music making because it is dependent on notions of racialized difference. Radano and Bohlman explain that ethnomusicology's commitment to culture and difference was – and still is – a response to Eurocentric racist ideas that positioned Europe as the center and height of music making (Radano & Bohlman 2000: 4). Inspired by the cultural relativism of Franz Boaz, ethnomusicologists shifted the issue of race to the issue of “culture” and the production of music, mapping the music of the world into distinct “musical areas” (based on anthropology's “culture areas”) distinguished by well-grounded musical traditions and cultural identities.²⁸ Scholars have long critiqued the mapping and study of cultures as homogeneous and monolithic “traditions” bounded in specifically grounded geographies as part of the European colonial project (Appadurai 1986; Asad 1985; Bhabha 1994; Fardon 1990; Rosaldo 1989). Yet this cultural mapping still informs who ethnomusicologists study (mainly “third world”), how they study them (participant-observation), the structure of

²⁸ Alan Lomax's *cantometrics* is an example that draws from “culture areas” (1968).

curriculum (area studies and world music courses), and representations of who they study.

Over the years, Ethnomusicologists have critiqued the discipline (Diamond in Nettl 2010) but ethnomusicology is still reluctant to break away from cultural mapping, leaving unquestioned the power structures that make the ethnographic encounter possible (Stobart 2008; Radano & Bohlman 2000). The power dynamic that continues to authorize ethnomusicologists to do “fieldwork,” calls for more self-examination of the discipline’s subjectivity and an increased engagement with disciplines such as cultural studies, women studies, and critical race theory that have long since grappled with identity, difference, and inequality. These conversations have happened, yet as Deborah Wong points out, ethnomusicology remains heavily reliant on liberal humanism when representing its work. “That is, we tend to resort to fairly basic relativist arguments about equal worth, when the strongest arguments focus on the political economies of uneven access to resources and the intervention of education (and performance) into those economies” (Wong 2006: 259-263).

It is critical that ethnomusicologists question what they do because as an academic discipline, ethnomusicology is implicated in the production and legitimation of racialized boundaries. The university institution, as Michele Foucault argues, is an apparatus of imperialism that produces “knowledge” and “truth” to maintain colonial power (Foucault/Gordon 1980: 119-165). For centuries, university trained writers or writers that have influenced the university institution, have “scientifically” proven the inferiority of non-European others.²⁹ Early anthropologists influenced ethnomusicologists of the 1950s and 1960s in their analysis on non-European music, which was not overtly racist, but perpetuated

²⁹ To name a few: Samuel G. Morton’s *Crania Americana* for scientific proof of inferiority by measuring skulls (Philadelphia: J. Dobson, 1839), Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau’s *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* translated by Albert Collins (London : William Heinemann, 1915).

racialized stereotypes.³⁰ Furthermore, the constructed boundary that defines the European “us” and the non-European “other” shaped the structure of specializations within music departments nationwide. For example, musicologists gave more value and prestige to European art music by avoiding non-European music, and in response, other scholars embraced the study of non-European music, leading to the creation of ethnomusicology. In other words, musicologists and ethnomusicologists partook in a “competitive exclusivity” (to solely focus on a certain population) which draws from and normalizes the “given” divide that marks, reproduces, and contains people of color and universalizes the European without ever questioning the divides origins (Soja 1996: 87).

Ethnomusicology is further implicated in oppression because of the history of the university institution as an agent and re-producer of race, gender, and class inequality. For much of its history, the university has been dominated by European American male scholars who have asserted themselves as the universal voice of academic scholarship and knowledge. For much of the U.S. academy’s history, people of color have been excluded from the university through quotas, financial aid, admissions policy, and curriculum.³¹ The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s compelled change when affirmative action policy gave people of color better access. These gains have recently been reversed by the elimination of affirmative action policy, rising tuition, and financial aid cutbacks. Additionally, the political economy of academia produces an unacknowledged privilege in which other cultures (often from marginalized or “third-world” countries) become resources

³⁰ There are too many examples to list here, but to name a few” Alan Lomax’s *cantometrics* (1968), Alan Merriam’s “African Music” (1959), or Richard Waterman’s “Hot’ Rhythm in Negro Music” (1948).

³¹ The research on higher education, race and access is vast. For an overview, see Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner, *Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education* (Needham Heights: Simon & Schuster Custom Pub., 1996); and Gary Orfield, Patricia Marin, Catherine L Horn, *Higher Education and the Color Line: College Access, Racial Equity, and Social Change* (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2005).

to be mined and packaged by the university's "experts" (Deloria [1969] 1988; Asad 1985; Chabram 1990).³² The professionalization of "culture gatherers" provides students funding to conduct research abroad, build "expertise" of the communities they study, and a career and salary as they move on to become professionals. Lastly, ethnomusicology and other disciplines worldwide have produced valuable scholarship on the study of music, but as characterized and argued by Steve Loza, the U.S. ethnomusicological canon remains "Euroamericentric," ignoring a body of literature and knowledge that could be useful to ethnomusicological inquiry. Loza cites some scholars such as José Martí and Marimba Ani among others (Loza 2006).

The failure of ethnomusicologists to recognize Chicanao music for most of the twentieth century points to the discipline's continued reliance on racialized difference and reluctance to fully address the above issues. Even when scholars were studying "their own back yard" early on in the 1960s, scholars focused their attention on African Americans. In Charlie Keil's *Urban Blues* (1966) he asserts that, "Contrary to popular belief, Negroes are the only substantial minority group in America who really have a culture to guard and protect" (p. 191). This is not just a radical idea by an individual; it is an idea that has its roots in the Black/White paradigm shared by many and has consequences for other racialized groups.³³ The idea that other groups have nothing to offer ethnomusicology appears again in 1972, when Chicanao music making was beginning to appear in music industry publications. Thomas Stanford reviewed a record compilation featuring music from the Texas Rio Grande Valley, which has a long history of musical exchange and hybridity, with disturbing but telling comments about the lack of appreciation for Chicanao music making:

³² Angie Chabram also critiques the university institution through the implication and intervention of Chicanao Studies as part of it.

³³ Robert Farias Thompson critiques Keil's assertion in a book review, see Thompson (1967).

It would seem that whereas the Black community today is feeling an awareness of its cultural heritage and a certain pride in it, and has arrived at a stage of feeling a certain cultural identity, the Mexican-American population has still not "found itself" nor mustered much cohesion as a group...and such, often is the dilemma of the Mexican-American who, not wanting to be a "lowly" Mexican, tries to pretend he's a Spaniard. But what is this "Spaniard's" music? I suppose that it is fairly natural that it must be Mexican music at least until such time as the Mexican-American community may acquire a sufficient group identity to be able to generate its own (Stanford in *Ethnomusicology* 1972: 154-156).

His assertion that the Chicanao community has not "found itself" and has "no cohesion as a group" is absurd, arguably racist, but telling of the insufficiency of ethnomusicology during a time when conjunto music of the Rio Grande Valley had been thriving for over forty years and an equally vibrant Chicanao music movement flourished in Los Angeles. Yet he believes that Chicanos have no "sufficient group identity" to generate its own kind of music. To Stanford, it reflects a will to be, or an inability to break away from "Spanish" or "Mexican," and that this "sameness" warrants little inquiry because the study of Spanish or Mexican music culture is better done from "the source."

As the above comments suggest, Chicanao music making was unfit for scholarly analysis because it did not "say much" as did African American music, and it contained no musical markers of difference that distinguish it from the music of other racialized groups. On the contrary, there are tangible markers in the music of south Texas that work as signifiers of Chicanao identity such as the sound of the bajo sexto of conjunto music. However, searching for these markers of difference is problematic because sometimes such markers are hard to put your finger on and other times they are non-existent. In the case for the music of south Texas, the music industry recognized a Chicanao sound and opened its doors to it. The sound that was later termed "tejano music" had been brewing in the area for decades and

pushed to the forefront by the Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.³⁴ Billboard Magazine first noticed a “Chicano market” in 1970 (Billboard Magazine, November 21, 1970: 58), and a few years later the magazine published a call for submissions to feature in a series of articles about the “Chicano Explosion” (Billboard Magazine: July 27, 1972: 12; August 12, 1972: 4-11; November 25, 1972: L4-L7).

Even as Texas Chicano music continued to grow in the industry under the term “Tex-Mex” and later under “Tejano,” not to mention other regional styles such as in Los Angeles, Ethnomusicologists continued to ignore Chicano music making. Using The Society for Ethnomusicology as a measure for the general direction of the discipline in the U.S., it wasn’t until 1977 when the society’s annual meeting in Austin, TX featured a special session that gave attention to Chicano music (Arecena 2006: 317). Again, it was not until 1980s that an entry about Chicano music appears in the *Journal of Ethnomusicology* titled, “From Ranchero to Jaitón: Ethnicity and Class in Texas-Mexican Music” (1985) written by anthropologist Manuel Peña. That same year, Manuel Peña also published *The Texas-Mexican Conjunto* (1985), one of a few major publications on Chicano popular music.³⁵ One of the first major works by an ethnomusicologist is Steve Loza’s *Barrio Rhythm* (1993). Even as scholars from other disciplines have taken up the study of music and written about Chicano music making, ethnomusicology remains reluctant to recognize it well into the 2000s. A search in the *Journal of Ethnomusicology* from its first publications to the present finds only one article – Manuel Peña’s article – specifically about Chicano music making.

Ethnomusicology’s failure to legitimize Chicano music making as an area of inquiry and interest also reflects their reluctance to study music “in their own backyard.” This idea

³⁴ For an overview of this movement see Rosales (1997).

³⁵ Another earlier major work is Américo Paredes’ *With a Pistol in His Hand* (1958). He was not trained as an ethnomusicologist but certainly did work that merits recognition by ethnomusicologists.

continues, that research done outside of one's own racial/ethnic group is more valuable because it is more "objective" (Begenho in Stobert 2008: Jackson 2006;).³⁶ Even as this changed and the discipline became more self-reflexive in the 1990s, the preference for music research outside of the U.S., particularly in Africa and Asia, persists. Ethnomusicologists of color have shared their experiences with a kind of "cultural tourism" that continues to inform research interests partly because the discipline is still dominantly European American in membership and values (Jackson 2006; Wong 2006). When scholars research and publish their work about music in the U.S., European and African American music comprise the majority of scholarship, Latinas comprise a small percentage (which is mostly Latin-Caribbean music; Arcena 2006), and Asian Americans are even less represented. Another factor that perpetuates this problem is that funding to do ethnography in the U.S. is extremely limited because most funding sources value research done overseas (Stobart 2008). I experienced this in my own research on Chicano soul in Texas. After months of searching and applying to the few sources that existed, I was never able to secure funding, and had to pay for my own expenses to do research in San Antonio.

My critique of ethnomusicology is not to discredit the discipline, but to join the ethnomusicological tradition of self-critique that pushes the discipline forward (Diamond in Nettle 2010: 54-69). Currently, ethnomusicologists are engaging critical approaches to difference and subjectivity from a variety of fields and beginning to "view the musical world not so much as groups of musics but a large network of musical interrelationships" (Nettl 2005: 435; Wade 2006). Wong provides a list of authors she feels have engaged in cultural theories in new ways that have changed the discipline of ethnomusicology. These include:

³⁶ Bruno Nettl questioned the value on objectivity in 1964. In 1989 he found that ethnomusicologists still favored and put more value on the study of culture outside one's own, even though many also believed that the study of one's own culture was legitimate research. See Nettl (1964: 8; 1989: 1).

Christopher Alan Waterman, *Jujú: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (1990), Jocelyne Guilbault, *Zouk: World Music in the West Indies* (1993), and Martin Stokes, ed., *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (1994).³⁷

Other more recent books include Ronald Radano and Philip Bohlman eds., *Music and the Racial Imagination* (2000) and Ted Solís, *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (2004). Yet these works are still few in a discipline that continues to map out non-European subjects and represent them within a liberal humanist analysis of music and identity.

With the lack of Chicanao representation in ethnomusicology and other texts about U.S. popular music, ethnography, and oral histories in particular, are important in this study because the majority of information on the histories and experiences of Chicanao artists remain in the memories of those who lived it. Music scholars, popular music writers, and the general public's lack of knowledge about specific places, people, bands, encounters, collaborations, and conflicts contributes to the idea that Chicanos had little impact in U.S. popular music and culture. Ethnography and oral history then are crucial to collect artifacts and preserve these histories to more fully understand the specifics about Chicanao music making, and more broadly, the diversity within the musical dialogue that created U.S. popular music.

The Chicanao Experience as Thirdspace

Here, I advance ethnomusicological method by first engaging in theories of subjectivity from Chicanao scholars to re-conceptualize Chicanao music making to include

³⁷ To read the full list, see Wong (2006:24).

the multiple experiences that shape its sound. To begin to construct a new method, I use the works of three Chicanao theorists: Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), Mary Pat Brady's *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space* (2002), and Rafael Perez-Torres' *Mestizaje: Critical Uses of Race in Chicano Culture* (2006). These scholars dismantle dichotomies and notions of purity, and in doing so, provide new possibilities for thinking about identity constructions. Although every scholar differs slightly in their approach, when combined these theories present the Chicanao subject as a "thirdspace" that disrupts the White/Black racial dichotomy, the geographical binary of the U.S./Mexico, and the musical binary of constructed "White" and "Black" music, or "American" and "non-American" music that have long excluded Chicanos from agency in fashioning U.S. American popular culture.

Thirdspace is a theory developed by geographer Edward Soja in his book *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996). To develop his theory, he draws primarily from the works of Henri Lefebvre³⁸ and charts an intellectual history for thirdspace through the works of Michael Foucault, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Bell Hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, and others. The French philosopher Lefebvre wanted to advance Marxist theory which he thought was limited because of its dependence on economic structuralism and binaries such as the dominant/subordinate, the center/periphery, and the us/them. Lefebvre called for a "trialectic" critical theory and philosophical investigation to inject a third dimension of the spatial into the dialectic between the historical and the social. Soja argues that too often space is frozen in the background of thinking as a container or stage in which social actions occur and not taking into account how space affects social actions or is

³⁸ Lefebvre's most influential work is *The Production of Space* (1974)

constructed by them (Soja 1996: 44). Accordingly, Soja's thirdspace is an interdisciplinary idea of space, history, and society that encourages new thinking about the meaning and significance of space and the spatiality of human life: place, location, environment, home, city, region, and nation (Soja 1996: 1).

Another aspect of thirdspace is what Soja calls "thirling" which is to provide "an other-than choice that speaks and critiques through its otherness. It does not simply derive from an additive combination of its binary antecedents; rather from a disordering, deconstruction, and tentative reconstitution of their presumed totalization producing an open alternative that is similar and different" (Soja 1996: 61). In this way we can think about the Chicanao experience in the U.S. as an act of thirling because it is relative to both European American and African American experiences. Chicanos participate in dominant European American culture on an everyday basis from schooling to the workplace, and as consumers of cultural goods (i.e. popular music recordings, books, cinema, etc.). In some instances, Chicanos have privileges similar to European Americans such as – in the past – sometimes being able to enter "White only" spaces because segregation laws legally only applied to African Americans. On the other hand Chicanos also share similar experiences with African Americans as a racialized and marginalized group. Although considered "White," they were more often treated unfairly, excluded from multiple spaces, and have dealt with antagonisms and violence against them. Their relative experiences have brought them together with African Americans as allies in the struggle for equality. Inserting the San Antonio Chicanao experience in the rhythm & blues narrative is an act of thirling that disorders the polarized and antagonistic relationship between Black and White; deconstructs the racial and notions of ownership and authenticity that inform musical categories; and recovers and foregrounds the

Chicano experience to tentatively reconstitute a narrative of rhythm & blues that goes beyond the Black and White.

My point in discussing Soja's theory of thirdspace is not to imply that he or earlier scholars like Lefebvre are the originators of theoretical thinking by the Chicano scholars I will discuss. I only want to show that the idea of thirdspace shares many similarities to the concepts of borderlands, contact zones, and *mestizaje*. I also want to frame how I will apply Chicano theories of subjectivities to the study of music. These theories are complex in so many ways, but generally they are strategies that diffuse and transform inequality created in part by binary thinking. The following Chicano scholars are part of a larger movement of cultural politics that has brought together scholars from many disciplines such as those in Soja's book.

Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* (1987) is a well-established work for Chicano studies and continues to grow as a major source for other disciplines. Anzaldúa criticizes borders – both physical and conceptual – that define spaces as safe and unsafe and that distinguish *us* from *them*. Borders are the dividing lines that create inequalities. As a woman, Chicana, mestiza, lesbian; Anzaldúa finds herself living in the borderlands, but she subverts her marginality by constructing a system of linguistic and visual metaphors to heal the “open wound” between the hegemonically racialized Anglo/Indio, the politicized U.S./Mexico, the gendered male/female, and the sexualized straight/gay. Anzaldúa calls for “thirding” as a strategy when she writes, “To survive the borderlands/ you must live *sin fronteras*/ be a crossroads” (Anzaldúa 1987: 3, 216). The “border consciousness” she calls for resists and transforms hegemonic dichotomies by positioning oneself in the crossroads of overlapping identities and accepting the ambiguity and the contradictory membership one has in multiple,

and sometimes competing identities (Anzaldúa 1987: 99-113).

Similarly in *Mestizaje* (2006) Rafael Perez-Torres explains that Chicanao multi-subjectivity can be a conceptual tool, what he calls “critical mestizaje,” which uses the body as a metaphor for cultural hybridity and as a discursive site for social transformation and justice. Torres argues that in discussions of Latino and Chicanao identity and culture, the notion of racial mixture play an important role different from that in the U.S. In the context of the U.S., racial mixture triggered an anxiety about the possible dissolution of a social and racial order, but in Latin America – where racial mixture was so pervasive – it took a more productive and complex role in society than merely marking the decay of the social foundation (Torres, 2006: 3-13). This is not to say that race mixture was fully accepted and celebrated. In Mexico for example, the Spanish caste system, depicted in the famous *casta* paintings, tried to contain racial mixing by quantifying it so that appropriate measures were enacted to limit or augment one’s social mobility. The caste system also helped the Spanish to protect and justify their dominance by separating themselves as “pure bloods” from the racially mixed Spanish, Indigenous, and African populace (Katzew 2005: 40).³⁹ Although racist, the acknowledgment of the complexity of racial mixing and the attempt to make a place for it in society was very different from that in the U.S. where racial mixture was viewed as sinful and European Americans made a great effort to keep the races separate in formal and public life, but contradictingly allowed racial mixing to occur behind closed doors.

Critical mestizaje – like Anzaldúa’s border consciousness – recognizes the multiple

³⁹ For more on the caste system and casta paintings see Katzew, Ilona. 2005. *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*. New Haven: Yale University Press; and Carrera, Magali Marie. 2003. *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

subjectivities such as race, class, gender, and geography that emerge, complement, and conflict throughout a history of conquest and exploitation. The Chicanao, a product of this conflictual history, becomes a physical embodiment or “walking contradiction” from living life in the margins between purity and racial mixture, European and Indigenous, Mexican and American, nonblack and nonwhite, and citizen and foreigner. Their displacement from dominant European American society and its racialized African American minority – gives the Chicanao a unique perspective and a certain freedom to engage with both groups as well as other marginalized groups such as Native Americans or Filipino Americans. The experience of the Chicanao body then serves as a site for alternative cultural production, counter-narrative, and transformation by expressing a sense of mixture that challenges notions of racial and cultural purity or essentialism (Torres 2006: 3-13).

Complimenting Anzaldúa and Torres, *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies* (2002) by Mary Pat Brady uses space as a lens to study how Chicana literature has contested the terms of capitalist spatial formations, especially the use of space to naturalize violent racial, gender, sexual, and class ideologies. She argues that space is not a passive setting, but interactive and formative. Space is produced, productive, and producing of how places are understood, envisioned, defined, and experienced. It shapes people’s choices, and how they conceptualize themselves, each other, and the world. Space as interactive and formative means “understanding that categories such as gender, race, and sexuality are not only discursively constructed but spatially enacted and created” (Brady 2002: 6-9).

Brady's theoretical examination of national borders, particularly the U.S./Mexico border, resists the construction of difference that produces the relationship between U.S. and Mexico and which extend to the construction of Chicanas as “foreign” and disconnected

from other communities. The production of Mexico as a different and foreign land with no connection to the U.S., Brady explains, is a reflection of “modernity’s structural separation of space and time into a dialectic that encourages a linear narrative of national development: nations emerge along a linear-temporal continuum that begins with feudalism and ends with cosmopolitan modernity.” Borders become the container for the territorial-temporal state in which each nation occupies its own state and understands itself and others to be somewhere on this linear continuum. Each nation repetitively strives to reach modernity, “the fulcrum of progress” (Brady 2002: 50). In this logic, the border is a modernist construct of difference. The U.S./Mexico border (the actual fence) is a spatial enactment of difference that is heavily informed by racial difference considering that Mexicans were portrayed as a “mongrel race” to justify U.S. aggression and economic pressure to seize northern Mexican territory.⁴⁰ Brady argues that the border is an “aesthetic project” because it is not really meant to keep people out but for people to imagine the nation or state “upholding the law” to keep out “illegals” and those who do not belong (Brady 2002: 52).⁴¹

The geography we now call Texas has been a site of contention and – as evoked by Anzaldúa – a crossroads that marks the overlapping and interconnectedness of identities. The transformation of this area from a Spanish settlement (1718, San Antonio being the first civilian settlement) to a Mexican Frontier (1821, Mexican War of Independence), to an independent republic (1836 Texas Revolution), to a U.S. territory (1848, Mexican-American War) not only continuously remapped its borders, but made the geography of Texas a crossroads that produced and transformed the European, African, Indigenous, and mixed-race

⁴⁰ For more about the construction of Mexican as mongrels and U.S. fears of “miscegenation,” see De León (1983: 12-45).

⁴¹ The U.S./Mexico border is approximately 1951 miles, of which only about 600 miles is fenced and another unknown amount of unfenced land is patrolled by border agents.

bodies that passed through it. This area was Mexico's northern frontier that was to be guarded from invasion by Anglo settlers and U.S. expansion. For northeastern and southern European Americans the area was a gateway to new lands in the south and west to be taken in the name of Manifest Destiny. To African slaves, free African Americans, and Mulattos and Creoles, the area was a gateway to better opportunities. To the indigenous nations the area was a homeland lost.

Keeping with the idea that space informs social interaction and produces identities, the following briefly recounts the historical and social consequences of San Antonio produced by Texas' spatial character. This narrative also reveals a long history of encounter between various racialized people that defies Euroamericentric notions of difference and disconnect produced by the U.S./Mexico border, especially between Chicanaos and African Americans.

The city of San Antonio began as a military garrison established in 1689 by Alonso de Leon on the site of a Paya Indian village called "Yanaguana." In 1691 it was renamed San Antonio de Padua.⁴² The frontier regions of Mexico (then called Nueva España) had more flexible racialized boundaries compared to other parts because they were isolated from the rest of Mexico, and the Spanish needed to populate those areas to strengthen and secure the land from invading countries, thus making racial mixture with the indigenous people more practical and common (Richmond 2007: 208; Mason 1998: 4). In San Antonio racial mixing increased in the early 1700s as African slaves and Spanish Soldiers and their families, native Tlascalans from central Mexico, and a number of mixed-race (African, Indigenous, Spanish) people from Coahuila were sent there to reinforce the settlement (Menchaca 2001: 102-105).

⁴² For an overview of the early history of San Antonio and Bexar County see de la Teja (1996).

The settlement expanded around the garrison and the surrounding area became known as Villa de Béjar. Its reputation as a mixed-race settlement spread throughout Mexico and Spain. The approximately 300 mixed-race residents of the new Spanish colony of *Téjas* called themselves *Tejanos*. In 1731, 54 Canary Islanders of mixed African, Portuguese, Genoese, Italian and Spanish decent were sent to San Antonio to govern its residents. The Spanish crown chose them on the grounds that they would blend in easy with the already mixed population of San Antonio (Mason 1998: 5). The Canary Islanders eventually became the elite and had economic and political influence in San Antonio into the 1840s.

As the population of *Téjas* continued to grow, the Afro-Mestizo and African population remained a large presence in the area.⁴³ In 1776, 150 out of 2060 residents in *Téjas* were Afro-Mestizo. Most of this population lived in San Antonio, about 86 total, making them the second largest group in the city (Richmond 2007: 213). In 1790 the numbers in *Téjas* increased to 414 Afro-Mestizos and 448 Africans out of 2992 residents (Mason 1998: 7). Very few of the African population in *Téjas*, were slaves. The number of African slaves recorded for *Téjas* in 1788 was 43 (Richmond 2007: 213). The number of African slaves in San Antonio remained small, only reaching 24 by 1840 (Mason 1998: 8-9).

In the 1800s, conflict between the U.S. and Mexico for land changed the demography of San Antonio. In less populated east *Téjas*, the Sabine River marked the U.S./Mexico border. Many Afro-Mestizos and free-Africans settled in the northeast, especially in the towns of Nacogdoches and La Bahia, and what is now called Jefferson which then had the largest enclave (Richmond 2007: 209). The east changed with the increased immigration of European American settlers who were intent on establishing slavery in the region. The Battle

⁴³ I use Afro-Mestizo to refer to all mixed-race people of African/Spanish, African/Indigenous, and African/Spanish/Indigenous decent.

of San Jacinto in 1836 ended the conflict between European American settlers and Mexicans for a period and created the independent Republic of Texas. Twelve years later, the U.S.-Mexican War ceded more territory to the U.S. Leaders of the new republic and then state wanted to rid Texas of free African Americans or enslave those that stayed. European American leaders imposed harsh measures to limit the rights and mobility of African Americans, forcing them and Afro-Mestizos to move further south of the relocated Mexican border where slavery had been abolished since 1829. The establishment of slavery in the new Texas state drastically changed the slave population of San Antonio. The slave population increased to 220 in 1850 and then more than doubled to 592 in 1860. Still low compared to the rest of Texas, the slave population in 1860 accounted for 7.2 percent of San Antonio's total population compared to 28 percent and above in other cities in the north and east (Mason 1998: 11-14).

The continued conflict over slavery forced runaway slaves to flee through San Antonio on their way to the Mexican border. Tejanos, many of whom had African ancestry, repeatedly helped slaves escape (Mason 1998: 13). This set them apart from the Canary Islanders who formed alliances with European American slave owners and tried to pressure Mexico to keep slavery. In the 1830s, Mexican leaders let it be known that African slaves were welcome in Mexico and any runaway slaves that came would receive land and tools in return for becoming Mexican citizens (Richmond 2008: 217). The years preceding the Civil War, when racial tensions increased, larger numbers of free-African Americans, slaves, and Creoles took advantage of Mexico's offer and settled along the border region of northern Mexico. One such settlement was the Eureka Colony founded just outside of Tampico by an African American Floridian named Luis Fouche (Weik 2008: 5). Similar to the exodus of

slaves to the north, ex-slave accounts tell of another to the south such as Felix Haywood who recounts when he would meet runaways who tried to convince him to go north and he would laugh and say “just walk south to Mexico and you will be free” (Tyler & Murphy 1974: 68, 69).⁴⁴ Jacob Branch remembers “The Mexicans [probably included Tejanos] rigged up flatboats out in the middle of the Rio Grande tied to stakes with rope. The slaves could get the rope and pull themselves onto boats and flee” (Tyler & Murphy 1974: 101).

After the acquisition of Texas by the U.S., the spatial character of San Antonio began to reflect a new racialized order of segregation. The European American population increased quickly with immigration from the south and midwest, and from a large number of new immigrants from Germany. Mexicans continued to migrate to San Antonio, becoming the largest immigrant group in the city. The African American population also increased significantly but continued to be relatively small compared to other groups. European American’s fear of racial mixing and economic competition led them to implement racial policies that established a tripartite system of segregation. Racially restricted policies for selling and renting homes separated European Americans into “White only” suburbs heavily guarded by residents and police to keep out “undesirables.” Communities of color were relegated to undesirable parts of the city to contain and control them. By the 1880s, the city was split into four wards that encircled the central business district. Located in the southwest was the first ward known as the “Mexican quarter” which was predominantly Chicanao and Mexican. North of the first ward was the second ward which was predominantly European American, but a large portion of Chicanos and Mexicans living in the area near the first ward. To the east were the third and fourth wards, both being predominantly European

⁴⁴ There is also a Website that is recording the histories of U.S. Blacks retracing their Mexican roots at (<http://www.afrigeneas.com/forum-carib/index.cgi?md=read;id=94>)

American with a large population of German immigrants. African American homes were sprinkled through all four wards along the boundaries of the central district, with the largest cluster located on the east side. According to Mason, most African Americans lived in this area because they were more likely to find employment or rental housing since most Anglos and Germans owned small businesses and more property than did the poorer Mexican population in the west side (Mason 1998: 27). Settlement patterns over the years –and even today –remain much the same.

San Antonio had a reputation for being a racially egalitarian city, measured by the living condition of African Americans. By the 1940s Chicanos and Mexicans together were equal to the European American population (both approximately 46 %), but the African American population was only 7% (Ayala 2005: 27).⁴⁵ The city earned its reputation for racial tolerance because compared to their counterparts in other Texas cities, African Americans lived better and led the state in civil rights, education, housing, and employment (Mason 1998: xiv-xv). Also adding to its reputation were instances where European American public figures openly spoke out against racism. For example, a sheriff in 1923 pledged that he would not allow the Klu Klux Klan to parade in the streets, and in 1925 Miriam “Ma” Ferguson ran for the office of governor proclaiming that “in my administration, Mexicans and all citizens from all nationalities will have equal and complete protection” (Ayala 2005: 29). Interestingly Ferguson’s husband, the former governor, had a reputation as an extreme racist (Ayala 2005: 29). One last factor for San Antonio’s reputation was the large Chicano and Mexican population whose presence helped to blur the rigid racialized divide between African American and European American.

⁴⁵ Ayala acquires this data from the “San Antonio Public Service Company, Economic and Industrial Survey, 1940” also published in Richard Garcia’s book *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941* (1991, Texas A&M University Press: 29).

Yet racial tensions existed in San Antonio with the most obvious between European Americans and Chicano/Mexicans, and European Americans and African Americans. European American politicians argued that Mexican immigration threatened American culture and way of life and that Mexico was planning to reconquer the southwestern territories won by the U.S. (Ayala 2005: 34). To assist these claims, a large number of articles written in the 1930s by local scholars asserted the inferiority of “Mexicans” that fueled antagonisms towards Mexicans – and Chicanos mistaken for Mexicans – as well as racist policy to further marginalize them (Ayala 2005: 30-34). Similar actions occurred towards African Americans who were threatened with violence for crossing the color line in public spaces or in social conduct. African American men perceived to have relations with European American women brought the possibility of imprisonment or threats of lynching, yet the policing of such conduct did not happen for European American men who had relations with African American or Chicana women (Ayala 2005: 49-53).

Racist and nativist attitudes together with the competition for jobs and social mobility also created tensions between African American and Chicano/Mexican communities. Mason observes that European Americans and African Americans often ignored and disregarded the large Chicano and Mexican population. African Americans considered Chicanos and Mexicans as the “blue-blood” elite of the darker races, targeting them as an obstacle for gaining an equal footing with European Americans (Mason 1998: 186-187). Even more threatening was the population of Afro-Mestizos and Mulattos who in 1910 comprised 25.4 percent of the total African American population (which was 11.1 percent of San Antonio’s population at the time). European American civic leaders – who identified Mulattos as Mexican and African American, not European American and African American – feared them

because they were reminders of a not so racially pure past that challenged ideas of racialized purity and segregation policy (Mason 1998: 186, 267).

Legal segregation – which focused on African Americans and ambiguously applied to Chicanaos – increased tensions between Chicanaos and African Americans. Chicanaos occupied a complicated “middle” ground that depended on skin color, class, and the whim of European American business owners and police. At times Chicanaos were treated better than African Americans in hotels, theaters, or restaurants. Chicanaos were occasionally able to enjoy “White only” spaces which caused ill feelings among African Americans. Other times Chicanaos, especially those who were “darker” were barred from “White only” spaces and harassed by European American police and European American residents. On other occasions, Chicanaos were the victimizers. Political organizations such as The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) based its civil rights strategy on the grounds of being White (legally they were supposed to be), and sometimes disassociated itself from African Americans, which frustrated African American Civil Rights activists (Phillips 2011: 136-146). Rather than pass this off as simply a racist act, Michael Phillips cautions that there was a complex situation that Chicanaos were trying to navigate, and often times were limited in their choices in a society that only recognized “Black” and “White” identities. He asserts it is more of a lesson in understanding how a small European American elite held on to power by creating the conditions that pitting marginalized groups against each other (Phillips 2011: 136-146).

Despite tensions between Chicanaos/Mexicans and African Americans, they also collaborated to fight social injustices imposed by European Americans. As mentioned in the previous chapter, African Americans and Chicanaos helped each other fight school

segregation by sharing strategies with each other. Another example occurs in 1937 when the Mexican and African American Service Employee Union Local Number 84 succeeded in winning a twelve-month employment guarantee and other benefits from the school district (Mason 1998: 252). Yet another is an African American and Chicanao coalition for education equality that in 1947 succeeded in getting an African American official voted onto the San Antonio City School Board (Fisk University News, *Race Relations* 1947: 161).

Another space of collaboration explored in the following chapters is the San Antonio music scene in the bars, clubs, and other establishments that became what Brady calls, “counter-spaces.” Some examples take place in the 1930s when the Works Progress Administration created by executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt helped a number of interracial jazz bands start up on the east side and were led by African American musicians (Mason 1998: 254). In the 1940s and 50s a handful of interracial clubs opened their doors. These kinds of clubs existed before, but two prominent clubs, the Keyhole Club and the Eastwood Country Club specifically advertised themselves as interracial nightspots, and in doing so, politicized themselves. These musical venues brought together African Americans, European Americans, Chicanos, and Mexicans to enjoy locally and nationally known artists. The relationships made in these counter-spaces challenged and slowly chipped away at segregation policy.

This brief history of San Antonio provides examples of Chicanao subjectivity as a *thirdspace*. It is a history that disrupts the racial binary of White/Black, geographical binary of U.S./Mexico, and the musical binary of constructed “White” and “Black” music, or American and non-American music; and allows us to recognize the deeply linked racial formations and cultural products of Chicanos, African Americans, and European Americans.

Towards a New Representation

The Chicanao experience as thirdspace allows me to rethink music style in a way that breaks apart the Black/White paradigm that has long guided representations of U.S. popular music. Referring back to Torres, critical mestizaje stresses that Chicanaos do not simply appropriate musical genres, they take things that are in sync with their own sense of self and synthesize and hybridize them in order to express a unique cultural identity (Torres 2006: 89). Using the framing, I can recognize a Chicano approach to jazz, rhythm & blues, and rock & roll, rather than a lack of African American skill in those styles. It also does not make my analysis depend on musical markers of racialized difference – meaning I do not need to search for distinct musical characteristics that “sound” Chicanao in order to claim Chicanao participation and innovation in U.S. popular music, especially when such musical markers are not always present. What kinds of knowledge do I obtain searching for markers of racialized difference between songs by a Chicano and an African American artist to compare and contrast, other than reify the racialized boundaries that keep them apart? The questions that are more important to ask include: Why were Chicanaos drawn to rhythm & blues? What were the processes of learning to play it? How did they engage it creatively? What did it mean to them and their audiences when they performed it? And what does that mean for Chicanao culture generally?

The work of Anzaldúa, Torres, and Brady guide my narrative so that I do not essentialize Chicanao music making as a set of fixed traits rooted in a Mexican past and which remain consistent throughout a historical trajectory of Chicanao music making. Of course the concept “Chicano soul” itself is a construction, a racial project, an act of

visualizing and signifying borders that enclose and define. This is okay, because no matter how careful I am in representing Chicano soul in this narrative, there is no way to entirely avoid doing essentialism. This is the nature and the complexity of the social construction of identity. However, I can construct a musical style in a way that embraces its incongruities and contradictions, and is open to reinterpretation and transformation. For this reason, I identify Chicano music making in terms of its mixture and interconnectedness with other identities and music styles.

Scholars have made the mistake of essentializing Chicano music making. Manuel Peña, for example, in his books *The Texas-Mexican Conjunto* (1985) and *The Mexican American Orquesta* (1999), constructs an ethnic and class boundary that produces one identity of “authenticity” (*conjunto*) and another of “assimilation” (*orquesta*). He champions *conjunto* music as the authentic because of its loyalty to *lo Mexicano* (that which is Mexican) and its roots in working-class communities, and criticizes the *orquesta* for its mixture that reflects a desire to join dominant European American society. However, the music of *conjunto* itself is born from mixture of the same European and European American characteristics. For example, the accordion and *polca* rhythm – two aspects essential to the style – come from the encounter with German and Eastern European immigrants. The pioneers that influenced today’s *conjunto* music style – such as Conjunto Bernal, Esteban Jordan, Flaco Jimenez, and others – innovated by integrating influences from jazz, rhythm & blues, rock & roll, country, and Latin-Caribbean music.

Considering the history of racial projects in the U.S. that have disenfranchised people of color and pitted them against each other, I frame Chicano soul as a politicized expression that signifies the struggle for inclusion into American society by finding connection to and

transforming rhythm & blues, rock & roll, and other styles through interpretative mixture (Torres 2006: 96). The artists interviewed in this study were aware of the implications of being Chicano, and the limits that put on their participation in music(s) that were deemed “Black” or “White.” For this reason, Chicano artists hid their identities, such as anglicizing their names to appear “near-White,” to have any chance at getting recorded or reaching audiences outside of their communities. At the same time, Chicano artists felt connected to African Americans because they shared similar experiences of racism and experiences as poor and working-class communities. Rhythm & blues became a medium for Chicano artists to express a relational experience with African Americans, and more so, to fight racial oppression and exclusion by participating in a counter-space centered on inclusion and mixture.

It is important to note that this perspective on mixture in Chicano music making can – and should – be applied to African and European American music making. To examine the mixture in Chicano music making and recognize its connections to other groups brings forth the mixture that has produced African American and European American music. Recalling the concept of “thirding,” Chicano critical *mestizaje* is a framework for scholars to rethink the constructions of “Black” and “White” music in a way that also opens them up to include multiple relational and competing experiences. For example, African American popular music styles go beyond rhythm & blues, soul, funk, hip hop (which all contain mixture) to include rock, punk, and others associated as “White” music. African American artists and scholars have spoken to this issue such as hip hop artists De La Soul, Trey Ellis in “The New Black Aesthetic” (1989), Matthew Morgan and James Spooner’s documentary *Afro-Punk* (2003), and Maureen Mahon in *Right to Rock: The Black Rock Coalition and the*

Cultural Politics of Race (2004).

In the following chapter, I will review scholarship that has recovered Chicanao and Mexican histories of participation in jazz and bring forth the interconnections between Chicanos, Mexicans, African Americans and European Americans in jazz that starts in New Orleans in the late 1800s to its transition into rhythm & blues in Los Angeles in the 1940s. Chicanao theories of subjectivity help shape this narrative, and intend for the reader to be mindful of the colonial histories and racialized and classed formations, and of the intersections between Chicanos, African Americans, and European Americans that challenge the constructedness of those identities.

Chapter 3: Chicanao and African American Convergences in Jazz

Taking from Gaye Johnson, this chapter situates Chicanao participation in jazz as a meeting point in a centuries-long parallel and series of convergences between African American and Chicanao suppression and cultural expression (Johnson 2008: 226). Centuries of conflict between nations fighting for power continually uproot marginal communities, forcing them to search for alternatives and allies in their struggle for equality. To deal with oppression and racism from European American society, African Americans and Chicanos expressed their humanity through music and created alternative spaces of inclusion in a society that repeatedly dehumanized them and denied them full citizenship. The history of popular music shows that the dancehalls, clubs, and other venues provided space for encounter, conflict, collaboration, and transformation for communities and for U.S. society. Jazz is one example between Chicanos and African Americans that challenges the jazz scholarship canon that aligns itself with the Black/White paradigm.

Two sites provide examples of Chicanao participation in jazz: the development of early jazz in New Orleans (1880-1920), and big band jazz, swing and jump blues in Los Angeles (1930-1950). New Orleans, an important center for the development of jazz, has a long-standing political and cultural relation with Chicanao communities in Texas before and after 1848, the year corresponding to the acquisition of the territory by the U.S. The institution of slavery, conflict between nations and states, and economic trade displaced African Americans, Mexicans, Chicanos, Afro-Mestizos, Mulattos, and Indigenous people, forcing them to migrate between Mexico and the U.S. In the ebb and flow of migration, these communities formed relationships and cultures not congruent with popular notions of U.S. or Mexican national identities. In the early history of New Orleans were a number of Chicanao

and Mexican musicians who played with and taught Creole and African American musicians now considered early jazz pioneers. A re-reading of this musical history will show that Chicanaos have been involved in U.S. popular music from the beginning. Furthermore, the fact that Chicano soul musicians in San Antonio were deeply inspired by and worked with Louisiana artists such as Fats Domino, Lloyd Price, Clifton Chenier, Joe Barry (Joe Barrios) and T.K Hulin demonstrates the numerous convergences of musical communities.

Los Angeles in the 1930s was another meeting point. Once the capital of Alta California governed by the Afro-Mestizo Pío de Jesús Pico,⁴⁶ Los Angeles was a bustling metropolitan center in the early 1900s.⁴⁷ The completion of the railroad, discovery of oil, and the film and recording industries that flocked there, attracted many Texas Chicanaos and jazz musicians from New Orleans. With the influx of migrants, multiracial working-class neighborhoods emerged, such as in Watts and Boyle Heights. The mixture of Chicanaos, African Americans, Eastern and Southern European immigrants, and Japanese nurtured the growth of a jazz scene that was different from cities in the east and south. Chicanaos participated in this scene as jazz aficionados, known as *pachucos*, and as aspiring musicians. By the late 1940s, Chicano musicians were fusing jazz, jump blues, Afro-Caribbean rhythms and pachuco aesthetics that reflected their specific urban multicultural experience in Los Angeles.

New Orleans

As popular scholarship depicts, jazz music began in New Orleans and eventually spread to cosmopolitan centers such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco between 1900

⁴⁶ For a biography of Pío de Jesús Pío, see Salomon (2010).

⁴⁷ For a general history of Los Angeles, see Fogelson (1993).

and 1920, then becoming a national sensation. However, there are still competing debates about the origins of jazz. According to Lawrence Gushee, these can be generalized as such: the most popular is a New Orleans origin, another argues that jazz started in more than one place around the same time, and lastly, some conclude that “jazz” was a term applied to ragtime dance music that became popular in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco (Gushee 2005: 13-18). Rather than continue this debate here, New Orleans – whether the origin of jazz or not – profoundly shaped the music later to be called “jazz.”

Taking New Orleans as an important source for early jazz, we must consider the city’s connection to the Caribbean, which according to Thomas Fiehrer, brings into question whether it is accurate to call early jazz an “American” musical form. He asserts that early jazz is more accurately an “Afro-Latin-American” musical phenomenon informed by three geographical traditions: Western Europe, West Africa, and the Caribbean Basin (Fiehrer 1991). Furthermore, it is more precise to say these geographical traditions were not always transmitted through their respective communities we associate with these traditions: Europeans, Africans, and Caribbean people. The following jazz history shows traditions such as Western European music or Afro-Caribbean music were also transmitted through Chicano and Mexican musicians.

Founded in 1718, New Orleans was first governed by the French (1718 – 1764) and then the Spanish (1764-1800), then the French again (1800-1803) and lastly by the U.S. with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Because it was previously a French and Spanish territory, New Orleans was culturally closer to other French and Spanish territories like those in the Caribbean, making it different from the U.S. It also was an important port under the French and Spanish for the export and import of goods. Under U.S. control, it continued to be an

important port for the slave trade, but it never lost its connections to French and Spanish Caribbean territories (Narváez 1994: Johnson 2008). Along with French, Creoles, Afro-Mestizos, and free and enslaved African Americans, the city continued to receive immigrants of mixed-race African descent from Haiti, Cuba, and Mexico. In the 1830s New Orleans received large numbers of German and Irish immigrants, adding to the complex diversity of the city.

Musician Demographics

A few years after the U.S takeover of New Orleans, its overall population grew tremendously. In 1800, the population was about 8,000 people (Washburne 1997: 64), and in 1810 the population increased to about 27,200. By 1840 the population grew to about 102,200 people.⁴⁸ Within the rising population of New Orleans, was a rising professional musician population. According to musicologist Lawrence Gushee, the number of registered musicians and music teachers in 1870 was 222. Of these, 80 percent of them were foreign born French, German, Austrian, Swiss, and Italian. The other 20 percent were native born which included three African Americans, seven Mulattos, and one European American. A decade later the number increased but Gushee notes a huge shift. In 1880 the number of foreign born drops to 45 percent, and the number of African American musicians increases to about fifty. By 1910 the number of African American musicians doubles (Gushee 1994: 6-7). But we have to be reminded that musicians designated as “negro” or “colored” in these registers included mixed race people of African descent. As discussed, dominant European American society viewed race as a dichotomy in which only Black and White was

⁴⁸ See *Abstract of the Census Legislation of the United States* website link: <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1850a-02.pdf>

recognized and surveys did not take into account racial mixture. Scholars have documented that the ethnic makeup of these musicians was very diverse. These include French, Spanish, Cubans, Haitians, Germans, Italians, Mexicans, African Americans, Native Americans, and large numbers of Creoles (Kmen 1966; Fiehrer 1991).

Even though the musician population of New Orleans was diverse, it has been historically portrayed as “Black” because of dichotomous racial perceptions informed by notions of racial distinctions and purity. Anyone with “African” features and dark skin was thought to be simply “Black,” wiping away the diversity within the African American experience that included the complex histories of Creoles, Mulattos, Afro-Cubans, and Afro-Mestizos. Social policy also further perpetuated this view such as the 1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* court decision that legalized racial segregation between European Americans and African Americans, and the “One-drop Rule” of 1910 that defined anyone with at least 1/16 African blood as “Negro.” Many accounts in newspapers and editorials from the early 1900s describe New Orleans jazz bands that toured the U.S. as “Negro” or “Colored” bands even though these bands consisted of mixed-race Creole musicians. This is also true for many musicians labeled as “White.” Such bands like Jack Papa Laine’s Reliance Band had light-skinned African American and Latino members.

Musical Environment

The diverse musical environment in 1800s New Orleans gave rise to early jazz music. There existed French and Italian opera, the balls that featured dance music based on European social dances and their reconfigurations from the Caribbean, drum and fife bands, militia brass bands, African and Afro-Caribbean music performed in the famous Congo

Square, African American blues in the honky-tonks, string bands, and Mexican bands performing renditions of European and Caribbean music. These musical practices provided musicians with a vast repertoire to draw from and experiment with to get people dancing and to make a name for themselves.

Cuba has a long connection to music making in New Orleans. As early as 1836, a Cuban opera troupe from Havana moved to New Orleans and was considered the best in the western hemisphere (Fernandez 2002: 14). Throughout opera's popularity, Cuban musicians and composers repeatedly visited New Orleans to perform and some remained to make the city their new home (Kmen 1966: 140-163). The Onward Brass Band of the 1890s – to some known as the best brass band in town – had Cuban and Mexican members. One such member, Manuel Perez from Havana, was influential to jazz pioneer Louis Armstrong who said, "Manuel and Joe King Oliver played together in the Onward Brass Band, really something to listen to when they played for parades and funerals" (Armstrong & Thomas 2001: 26). The Onward Brass Band performed in Cuba around 1884, and later in 1898 when members of the band went to Cuba as the Ninth Volunteer Infantry Immune Band during the Spanish-American War (Sublette 2007: 324). Surely they must have encountered Cuban music and brought back new musical ideas.

Haiti provides another strong connection between New Orleans and the Caribbean, and strengthens the Cuban connection. During the Haitian Revolution that started in 1790 an estimated number of 10,000 to 30,000 Haitians of mixed-race fled to Cuba and lived there until they were forced to relocate again during tensions between Spain and France that led to war in the 1820s. The exact number that fled from Cuba to New Orleans is not known. The Haitian refugees brought with them musical traditions from Haiti and others they picked up

in Cuba. It is said that Haitian refugees established the first light opera theatre in New Orleans in 1792 (Kmen 1966: 56-60; Fiehrer 1991: 24). A child of these immigrants and established composer, Louis M. Gottschalk traveled to Cuba, Puerto Rico and other islands in the 1850s. Inspired by what he heard, he wrote many pieces such as “Ojos Criollos” which had similar rhythmic characteristics to piano ragtime, but predated it by almost forty years.

The Mexican Connection in Early Jazz

A historical relationship exists between New Orleans and Mexico, which involves U.S. African Americans, Creoles, Mexicans, and Afro-Mestizos that has not received its due attention by scholars. In the U.S./Mexican borderlands and along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico existed many towns established by Afro-Mestizos; some runaway slaves, others Mulattos and Creoles from the U.S.⁴⁹ Before the Mexican-American War in 1846, the area now known as Texas (which borders Louisiana) was part of Mexico, making New Orleans closer in proximity to the Mexican border. After 1848 when the border moved further south, the region continued to have a different racial climate than other parts of the U.S. because of its history as part of Mexico, the Mexican residents who stayed, and the continuous migration of Mexicans into the area. The growing hostility from Anglo settlers towards Mexicans and their persistence in establishing slavery against Mexican law was conducive to relations between African Americans and Mexicans. For instance, Mexican officials repeatedly tried to keep Anglos from bringing slaves, and in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, they unsuccessfully attempted to outlaw slavery in the ceded territories. There are also accounts of Mexican troupes aiding escaped slaves cross the border (Tyler 1974; Narvaéz 1994: 4).

⁴⁹ For more on this history see: Tyler (1974), Mason (1998), Lewis (2000), Vinson (2006), Richmond (2007), and Weik (2008).

To escape the escalating anti-African American sentiment from European Americans, New Orleans Creoles and free African Americans left to parts of northern Veracruz. With the help of the Mexican government, a number of agricultural collectives were established in the 1850s. One was the Eureka Colony near the town of Papantla, Veracruz which was founded by a New Orleanian Creole, Louis Nelson Foucher. In 1859 he contracted with a Mexican family to purchase a large amount of farmland for 100 Creole families. That same year a number of legislative proposals were presented, some called for the slavery of all free African Americans who did not leave the state and for the confiscation of property (Kinzer 1993: 100). Fearing their livelihood, in 1860 there was a “mass exodus” of free African Americans and Creoles to Mexico. The Eureka Colony was set up to be an agricultural collective but it did not last long because of a major fire. Many of the residents moved to Tampico and others went back to New Orleans. Also leading to migration was the South’s dependence on trade with Mexico because the northern states blocked traditional confederate trade outlets. Creoles moved to Mexico and frequently visited to start merchant businesses to establish trade with New Orleans. This relationship lasted well into the 1900s (Johnson 2008: 228).

The relationship between New Orleans and Mexico and the migration of Creoles becomes an important link in early jazz history. Part of this migration was the influential Tio family, a family of clarinetists and music instructors in New Orleans. Although the Tios’ Mexican heritage has been highlighted in jazz writings, the Tio family was a mix of Spanish, French, and African Heritage. Their family history starts with Louis Hazeur, a Creole senior musician in the band of the First Battalion of Free Men of Color established between 1812 and 1814 (Kinzer 1992: 349). The Battalion was made up of Creole men of French, Spanish,

and African American heritage whom were native to New Orleans. The band was the second largest of the American Armed forces bands stationed in the city. There is little evidence that determines the exact instruments used, but scholars speculate the band consisted of drums, fifes, clarinets, horns, and cymbals (Kinzer 1992: 353). These militia bands became very important in New Orleans towards the later part of the 1800s, especially for funeral marches that became a community custom in New Orleans. The militia bands were also hired for other events that required music, making them an important part of city life and celebration. In the summer of 1860 Louis Hazeur left for the Eureka Colony with his daughter, Athénais Tio, to join son-in-law Thomas Louis Marcos Tio who settled there in 1859.

Thomas and Athénais had two more children in Mexico in the 1860s, Antoine Louis Tio born in the Eureka Colony and Augustine Lorenzo Tio (Sr.) born in Tampico a few years later. They began studying clarinet at an early age, probably from their father who had been a professional clarinetist in New Orleans. In 1877 the family returned to New Orleans. There, Louis and Lorenzo became prominent musicians and well-known teachers of musicians who later became known as early jazz pioneers. During their musical careers, they played and led brass bands, theater orchestras, and dance bands. They also toured nationally with minstrel groups, including The Georgia Minstrels, Oliver Scott's Mastodon Minstrels, and Richard, Pringle, Rusco & Holland's Minstrels. In the 1880s they both worked with the Excelsior Brass Band that included influential musicians such as John Robichaux, George Baquet, Alphonse Picou (Kinzer 1996).

Aside from being well-established performers, the two brothers also received a supplemental income as music teachers. Scholar Charles Kinzer concludes that the teaching style of the Tios was rigorous but effective because most of their students went on to be very

accomplished musicians in orchestras and jazz bands (Kinzer 1966). Their approach to teaching clarinet involved solfège sight singing, ear training, intonation, site-reading skills, and harmony; and they taught other instruments and skills such as conducting. Their students had to master solfège sight singing before they could even touch an instrument. Both brothers did not teach skills of early jazz such as improvisation as a separate topic. They actually disapproved of it, especially Louis Tio. They focused on “traditional” techniques of reading, hearing, and technical skills such as tone production. Well-known orchestra and early jazz musicians studied under their guidance, including George and Achille Baquet, Sidney Bechet, Barney Brigard, Louis “Big Eye” Nelson DeLisle, Emile Barnes, Paul Beaulieu, Charles Elgar, Alphonse Picou, Charles McCurdy, Joseph Bloom (Kinzer 1996).

The Son of Lorenzo Sr., Lorenzo Tio Jr. also became a well-known musician in New Orleans. Lorenzo Jr., trained by his father and uncle, mastered traditional musical skills in reading, hearing, transposing, playing techniques, and composition. He also found great interest in the emerging jazz style of the 1900s and developed his skills at improvisation. This combination led him to be the leading clarinetist in New Orleans and admired by many emerging jazz musicians. He was very active in the community of early jazz musicians. He played in the Onward and Excelsior brass bands, in dance orchestras such as Freddie Keppard’s Olympia Orchestra, Bunk Johnson’s Eagle Band, and Armand J. Piron’s New Orleans Orchestra, and collaborated with jazz pioneers Joe “King” Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton. Lorenzo Tio Jr. helped spread New Orleans early jazz to other major cities. In 1916 he traveled to Chicago with a band led by Manuel Perez and in 1923 and 1924 went to New York with A.J. Piron’s New Orleans Orchestra to perform at Cotton Club and Roseland Ballroom. While in New York he made a series of recordings with the orchestra.

Lorenzo Jr. was also a composer and it is known that he sold some of his compositions when we moved to New York in in 1930. According to some of his students, he wrote "Dreamy Blues," which was used as a theme song by the Piron Orchestra in the 1920s. Later it resurfaced as "Mood Indigo," with composition credit under Barney Bigard and Duke Ellington. (Kinzer 1966: 295; Van Vorst 2006).⁵⁰ As did his father and uncle, Lorenzo Tio Jr. became an admired music instructor. He gave instruction to young aspiring jazz musicians and helped fellow band mates push their skills to new levels. His students include Barney Bigard, Jimmie Noone, Omer Simeon who he met while in Chicago, Albert Nicholas, and Johnny Dodds, Louis Cottrell Jr., Adolphe Alexander Jr., Harold Dejan, Darnell Howard who played with Earl Hines and Fletcher Henderson, Don Albert, Peter Duconge, Lawrence Duhé, Tony Giardina, Sidney Vigne, Louis Warnick, and Wade Whaley (Kinzer 1996).

Another Mexican connection occurs in the 1880s with the arrival of Mexican bands in New Orleans. Previously, Cuban rhythms like the *contradanza habanera*⁵¹ made their way to New Orleans through Cuban musicians who visited or stayed permanently in New Orleans, or from New Orleans musicians who brought it back from their visits in Cuba, such as Louis Moreau Gottschalk. The habanera also made it way to Mexico before coming to the U.S. and in the hands of Mexican musicians; it took on its own flavor. The "Eighth Cavalry Mexican Band" performed in the 1884 "World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition" in New Orleans (Stewart 1991: 1-6; Roberts 1979: 2-3), introducing locals to Mexican renditions of *waltzes*, *mazurkas*, *schottiches*, and *danzas* (Mexican variation of the *habanera*). These compositions became the rage in New Orleans, especially the *danzas*. Their impact can be

⁵⁰ Article can be found online at www.jazzology.com/jazzbeat.php?id=33

⁵¹ This genre originating from Cuba became popular throughout Latin America before coming to the U.S. it became popular in Argentina eventually evolving into the tango. Its rhythm lies within a repeated 2/4 bass figure in which an elongated eighth note is followed by a sixteenth note and two eighth notes. See John Storm Roberts (1979).

measured by the numerous sheet music publications of songs performed by the band and the posters and advertisements for these publications that boast, “selling over 200,000 copies” of “Mexican Music” or “music as played by the Mexican Band” (Roberts 1979, Fernandez 2002, Stewart 1991). Their popularity brought them back in 1891, 1898, and 1920. The impact of Mexican musicians has been recognized by early jazz musicians such as Jelly Roll Morton, who referred to it as the “Spanish tinge,” and European American ragtime pianist, Ben Harney, who wrote in a ragtime instruction book, “Ragtime originally takes its initiative steps from Spanish, or rather Mexico, where it is under the head names of habanera, danza, seguidilla, etc.” (Roberts 1979: 10).

It is not clear if there already existed a liking for Mexican bands or if this popularity started after the 1884 appearance of the Eighth Calvary Mexican Band. It is known that a number of Mexican bands continued to perform in New Orleans well into the 1920s such as La Orquesta Tipica Mexicana (1893), The Mexican Artistic Quintet (1907), and the Mexican National Band (1920) (Stewart 1991). These bands also toured northern cities for other expositions such as the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo on June 14, 1901 in which the First Artillery Band from Mexico City and the Havana Municipal Band from Cuba performed.⁵²

Several other Mexican musicians lived and performed in New Orleans, but there is little information about them. Some of these musicians arrived with the Mexican Bands and stayed in New Orleans. These include Manuel Guerra who was a teacher of trombonist Eddie Edwards who played in the Original Dixieland Jass Band; and Florencio Ramos, a saxophonist who played mainly with orchestras and a few jazz bands in the 1920s. Like the

⁵² See the University at Buffalo Libraries Website: <http://library.buffalo.edu/libraries/exhibits/panam/>.

Tios, Florencio became a music teacher in New Orleans but we do not know who studied with him. He is also known as the first resident saxophonist in New Orleans. There is no strong evidence to confirm this, but it is known he was playing saxophone on a regular basis as early as 1890 (Stewart 1991: 6-7; Stewart 1994: 4). Another is Leonardo Viscarra who arrived in New Orleans 1889, and played for a short time with one of Jack “Papa” Laine’s early bands. The Reliance Brass Band, often referred to by scholars as a “White” band, was not necessarily so. Papa Laine was not jazz musician, but he was a good scout for talent. Many of the musicians he hired went on to become important jazz figures in New Orleans. Many of these musicians were not European American, but people who could pass for European American such as Achilles Baquet, a Creole of color, and many musicians with Spanish surnames.

Another musician we know a little about is Joseph “Sou Sou” Oramous, a guitar and mandolin player. He played in a band called the Sonora Orchestra that also included musicians who played in Papa Laine’s band. Oramous also played with musicians who later became the Original Dixieland Jass Band, and is pictured playing guitar with Emile “Stalebread” Lacoume’s band in 1906. Another example is Bunk Johnson’s music teacher, said to be a Mexican named Wallace Cutchey (Stewart 1991: 2; Johnson 2008). Abraham “Chink” Martin was a guitar player who is said to be of Spanish and Mexican descent, but Lawrence Gushee claims he is Spanish and Filipino, which might explain his nickname “Chink.” Nonetheless, he was connected to bands and musicians of Latino heritage such as the Reliance Brass Band and the Sonora Orchestra of Sou Sou Oramous. He also spoke of sections in the French Quarter where there were communities of Mexican, Spanish and Puerto Ricans. He learned guitar from a Mexican teacher, and used to play in Mexican and

Puerto Rican string ensembles. Lastly there are brothers Manuel and Leonce Mello who are known as Mexican and played in the Reliance Brass Band (Roberts 1979; 37 Stewart 1991: 2).

Other musicians may have been Mexican such as Alcide “Yellow” Nuñez and Ray Lopez, whose racial background, scholars have not confirmed. According to scholar Raul Fernandez, Nuñez was of Mexican and Spanish heritage (Fernandez 2002: 25), but others claim he was Spanish and French (Gushee 2002). Alcide Nuñez was a clarinetist and a key jazz musician in New Orleans. He played with Frank Christian's Ragtime Band, Tom Brown's Band from Dixieland, Stein's Dixieland Band that later evolved into the Original Dixieland Jass Band, and led his own group, the Louisiana Five. Interestingly, The Original Dixieland Jass Band (ODJB) also had a history of working with Latino and Creole musicians up until their recording in 1917, known as the “first jazz recording.” In October 1916, Alcide was fired from the band just before their recording in January 1917. Ray Lopez’s background is unconfirmed as well, but often referred to as Spanish. He also started in Laine’s band about 1906 and later in 1915, went to Chicago with Tom Brown’s Band from Dixieland (Charters 2008: 111-125). In 1920 he moved Los Angeles to join Abe Lyman's California Orchestra (Gushee 2002: 8). These two musicians may have very well been Spanish, but one has to remember the racism that existed at the time. It is likely they may have been Mexican, but since they were lighter skinned, may have identified as Spanish as a means to avoid racist antagonisms against them.

Conclusions on New Orleans

In examining the history New Orleans jazz, what becomes apparent is that it is rooted

in a racially diverse community connected to the Caribbean and Mexico. Cubans, Haitians, Mexicans, Creoles and African Americans contributed to its development. Once jazz became nationally popular in the U.S. in the 1920s, it traveled back to the Caribbean islands from which it had drawn many influences (Averill 1989; Austerlitz 1998; Pinckney 1989, 1992, 1994). As a result, the introduction of jazz spawned new jazz scenes that tried to imitate what they heard from the U.S., but in doing so, created new flavors of jazz music as they added elements from their own musical traditions. Consequently the jazz-influenced music of the islands gets imported back into the U.S. through migration caused by its economic and political presence in the Caribbean. As jazz scholars continue to dig into the history of New Orleans more resurfaces about early musicians with Spanish surnames or references to “Spanish” musicians. We may never know the history of these people, but we can say that the cultural environment in New Orleans that created the conditions for early jazz music did indeed have connections to Cuban and Mexican culture. By bringing in Latino experiences into the canonical jazz narrative, it calls for a reconceptualization of jazz history.

Chicanos in the Los Angeles Jazz Scene

As jazz music took root in the ballrooms, dancehalls, and small clubs of major cities in the 1920s, it continued to evolve by taking on the local character of urban communities. The racial climate in California was different from the northeast and the south because of the presence of Latinos (who were predominantly Chicanos) and Asian communities. Nevertheless, in Los Angeles during times of segregation and strict policing of the color line between European Americans and African Americans, the dancehalls and clubs existed as alternative spaces that challenged the color line. Places such as downtown’s Central Avenue

became an important hub for jazz music and a place of racial mixing where Chicanaos, African Americans, Filipinos, Japanese, European Americans, and others would go from club to club to see nationally recognized musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, and Glenn Miller (Dje Dje & Meadows 1998, Otis 1993). Apart from downtown, other venues in working-class neighborhoods provided spaces for local multi-racial jazz bands to perform. During times of segregation and increasing hostility towards people of color, this kind of open display of race mixing on the stage and dance floor was perceived as an outrage and a social danger. European American authorities enforced stricter segregation policy in their neighborhoods and businesses, and used the police to harass local venues that had diverse audiences (Pagán 2003: 50).

The rich multicultural environment of the 1930s and 1940s in Los Angeles' working-class neighborhoods raised a cohort of jazz musicians from many backgrounds. This history provides an example of Chicanao's continued participation in jazz music and their inventiveness in reshaping it to reflect their urban experiences. However, the segregated music industry and musician's unions, and the major dancehall circuit often excluded Chicanaos which has consequently kept them out of the canonical jazz narrative. I was reminded of this when reading "Lester Young: Master of Jive" by Douglas Daniels (1985). Part way through, is a picture of a band playing at the Capri Club in Los Angeles in 1942. Present are Lester Young, Arthur Twyne, Gardiner Paul Campbell, Hubert Myers, Lee Young, and Red Callender; all musicians who have been written about a fair amount. Hidden within the group is a guitarist, named Louis Gonzales, who apparently played with a lot of big names in Los Angeles, but his story has never prompted scholars to inquire into his history. (Gonzalez is pictured in Daniels 1985: 315; and mentioned in Macias 2001). Later in

this section I will revisit the story of Louis Gonzalez.

To ignore the Chicanao experience in Los Angeles jazz history disregards an important youth culture that sustained the jazz musicians, promoters, and club owners. Calling themselves *pachucos*,⁵³ Chicanao youth aligned themselves with African American jazz hipsters by adopting aspects of jazz culture. Through jazz music, style, and language, pachucos expressed an alternative “American” identity that challenged both dominant society and the older Chicanao community (Alvarez 2001). This collaboration between Chicanao and African American youth who lived in the same neighborhoods or alongside each other provides another “meeting point” that deserves scholarly inquiry.

Pachuco Origins and Experience in Los Angeles

Despite the misperception that pachucos were gang members, pachucos were primarily Chicanao youth who identified with jazz music, but also Latin-Caribbean genres such as *rumba* and *mambo*, and Mexican/Chicanao music of the southwest such as the *corrido*. This view runs contrary to popular examinations of pachuco/a culture which starts in the 1950s. Informed by racist stereotypes, early scholars examined pachucas/os as examples of gangs to reinforce Chicanao’s so called violent nature and inability to assimilate in U.S. society.⁵⁴ As Laura Cummings calls for in *Cloth-Wrapped People, Trouble, and Power: Pachuco Culture in the Greater Southwest* (2003) one must look at the history of the terms “gang” or “delinquent” and their use to label young men of color. Although they indeed flirted with gangster images, pachuco’s public display of fashion, music tastes, and attitude

⁵³ I will keep with the Spanish language grammar and use *pachucos* or pachuco/a to identify both male and female, and use *pachuco* for men and *pachuca* for women.

⁵⁴ For such literature, see George R. Alvarez (1967), Emory S. Bogardus (1943), Lurline H. Coltharp (1965), Paul Lerman (1967), Ralph Turner (1956).

was a strategy to assert themselves into American society of which politicians, police, and wealthy European Americans kept them out.

The term *pachuco* was used by urban Chicanaos to denote an economic class of Chicanaos and Mexicans in the southwest in the 1930s, similar to the term *hick*. The etymology of *pachuco* is still uncertain. One of the most popular theories traces it back to El Paso, Texas. During the 1930s, large numbers of workers traveled by freight train from west Texas to California in search of work. It is believed that many were from El Paso. One version states that El Paso was known among these migrants as *El Chuco*. When they would return to *El Chuco* they were said to be going “*pa’ El Chuco*.” Eventually this phrase became condensed to *pa’chuco* and became the name of these migrant workers (Guerrero 2002). A slightly different version says that El Paso was simply called, in pachuco slang, El Pasuco or El Pachuco (Macias 2008: 87).

Scholars have speculated that many of these migrant workers belonged to a border culture known as *tirilis*. The word *tirili* or “reefer man” was the name given to a group of Mexicans who trafficked marijuana within the borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico. They were known to be devout followers of a theology that mixed Catholicism and native beliefs and wore elaborate tattoos on the forearms, neck, chest and sometimes a tattooed cross on the forehead (Cummings 2003). *Tirilis* spoke *caló*, an idiom which can be traced back to Spanish gypsies who spoke an encoded form of Spanish called *zincaló* (Mazon, 1984: 3). Looked upon by the conquistadores as an argot of the criminal, poor, and uneducated, *zincaló* made its way to the new world and became utilized by marginalized indigenous communities. The *tirili* became a mythic figure similar to the “outlaw” because they lived by their own rules, undermining both the U.S. and Mexican authorities.

By the 1940s large numbers of young rural and urban Chicanaos in the southwest identified as pachucos. Many formed social clubs with neighborhood peers that acted as support groups in the face of growing antagonisms and violence towards them, as well as an escape from strict Catholic virtues at home. These social clubs paralleled African American youth in the development of a culture that was cool, rebellious, and expressive. They synthesized elements of the jazz hipster: music, style, expressive freedom – and the *tirili*: the mythical outlaw, ability to undermine institutions, and the *caló* idiom. To live “cool” was in part a rebellion against the classist and racist mechanisms working to keep them disenfranchised. This new identity facilitated a dialogue between themselves and the world outside the barrio. Eduardo Obregón Pagán affirms:

By setting up a dichotomy between the hips and the squares, the zooters established a social hierarchy based not so much on material assets as on attitude and personal attributes. It was a way of subverting the capitalistic paradigm that material acquisition lends social status. By creating a social hierarchy based on cool, and all the social attachments that went with it, the hipsters set up a situation in which they were on top (Pagan, 2003: 120).⁵⁵

The fashion of the jazz hipster was one way to publicly display pachuco identity and visually set themselves apart from “squares” or “hicks,” while simultaneously connecting themselves to other marginalized youth nationwide. The zoot suit or “el tacuche” to pachucos consisted of high waisted-baggy pants that were cuffed and pegged at the ankle. The jacket was extra-long stopping at the knees. The complete suit would include double soled shoes, a long pocket chain, and a wide brimmed hat called a “tando.” Unlike the flashy suits of African American “zooters,” pachucos liked more conservative black, brown, grey, and navy blue colors. Zoot suits were expensive, but Chicanao youth saved up their money to have one

⁵⁵ For more on politics of style see Alvarez (2001), Daniels (1997), Ramirez (2002), and Sanchez-Tranquilio (1992).

made by a local tailor. These suits were more for weekend wear or going out to dance. During the week pachucos wore less baggy slacks or a pair of dirty worn out workpants with the cuffs rolled up, white t-shirt, and leather jacket. This style of dress became popular a decade later through Hollywood film (Macias 2008: 84).

Like their male counterparts, pachucas also created codes of style that established a distinct generational and ethnic identity that transgressed both social and physical boundaries. The pachuca style consisted of short skirts, long coats, vibrant makeup, very tall hair styles, tattoos, and at times the wearing a zoot suit. These types of clothing challenged existing symbols of femininity, especially wearing jeans and zoot suits. Pachucas were also known to be outspoken, sharp tongued, and willing to engage in physical confrontation (Ramirez 2002; Cummings 1994). Most likely pachucas became more aggressive to secure a place within society that unequally subjugated women-of-color compared to European American women, as well as to protect themselves from male harassment. Physical boundaries were transgressed as many Chicanas, including many self-identified pachucas, became more involved in the public sphere, replacing men who were being shipped out to fight in WWII (Ramirez 2002: 13). Their display of symbolism and attitude became more visible, threatening dominant society's perceptions of gender and racial norms. Their visibility in turn increased the hostility towards them. Local and national media portrayed them as "whores" and "delinquents," and state intervention increased its establishment of gendered and race-based reform schools (Cummings 1994: 140).

During WWII, European American society perceived the pachuco as a "gangster" which extended to any Chicano kid hanging out in the streets. In general, youth had more leisure time during the war, spent at public institutions such as movie theaters, soda shops,

recreation centers, and dance halls, but most of these places were closed to people of color.⁵⁶ Hanging out in the streets was the only alternative. As the war created a powerful identification with conservative American ideals – thereby creating a sharp distinction between “us” and “them” – Chicanao and other people of color became targets for European Americans to act out their fears. Anyone who did not fit within conservative European American values was instantly marked as un-American, communist, and an enemy. As a result, the extremely visible pachuco became a symbol which embodied the “anti-American” and European Americans used the pachuco image to label all Chicanao youth as gangsters, delinquents, draft dodgers, and drug abusers (Alvarez 2001: 76-83).

The gang association and racial stereotyping was further reinforced by the media. An example is the coverage of *The Sleepy Lagoon Case* of 1942 which involved a group of Chicanao teens accused of killing Jose Diaz at a brawl that had broken out at a house party. Statements made by prosecuting officials about the seventeen young men were ridiculous and outright racist, and illustrate the racist portrayal of Chicanao youth as violent criminals. Lieutenant Edward Duran Ayres of the sheriff’s department and self-proclaimed anthropologist testified against the so called “38th St. Gang” with a series of indictments. He argued that Chicanos were descendants of the “blood thirsty Aztecs who were given over to human sacrifice” (Mirande 1987: 160), and continues to compare them with European Americans:

The Caucasian, especially the Anglo Saxon, when engaged in fighting, particularly among youths, resort to fisticuffs and may at times kick each other....but the Mexican element considers all that to be a sign of weakness, and all he knows and feels is a desire to use a knife...to kill, or at least let blood (Mirande 1987: 160).

⁵⁶ In nearby San Bernadino in 1944, Chicanao and Puerto Rican parents representing a class of 8000 people, sued officials of San Bernadino to gain simple access to a public park. See Perea (1997: 161).

Generally the image in the media of the Chicanao transforms into a criminal one in the years of WWII. Ralph H. Turner and Samuel J. Surace conducted a study (1956) in which they looked at newspaper articles dealing with Chicanaos from the *Los Angeles Times* from the years 1933 to 1943. They found that from 1933 to 1939 the majority of themes tended to be favorable. Most articles used the term “Mexican” and highlighted romanticized stories of Mexico and California’s historic past. However from 1940 up until the riots of 1943, they find a huge shift as the term “Mexican” was gradually replaced by “pachuco” and “zooter” with all their negative associations (Turner and Surace 1956).

Antagonisms and violence against Chicanao youth reached its peak on June 3, 1943 when a riot popularly known *Zoot-Suit Riot* took place and lasted several days. The riot, which really was more of a European American service men’s riot, was the result of escalating tensions between European American servicemen of the Chavez Ravine Naval Base and the adjacent Chicanao barrio. The European American servicemen stationed there were mainly from the south and roamed downtown and Central Avenue to drink and blow off steam before being shipped out to war. On many occasions pachucos came into contact with servicemen in downtown and in their own neighborhoods which sometimes resulted in conflict. On June 3rd a rumor started that a group of pachucos had stabbed a serviceman. Shortly after mobs of servicemen and civilians in taxis escorted by police roamed through downtown and into the Chicanao barrios looking for revenge. Pachucos that were found were beat up, stripped of their clothing which was burned, then arrested by police. European American rage against pachucos turned into racial violence. Older Chicanao men, African Americans, and some Filipino and Asian males were also beat up, yet many of racist acts

were justified by European Americans as doing their part for the war effort by teaching “draft-dodgers” and “gangsters” a lesson (Macias 2008: 72).

On the fifth day of rioting, radio stations were announcing the next convoy of sailors was going to go in to downtown near Central Avenue. Chicano and African American youth used this to their advantage and planned a counter-attack. Some older African Americans around downtown loaned their cars to pachucos so they could bring in people from other barrios to form a downtown defense squad. They set up a trap, luring the sailors and civilians into a lot and surprised them. After many injuries on both sides, servicemen and civilians retreated and police quickly swooped in to arrest the Chicano and African American defense squad. Collaboration between the two groups forced military officials the next day to make Los Angeles off limits to all servicemen (Macias 2008: 112).

Chicano Jazz Musicians

As pachucos supported the city’s jazz musicians in the dance halls and clubs, other Chicano youth were inspired to hone their music skills as jazz musicians. Thanks to Anthony Macias, his book *Mexican American Mojo* (2008) is the first major study of Chicano jazz musicians in Los Angeles. He provides in-depth histories about musicians such as Don Tosti, Lionel Chico Sesma, Paul Lopez, Anthony Ortega, and Lalo Guerrero; and insights into other musicians such as Eddie Cano, Reyes Gaglio, Jesus “Chuy” Ruiz, Bob Hernandez, Raul Diaz, Ray Lugo, Maurice Vendrell, and big bands such as the Phil Carreon Orchestra. Furthermore, there are names of women artists that need further investigation such as Lily Ramírez and Wendy Torres.

In the 1930s, working-class, racially diverse neighborhoods such as Boyle Heights

and Watts had numerous marching bands, orchestras, and jazz bands. These racially mixed bands trained future African American, Chicano, European American, and Japanese jazz musicians. The trombonist, Chico Sesma, joined the marching band at Hollenbeck Junior High School in Boyle Heights in 1936. The band had Jewish, Russian, Asian, Chicano, and African American members, which reflected the diversity of the neighborhood (the band is pictured in Macias 2008: 21). At Jordan High School in Watts, students formed a swing band, the Jordan Hep Cats that had African American and Chicano members, and in the 1940s played many venues outside of Jordan High School.

The few African American music teachers in Los Angeles played important roles in training aspiring Chicano jazz musicians. At Jefferson High, Samuel Browne, an accomplished pianist who held a degree in music education, was the first African American teacher to join the Los Angeles Unified School District in 1933. He taught both African American and Chicano students skills in music reading, harmony, arranging, and composing. He also organized a school swing band, jam sessions and field trips to Hollywood for his students to meet and play with professional musicians. Some of Browne's students include African American musicians Dexter Gordon, Chico Hamilton, and Buddy Collette, and Chicano pianist Charles Caballero, and Jewish/Mexican saxophonist Rene Bloch (Macias 2008: 31-32, 241). Another important figure was Lloyd Reese, a jazz trumpeter and saxophonist, and private music teacher who many African American, European American, and Chicano aspiring musicians sought out to get further instruction outside of the schools bands. He organized Sunday rehearsals at the African American Musicians Union Local for his students to work with older professional musicians. Reese also held rehearsals for students to network and work on arrangements together (Macias

2008: 30). Anthony Ortega, Chico Sesma, Paul Lopez and others studied with Reese, working alongside African American students such as Eric Dolphy and Charles Mingus, who later became well-known jazz musicians.

By 1940, Los Angeles had a handful of fifteen to twenty piece Chicanao jazz bands that provided work for young Chicanao musicians once they graduated from the high school bands. Some of these jazz bands include the orchestras of Sal Cervantez, Phil Carreon, Frank Delgado, Dacita, Freddie Rubio, and Eddy Castillo. Other bands such as the De la Torre Orchestra, the Tilly Lopez Orchestra, and Dacita and her Orquesta were high society bands (Macias 2008: 33; Peña 1999; Loza 1993). These jazz bands played covers of popular jazz tunes, but also mixed in a *rumba*, *mambo*, *cha-cha*, *danzon*, or *bolero*, to appeal to the diverse taste of Chicanao and Mexican audiences. Paul Lopez and Anthony Ortega remember Phillips Music Store in Boyle Heights and hearing Chicanao bands playing in the back of the store in rented practice rooms and where bands could network and find musicians for gigs. The owner, William Phillips, opened the store in 1935, selling instruments, renting practice space and giving music lessons. One of his early drum students became a popular singer who went by the name, Andy Russell, whose real name was Andrés Rábago Pérez (Macias 2008: 33).

Young start-up bands were often multiracial, which reflected the diversity of their neighborhoods and broke the norm of the older, more established jazz bands which were often strictly African American or European American. For example, Anthony Ortega started his own band in high school called the Frantic Five. It included Chicano/Italian Reyes Gaglio on bass, Chuy Ruiz on drums, and African American friends Walter Benton on sax and Jimmy O'Brian on piano. They played regularly the ballrooms in Venice, Long Beach, and

Santa Monica. They even made a recording in the late 1930s in a Hollywood Studio owned by a Jewish producer. They cut a record under the name Ray Vasquez and His Beboppers. Anthony would also spend his time going downtown to sit in on the numerous after hour jam sessions with older established jazz musicians at places like the Downbeat Club, The Crystal Tea Room, and Jack's Basket Room (Macias 2008: 56).

Of the few successful Chicano jazz musicians, an important figure was Edmundo Martinez Tostado, popularly known as Don Tosti. Tosti grew up in El Paso in the infamous *Segundo Barrio*, a notorious pachuco neighborhood. At age fifteen, he moved to L.A., where he began taking saxophone lessons inspired by his hero Ernie Caceres, a Texas Chicano who played in the Glen Miller Orchestra. While in high school, he led a swing orchestra that included Nancy Norman, Al Rothberg, Bernie Menecker, Ray Vasquez, Nelly Gonzalez, Paul Lopez and Chico Sesma. They played at neighborhood weddings, downtown ballrooms such as the Paramount and Avedon, and East LA. His musical talents got him a position as concertmaster from 1939 to 1941 for the All City High School Orchestra that played locally and for national radio broadcasts. To continue fine-tuning his skills, he studied with Lloyd Reese where he met Charles Mingus with whom he became good friends (Macias 2008: 32, 121). He eventually earned a good reputation as a musician, and other Chicano youth sought him out for music instruction. In 1942 his hard work and talent landed him a job with Jack Teagarden's orchestra. Touring throughout the U.S. with Jack Teagarden opened other doors for him. He continued to get jobs with bands including Bobby Sherwood, Les Brown, Charlie Barnet, and Jimmy Dorsey (Peña 1999: 171-172).

In 1948 Tosti was scheduled to record a bolero he wrote with Ruben Reyes, a popular balladeer. Ruben never showed up, so Tosti took the opportunity to record some new

material he had been working on. He called in his friends Raul Diaz, Bob Hernandez, and Eddie Cano to record with him. Tosti and friends sketched out two songs: a jump blues influenced “Pachuco Boogie” and a *guaracha* called “Guisa Gacha.” It is claimed that “Pachuco Boogie” sold over a million copies (Peña 1999: 174; Oakland Tribune Aug 18, 1948 [states 100,000 copies]). Whether this is true or not, many young pachucos began to follow and idolize Tosti because his music resonated with their experiences. In a paper published in 1950, George Carpenter Barker writes about his experiences studying the *caló* slang among pachucos in Tucson, Arizona.

When the song “Pachuco Boogie” first appeared in the machine at the Jukeland concession on West Congress Street, a crowd of young boys stood around it for hours at a time, trying to catch each word of the spoken pachuco monologue contained in the song (Barker 1950: 24).

This gives us a glimpse of the reach and impact Don Tosti’s song had on Chicanao youth. Tosti capitalized on the success of the recording and made a series of boogie songs such as “Wine-O-Boogie,” “El Tirili,” and “Loco” that featured racy lyrics in *caló* mixed with popular jump blues and Afro-Caribbean rhythms of the time.

“Pachuco Boogie” represents a musical synthesis of African American and Chicanao experiences. Tosti modeled the recording after the sounds of jump blues pioneered by Los Angeles based artists such as Louis Jordon, Joe Liggins, and Johnny Otis who were taking the big band sound and stripping it down to a handful of instruments and approaching it with a more driving blues-based approach. Present in “Pachuco Boogie” are boogie woogie piano, walking bass, swinging sax, and smooth catchy lyrical phrases. What makes Tosti’s recording stand out is the use of *caló* lyrics that are not sung but spoken. The music takes a back role to emphasize the narrative giving the song a relaxed, “laidback” feel. A dialogue

takes place between two pachucos getting ready for a night on the town (voiced by Don Tosti and Raul Díaz):

*Boogie, que alalva el boogie
Boogie, que alalva el boogie
Pachuco Boogie...*

RD: Ese, dónde la leeva pues?

DT: Nel ése, pues si no voy ése, vengo del paciente ves. Un lugar que le dicen El Paso, nomas que de allá vienen los pachucos como yo eh.

Me vine acá al Los Ca ve, me vine a parar gara porque aquí esta buti de aquella ese. Aquí se pone buti alerta todo, ve.

Oíga sabe vamos a dar un volteón ése. Vamos y nos ponemos buti tirili, y luego, ay mano pos que suave, se venga, porque quiero que me cante, quiero quele hago mucho al alva? Eh.

Orale ese! Caname una cancioncita ese, nos ponemos buti alerta ése. Cantame, suénele Viejo...suénele!

[scat solo by Raul Diaz]

*Boogie, get in the groove with the boogie
Boogie, get in the groove with the boogie
Pachuco Boogie...*

RD: Where you goin' man?

DT: No man, I'm not goin' but comin' from El Paso, a place called El Paso were pachucos like me come from.

I came to L.A. see, I came to show off my clothes because it's very cool, here everything gets pretty charged up.

Come on let's take a spin man. Come on let's get real high and then bro, we'll be cool,
Come on 'cause I want you to sing,
Give it a lot of soul? Eh.

[Alright] man! Sing me a song, we'll get real charged up. Sing it, hit it man...hit it!

[scat solo by Raul Diaz]

(Translation: Chuy Varela 2001)

Tosti's string of boogie recordings drew from real-life experience and fantasies that pachucos flirted with such as smoking marijuana, drinking, girls, *tirilis*, parties, and dancing. Chicanao youth idolized Tosti because they heard themselves in his musical narratives, and to hear them on radio or in public jukeboxes, which for the most part excluded Chicanos, was a declaration of space they were fighting for in Los Angeles.

Another important figure who contributed to Chicanao jazz was Lalo Guerrero. He

was a cultural chameleon, always articulating what was going on in the Chicanao community through his music. As early as 1946 he recorded traditional *ranchera* songs like “La Pachuquilla” and “El Pachuco y el Tarzan” using *caló* lyric to talk about the pachuco experience of the southwest. It wasn’t until 1949, a year after Don Tosti recorded “Pachuco Boogie,” that Lalo joined in on the pachuco boogie craze in Los Angeles with songs like “Muy Sabroso Blues,” “Marijuana Boogie,” and “Los Chucos Suaves.” Lalo was not a pachuco himself, but in his biography (Guerrero 2002) he recalls meeting many pachucos and befriending them. Pachucos frequently came to his performances which impelled him to write jazz songs in tribute of them.

Lalo’s “Los Chucos Suaves” apparently written in 1944 (Loza 1993: 164), but recorded in 1949 is a synthesis of swing and Afro-Cuban rhythms. The song is carried by the driving guaracha rhythm of the maracas and bass, mixed with a raspy and soulful trumpet that weaves in and out of Lalo’s singing that incorporates jazz and *caló*. This musical mixture supports Lalo’s lyrical narrative which tells of the changing times in musical tastes among pachucos, “swing, boogie woogie, and jitterbug” dancing have passed and “chucos” (pachucos) are catching onto the rumba, guaracha, and *danzón*.

To return to a name mentioned earlier, the guitar player Louis Gonzalez is an example of the invisibility of many Chicanao jazz artists. His name and picture appear in passing in numerous accounts from African American jazz musicians. As mentioned, he is pictured with Lester Young and Red Callendar in 1942 at the Capri Club in Los Angeles (Daniels 1985: 315). He is also mentioned in a biography of Lee Young. In this account, Lee mentions putting together a band in 1940 called the “Lee and Lester Young Band” with his

brother Lester Young right after he left Count Basie's band.⁵⁷ Lee mentions that the band played at many clubs in downtown and members attended popular jam sessions that led to bookings at the Philharmonic Theatre (Bryant 1998: 62). Another account is an interview with jazz pianist Coney Woodman who recalls, "We played any kind of music. For Mexicans, we played Mexican" (Bryant 1998: 98), Woodman continues that he started a band in 1947 called Connie Jordan & the Jordanaires and mentions, "Louis Gonzalez, Mexican guy, played guitar" as one of the members (Bryant 1998: 101). Coney says they played regularly at the Title House in Culver City until it got shut down by police because too many European Americans were attending the shows. Another account speaks of a wedding anniversary in Los Angeles in 1949 and the hiring of a jazz band for the occasion. The contact was Albert Nicholas, a clarinetist who studied with Lorenzo Tio Jr. in New Orleans. Gonzalez is mentioned again as the guitar player. The account provides a picture of him playing guitar with James P. Johnson, Leonard Bibbs, and Albert Nicholas (Levin 2000: 99-101). Interestingly, Gonzalez is mentioned as the guitar player for a 1946 recording with Dink Johnson, a jazz pianist who played with The Original Creole Band and Kid Ory.⁵⁸

Still, there are more musicians whose histories are unknown. People with Spanish surnames, pictures, and references to "the Mexican" or "Spanish cat" appear in passing in accounts from both European American and African American musicians and fans. Just to pick one as an example, in Clora Bryant's *Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles* (1998) she interviews African American and European American musicians about their experiences in the Los Angeles jazz scene from the 1930s through the 1960s. Many of the musicians mention growing up with "Mexicans" playing for and with them, but there is not

⁵⁷ In the biography of Lester Young, he is mentioned as "Louis Smith." See Porter (1985).

⁵⁸ The recording was American Music by Bunk and Dink Johnson produced by DAN Records (VC-7025) and also features a bassist named Jose Mendoza.

one interview of any Chicano musicians. One final example of this oversight of the African American/Chicano connection is a picture that shows the big band of Gerald Wilson playing at Shepp's Playhouse in 1944. The members of the band appear to be African American, except for the trombonist named, Robert Huerta (Bryant 1998).

At the turn of the 1950s, popular local artists such as Johnny Otis and their large Chicano fan base helped Los Angeles play a key role in transitioning from jazz to rhythm & blues (which quickly became called "rock & roll" by the mid-1950s). In the late 1940s, Otis promoted shows for mixed crowds in Los Angeles and gained large support from Chicano fans. Otis acknowledges, "I would have had less a career if not for the Chicano audience" (quoted in Reyes & Waldman 1998: 17). But with repeated police harassment for having racially mixed crowds, he was forced to find space elsewhere for his rhythm & blues shows. In the early 1950s, Otis began organizing shows at the El Monte Legion Stadium located in El Monte City near East Los Angeles. The diversity and the Chicano presence increased at El Monte, and it eventually became an important venue that made the careers of future Chicano rock & roll musicians in the mid-1950s (Lipsitz 2010: 62).

Between 1945 to the early 1950s, the city was home to the largest number of independent rhythm & blues recording labels, and according to a 1952 report by Billboard Magazine, Chicanos were the largest record buyers in southern California (Billboard Magazine, May 31, 1952). Chicanos loyalty and support for rhythm & blues had a huge impact on the scene. They exposed many European Americans to the music such as Dick Hugg or who later made a name for himself as "Huggy Boy" the rhythm & blues disc jockey credited for helping rhythm & blues "cross-over" to larger European American audiences. In turn, African American artist recognized their loyal Chicano fans that followed them

everywhere they played. Saxophonists Big Jay McNeely who “was raised with Mexican in Watts” and Jack McVea, recorded the songs “Pachuko Hop” (1952) and “Tequila Hop” (1954) respectively in tribute of their Chicanao fans (Reyes & Waldman 1998: 14; Macias 2008: 150-154; Loza 1993: 81).

Conclusion

I have laid out a brief narrative of Chicanao participation in jazz in two regions and historical periods. New Orleans demonstrates the presence of a third entity in the development of jazz. The Mexico connection disrupts the definitive narrative that only tells of a synthesis between European and African music cultures by presenting a “third-other” option that opens up new possibilities. The Mexican presence in New Orleans – which results from a parallel encounter between European, African, and Indigenous people – adds a layer of complexity to the cultural fabric in New Orleans, making the region a crossroads or interstices of overlapping racial ideologies and subjectivities. African American, Creole, Mexican, Cuban, and other musician’s experiences show how they navigated such space and created their own alternative spaces through mixture; the source for jazz’s creation. In the case of Los Angeles, I have described the transition in popular style from jazz to swing, jump blues, and then rhythm & blues that further disrupts the Black/White Paradigm. Furthermore, this narrative shows how Chicanao musicians engaged with African Americans and their music making, and how they synthesized it and reshaped it to reflect a unique Chicanao cultural expression.

By drawing attention to its own mixture, the Chicanao jazz narrative questions the heavily guarded assertion that jazz is essentially “Black” music. I agree that African

American artists and notions of Blackness in general have profoundly shaped jazz, but African American identity, culture, and its productions such as music did not develop in a bubble. I argue, as does scholar Gaye Johnson, that by charting the mixture within Chicano subjectivity in New Orleans and Los Angeles, I bring to light the “multi-national and inter-racial history” of African American identity and cultural production that is profoundly connected to Latino America (Johnson 2008: 226).

The following chapters will draft a similar narrative of the emergence of rhythm & blues in San Antonio, Texas in the 1950s and 1960s. This narrative represents another historical, social, and spatial meeting point between Chicano and African American communities.

Chapter 4: The Making of Chicano Soul in San Antonio

Evidence at hand indicates that the Chicano soul in San Antonio started circa 1954. This date corresponds to the period when African Americans recording under the genre label “rhythm & blues” (formerly referred to as “race records”), were gaining more exposure through the radio and later television than they had previously; and some such as Fats Domino were “crossing over” into the pop charts. The growing taste of young European Americans for rhythm & blues prompted record producers to capitalize on it, producing and heavily promoting artists such as Bill Haley and Elvis Presley under the genre label “rock & roll.” Just as a majority of young Americans, Texas Chicano youth were influenced by rhythm & blues and rock & roll that they heard on the radio. They were aware of artists such as Elvis Presley, and some liked him, but were more drawn to and long supported African American rhythm & blues and rock & roll artists.

Before representing the history of Chicano soul, I will briefly give some background into musical ensembles and styles such as *conjunto*, *orquesta*, blues, and jazz that preceded rhythm & blues of the 1950s. The purpose of discussing ensembles like the conjunto and orquesta is to foreground the music that many Chicanos were growing up with and experiencing within their families as “their music.” Musicians brought these experiences into their exploration with rhythm & blues. My discussion on blues and jazz is to show that San Antonio Chicanos had been involved in other forms of popular music that connects them to a broader jazz culture that encompasses the southwest, stretching from southern Los Angeles to New Orleans.

Following, I draw from musicians’ accounts of Chicano soul in San Antonio to detail its development in the 1950s to its blossoming in the mid-1960s. This narrative focuses

on four major themes: the beginnings, the development of infrastructure, development of sound, challenges with racial perceptions, and again on infrastructure that expanded artists' reach outside of San Antonio. Within these major themes are sub-narratives, including the processes in which Chicanos learned to play rhythm & blues and rock & roll; most importantly, connections and intersections which include cross-cultural relationships and collaborations between Chicanos, African Americans, and European Americans; regional connections between Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, California, Louisiana, Illinois, and Michigan; intergenerational connections; and lastly, encounters and exchanges with national stars. All of these sub-narratives provide examples that dismantle the Black/White paradigm that has framed canonical narratives of U.S. popular music.

The Conjunto and Orquesta

In the first half of the 1900s, two types of popular ensembles were forming in Texas Chicano communities – the *conjunto* and *orquesta*. The conjunto first began with accordion and bajo sexto⁵⁹ accompaniment. Then in the 1930s the *tololoche* (stand-up bass) was introduced, and in the 1950 drums became a standard part of the ensemble. The music played by the conjunto consisted of *polcas*, *huapangos*, *schottisches*, *mazurkas*, *vals*, *cancion rancheras*, and *corridos* that had developed over the years from a mix of German, Polish, Czech, Mexican, and U.S American influences. The orquesta ensemble developed from early string and brass bands that dotted the southwest since the 1800s. By the 1940s the orquesta resembled African and European American dance bands that consisted of a rhythm section: bass, guitar, drums, sometimes piano or accordion, and a horn section with saxophones,

⁵⁹ Bajo sexto is a twelve-string guitar strung in six courses. It is an instrument specific to the region of northern Mexico and south Texas.

trumpets, and trombone. Orquestas adapted their repertoire to popular music styles found in Mexico, the U.S., and the Caribbean which include the *polca*, *ranchera*, *danzón*, *bolero*, *rumba*, *mambo*, fox-trot, blues, and jazz.⁶⁰

A number of independent recording labels opened shop in the 1940s and 1950s to capture and document the lively sounds of the conjuntos and orquestas. Armando Marroquín and Paco Betencourt formed Ideal Records in 1946 after realizing the lack of Texas Chicano recordings by the major labels. In McAllen, Arnaldo Ramirez founded Falcon Records and in the same year, Manuel Rangel founded Corona Records. In San Antonio, Hymie Wolf opened up Rio Records at 700 West Commerce St. in the heart of downtown. Other labels followed such as Discos Grande Lira and Magda, both located in San Antonio (Hickenbothem 2004: 11). Some of these labels such as Hymie Wolf's Rio label released recordings of jazz and rhythm & blues from local Chicano bands in the late 1940s.

Manuel Peña, a prominent scholar of Tejano conjuntos and orquestas, examines the correlation between class, music, and cultural identity. He argues that the conjunto represents the poor and working-class Chicanos, while the orquesta represents the working-class and more affluent "assimilationists." In his examination, Peña sets up a dichotomy that defines musical communities into two cultural identities: those who identify with conjunto out of pride and commitment to their working-class ethnic roots and those who identify with orquesta, thus abandoning their roots to become part of dominant society. However, by the 1940s musicians and audiences began to break down these boundaries and stigmas. For example, Beto Villa incorporated conjunto *polcas* and other elements into the orquesta, and likewise the conjuntos incorporated non-traditional instruments such as the drums and

⁶⁰ For more on conjunto and orquesta see Peña (1985, 1999, 1999b).

saxophone, and incorporated music such as jazz into their repertoire.⁶¹ Also in the 1930s and 1940s, Texas pachucos, who were arguably extreme anti-assimilationists, patronized the orquestas and African and European American jazz bands (Cummings 2003).⁶²

Problematically, Peña puts the rhythm & blues and rock & roll combos in the same category as orquestas – as assimilationists. For example he classifies Sunny Ozuna and Little Joe as orquestas, which they did become later in their careers, and uses them as examples of those who had abandoned and returned to their ethnic roots. By labeling them as orquestas and not paying more attention to detail during their rhythm & blues years, he is oversimplifying a complex experience that cannot be captured from the lens of class and ethnic identity alone. Sunny Ozuna and many other young Chicanaos in the 1950s and 1960s were questioning what it meant to be “Mexican American” which in those times meant being “Mexican.” Rhythm & blues became a counter-space where Chicanaos worked out and expressed their experiences in the urban, multicultural environment of San Antonio. Furthermore, patronizing rhythm & blues and rock & roll played in small bars and honky tonks was not necessarily to assimilate into dominant society, but an effort to connect with other poor and working-class African and European American communities.

The rhythm & blues combos never abandoned their ethnic roots, even when they expressed distaste for the Mexican music of their parents. The conjunto and orquesta were present in their lives, experienced through their families, and – whether they recognized it or not – informed their musical explorations.

⁶¹ See CD compilation *Pachuco Boogie* (2002) which has a few recordings of swing music by conjuntos.

⁶² Cummings interviews Chicanaos who talk about going to swing dances every week. Nationally known European and African American bands traveled through the southwest, but probably not with such frequency. There existed many territory bands that were interracial and the orquestas which played jazz music that played more frequently at small dance halls in the southwest.

Blues and Jazz in San Antonio

There are few records, but some evidence suggests that Chicanaos in San Antonio were involved in popular styles such as blues and jazz. The strongest evidence we have about Chicano blues musicians does not show up until the 1950s as will be discussed later. In “The Influence of Hispanic Music Cultures on African American Blues Musicians” (1994), Peter Narvaez examines social and life histories, blues lyrics (early as 1926) and other musical evidence to reveal that musical interactions between African Americans, Chicanaos and Mexicans have taken place for a long time (Narvaez 1994: 203). For example John “Knocky” Parker, who played with Blind Lemon Jefferson, said that the Spanish motif is stronger in the southwest and has influenced African American musicians. African American musicians known as “songsters” played a variety of styles including Spanish-language music. Recordings exist of such musicians, but were not recorded until the early 1960s (Narvaez 1994: 212). He also notices there are countless references to Mexico, which according to Narvaez, tell us that African Americans spent time south of the border or had some kind of experience or relation with Mexicans and Chicanaos in Texas. This evidence remains ignored because the intellectual canon had defined “blues” as a purely African American invention with the obvious influence from Europe. Narvaez reminds scholars that the blues musician is largely an invention of commercial culture informed by racial stereotypes and European American fantasies about African American music (Narvaez 1994: 205).

In the 1930s, San Antonio hotels such as the Blue Bonnet, the Texas Hotel, and The Gunter Hotel became makeshift recording studios where African and European American, and Chicano musicians made recordings and encountered each other in the process. One account by Milton Brown, a White musician who headed a group called the Musical Brownies,

recalls their first recording session on April 4, 1934. The Victor Recording Company set up a week-long session at the Gunter Hotel. There was a mix of bands: his own that played country, blues and jazz, the popular African American fiddle band, the Mississippi Sheiks, and what he calls a “Mexican Jazz band” led by Emilio Caceres. He also notes a European American band that recorded some “Mexican tunes” (Ginell & Brown 1994: 97). Robert Johnson’s famous recordings in 1936 were also made at the Gunter where he crossed paths with Chicano artists also recording the same day (Narvaez 1994). That same year a group called Hermanos Barraza recorded two songs labeled “cancion blues” *Martirio* and *Ausencia* (Spottswood 1990). There is nothing “bluesy” about these recordings other than some jazz tinged woodwinds. Perhaps these songs were called blues because of their melancholy quality.

Evidence suggests that Chicano jazz musicians were in San Antonio in the early 1900s, but we do not know how many, who they were or what impact they had in the city. In 1919 there were several ads run in the local paper looking for “Colored or Mexican jazz band of five or six pieces” (San Antonio Light, February 21, 1919; March 2, 1919; March 3, 1919). Someone specifically looking for “Mexican” jazz players may have managed a club that catered to Chicano and Mexican patrons, or Mexicans had reputations as good jazz musicians; we may never know. Another paper entry in 1923 in Brownsville announced the arrival of a “twelve piece Mexican jazz band here today from San Antonio” to play a week-long engagement (Brownsville Herald, February 10, 1923). Again, in 1924 a St. Cecelia Orchestra gave a jazz concert on the radio, filling in for another jazz band at the Winter Gardens. The paper entry gives names of the members: Emilio P. Caceres, pianist and director; Joe Gutierrez, trombone and violin; Polo A. Aguilar, trumpet; E. P. Olivares,

saxophone and clarinet; Ross Garza, saxophone; A. C. Olivares, banjo and violin; and J. C. Pedraza, drums (San Antonio Express April 4, 1924). A year later, the St. Cecelia Serenaders play a jazz program on WCAR radio (San Antonio Express, November 16, 1925; San Antonio Light November 27, 1925). Again in 1929, the local paper had a two page story about a new radio program featuring the orchestras from the three big theaters; The Aztec, The Texas, and The Majestic. These pictures show all the members of the bands with instruments and provide names. Many of them are Chicano or Mexican musicians with reed and brass instruments, violins and banjos. If they were the theater bands then it is likely they played many kinds of music styles including jazz (Figure 1).

By the 1930s more evidence suggests Chicanao participation in the local jazz scene. PBS aired a short documentary about San Antonio that included a glimpse into the musical life of the 1930s (Richardson 1999). Some notable footage is about Mateo Elizondo who opened up La Gloria Filling Station #3 on Laredo Hwy and Brazo St. The station became a family place once they turned the rooftop into a park and outdoor dance spot called, La Gloria Roof Gardens. Mr. Elizondo hired jazz bands to play at the gardens. One such band mentioned was the Palace Serenaders led by a Rudy Almaguer. Footage shows the band consisting of drums, bass, banjo, clarinet, cornet, trombone and saxophone playing for dancers during a Charleston contest.

Local newspapers name Chicano jazz musicians such as guitarists Johnny Gomez as a member of the Johnny Fielder Orchestra (San Antonio Light, March 1, 1939), and another Johnny Gomez who was a vocalist on Benny Goodman's radio show (San Antonio Light, September 3, 1938). The most popular, mentioned numerous times in local papers, is Emilio



Here are members of the Artze orchestra, Ralph Pollock, director, who will be seen and heard at the radio show which opens this evening. Front row, left to right, Polo Aguilar, Jack Amlung, William Robeles, Mike

Cordova, Benjamin Alvarado, Tony Martinez. Standing, Bob Ragland, Diego Gigeromino, J. Villar, Louish Rich, Frank Hernandez, John Macias. Pollock is shown standing, with baton.



Here are musicians of the Texas theater who will have places on radio show program. Left to right, standing: Eddie LeBleu, D. Acosta, Joe Gutierrez, Al Familiario, Edwin Scott, Vic Insirilo, director, is standing. Seated:

Jerome Zoeller, Eddie Clark, Dan Silva, Frank Doyle, Gene Demattio and Dan Perez. Radio fans who are unable to be in the auditorium will hear the music of the theater musicians over the air part of the time.

Figure 1: San Antonio Theatre Orchestras
San Antonio Light, August 5, 1929: 9-A

Caceres a violinist based in San Antonio since the mid-1920s. He had an orchestra known as one of the leading in the city that played many types of engagements including jazz shows (San Antonio Light, January 30, 1934). As mentioned, his band recorded for Victor in 1934 and for Decca in 1936. What made Emile and his brother Ernie Caceres – a clarinet and sax player – popular was their debut on Benny Goodman’s radio show “Camel Caravan” in 1937 where they surprised audiences. It seems that they got the gig from an early tour in Chicago in 1936 when local papers reported that “the boys are cooking” and getting attention (San Antonio Light, May 20, 1936; November 9, 1937). After the Emilio brothers with guitarist Johnny Gomez appeared on Goodman’s show, they got an invitation to record in New York for Victor. Critics in New York gave the trio good praise, with Emilio earning the name “The hottest swing violinist.” Later Ernie Caceres would play with Jack Teagarden, Glen Miller, and even as a soloist for Benny Goodman’s band (Oliphant 1996: 216-219).

Another interesting newspaper entry appears in the African American newspaper the *San Antonio Register*. In 1939 Count Basie and his Orchestra played at the Library Auditorium. The commentator, Celeste Allen, describes the crowd as “one of the largest – and most mixed up – crowds.” She continues, “The Latin Americans present were on their way to stealing the show with their hip-hop jitterbugging until a little fist flinging scared their goat and cooled them off” (SA Register, November 17, 1939). Although a little condescending with the joke about the goat, she gives us a picture of jazz audiences that were “mixed up” meaning there were African American, European American and Chicanaos present, and that Chicanaos (whom she calls “Latin Americans”) were lively dancers.

A small number of clubs known as “black and tan” clubs appeared in the 1940s. Clubs such as Famous Door, Woodlake Country Club, and others featured local and touring

bands and had a racially mixed clientele (Perales & Ramos 2010: 75). The Key Hole Club, opened in 1944 by Creole jazz musician Don Albert, became a premier spot to see nationally known African American artists. In the late 1920s, he was playing frequently in San Antonio with the territory band of Troy Floyd. The Texas' economy was doing very well after the discovery of oil, so Don Albert decided to move there in the early 1930s (Wilkinson 2001: 38). His story is exemplary of the interconnections between New Orleans and Texas. Born as Albert Dominique, he grew up in the diverse seventh ward of New Orleans. He studied trumpet from Milford Piron, brother of Armand Piron who was the leader of the orchestra in which Lorenzo Tio Jr. was a member. His first cousin Ulysses Bigard owned a cigar factory where his father and his jazz hero, Cuban trumpeter Manuel Perez of the legendary Oward Brass Band, worked. His second cousin Barney Bigard had studied with the Tio family as mentioned in chapter four. Lastly, Don Albert's uncle Natty Dominique was a trumpet player who worked with Johnny Dodds, Jimmy Noone and Jelly Roll Morton; musicians who also had a history working with Mexican musicians (Wilkinson 2001: 70-94).

The Beginnings of Chicanao Soul

In 1950s San Antonio, the racial climate was considered more tolerant when compared to other parts of the country (Mason 1998: xiv-xv). Chicanaos and Mexican nationals made up roughly 40% of the population and mostly lived in the west side of town. African Americans made up approximately 7% of the population and mostly resided in the east side, close to the downtown area, while most European Americans lived in the north and German, Czech, Irish, and Polish residents lived in the eastern suburbs (Olsen 2005; City of San Antonio Planning Department, January 2003). Adding to its reputation, San Antonio was

one of the first major southern cities to desegregate its schools in 1954, although many schools in working-class Chicanao neighborhoods such as Lanier High School in the west side were already somewhat integrated.⁶³ Military bases and churches also desegregated before they were required to by law; however San Antonio was no utopia. Racism still existed among middle and upper-class European Americans who isolated themselves from African Americans and Chicanos, and continued to treat them unfairly in numerous ways. However poor European Americans, African Americans and Chicanos crossed paths daily in public schooling, in the workplace, in the bustling downtown area, and especially in the nightclubs.

San Antonio's musical culture reflected the city's diversity. Country and pop music, blues, jazz, conjunto, Mexican popular music, German polkas, and Latin-Caribbean rhythms filled the city's small cantinas, honky tonks, clubs, and ballrooms almost every night of the week. In the 1940s and 1950s a handful of venues provided a counter-space for inter-racial mingling and exchange. The Key Hole Club, which move to 1619 West Poplar St. on the west side, and the Eastwood Country Club on the east side brought nationally popular African American artists to San Antonio, placing it on the map of the Chitlin' Circuit (Olsen 2007).

At the Key Hole, Don Albert openly welcomed patrons of all races, and doing so, brought unwanted attention from European American police. George M. Roper, a police chief from the south, became fire and police commissioner in 1950. He began using liquor laws, building codes, and other means to raid nightspots where European American patrons mixed with African Americans, and Chicanos. A newspaper reported that Roper pledged "a

⁶³ Looking at Lanier High and Luther Burbank High yearbooks from the 1950s, the student body is predominantly Chicanao because they were located in a predominantly Chicanao neighborhood. There are African and European Americans present in these yearbooks.

fight to the finish in his raids against nightspots where laws are being flaunted...he would call on the Texas Rangers if necessary” (San Antonio Express News, June 26, 1951). He harassed Don Albert and his customers on a regular basis. In response, Don Albert filed a restraining order against Roper that set off a series of legal battles between the two, with Roper losing many of them. One paper reported that Roper told attorneys, “He will not let Negroes and Whites assemble together” and later Roper denied making the statement (San Antonio Light, July 3, 1951). Roper made many excuses to shut down the keyhole such as calling it unsafe due to a faulty roof. On Wednesday, October 17th the Justice Jack Pope of the Court of Civil Appeals scolded Roper for abusing his authority. In addition, Roper and other police officials were ordered to pay all court costs (Wilkinson: 233-244). It was a great victory for Don Albert, but it did not put a stop to police surveillance and harassment. Nevertheless, African Americans, European Americans, and Chicanaos continued to frequent the Key Hole. As the Chicanao soul scene gained momentum in the late 1950s, Chicanao artists performed there. An advertisement in 1955 provides some evidence. It announces an “all new show” with a “Bobby Lopez: Comedy, Ballads, and Blues” (Ad held at UTSA Digital Collections, source unknown).

The Eastwood Country Club was opened in 1951 by Johnnie Phillips, who also proudly proclaimed it as an integrated club. The Eastwood played an integral part as a training ground for the first wave of Chicano musicians. It was an after-hours venue that stayed open until four o’clock in the morning and where musicians and audiences mixed after other engagements of the evening were done. Pianist June Parker who frequented the club recalls:

When I played at [the] Eastwood, it was out of the city limits, so we had all races

coming after hours, because the club stayed open until 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning...So you had all nations of people coming out there. We had three shows a night, and after integration...it really got full of all races. The people wanted to mix up. Sometimes we had more other races than we had African Americans!" (Quoted in Olsen 2007: 8).

Phillips hired the best nationally known African American musicians which immediately made his club the western fringe of the Chitlin' Circuit. Such popular entertainers as Fats Domino, Pearl Bailey, B.B. King, the Drifters, Ike and Tina Turner, Etta James, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Gatemouth Brown, T-Bone Walker, Little Richard, Chubby Checkers, Bo Diddley, Della Reese, Big Joe Turner and others played at the Eastwood. Young aspiring musicians frequented the club to study the musical skills of their heroes. Phillips also brought in local musicians to open for national artists providing them a space to develop their skills as rhythm & blues artists. These local artists included Spot Barnett, Fats Martin, Curly Mays, Shake Snyder, Clifford Scott, Doug Sahm, Augie Myers, Charlie Alvarado, and Randy Garibay. Sometimes under-age musicians were allowed to play under supervision of Phillips himself or other musicians. European American musicians Doug Sahm and Augie Meyers used to go there when they were about 12 years old. Phillips would put them in chairs right next to the bar so he could keep an eye on him (Olsen 2007: 31).

The radio was another medium that popularized rhythm & blues and rock & roll in San Antonio, and medium that help train aspiring Chicanao musicians. Many of the musicians interviewed were still in junior or high school when they first heard rhythm & blues and rock & roll on the radio. They tuned into local radio stations like KONO and KTSA that were the major "Top 40" stations that only played rhythm & blues tunes that hit the pop charts. But there were smaller stations such as KMAC, and Spanish stations, KCOR and KEDA, and later KUKA, that had teen shows featuring popular rhythm & blues music

(Figure 2). An important figure on radio and television is Albert “Scratch” Phillips, an African American who performed at the Key Hole with a comedy act called “Scratch and Stitch.” In 1951 he was hired by the Spanish station KCOR to host a rhythm & blues show, and later hosted a similar show on KMAC, and then a television show on KCOR TV. Many of the musicians cite Scratch Philips as exposing them to rhythm & blues and for his support of local Chicano and African American rhythm & blues groups. Unfortunately there is very little is known about his life (Billboard Magazine, December 19, 1953; April 20, 1959).

KMAC radio aired a two-hour rhythm & blues show every night called “Harlem Serenade.” African American disc jockey Flip Forrest ran the program until circa 1956. Then a young Joe Anthony Yannuzzi filled his Spot. Popular known as “Joe Anthony,” he was of Mexican and Italian descent and spoke Spanish, which made him popular with Chicanos on the west side (Alvarado 2010). Joe Anthony became an important person to know in San Antonio for rhythm & blues musicians. In 1959 he started his own record label called Harlem, which he used to record local talent and used the radio show to break them into the scene. He also opened up a record store and organized many of the teen sock-hops in town. Joe Anthony and his partners Henry Carr and E.J. Henke, recorded many Chicano artists’ first recordings such as The Lyrics, Charlie & The Jives, and The Sunglows (Wired For Sound, September 25, 2011).

Circa 1954 is when the earliest Chicano soul artists such as Little Sammy Jay (Jaramillo) & The Tiffaniers, Ricky Aguary (Enrique Aguirre), and The Flat-Toppers were playing professionally in San Antonio. There is little known about the lives of the

SAM
KINSEY
AND
LITTLE JUNIOR **JESSIE**
VALLADO
PLAY ALL
FAVORITE OLDIES AND
GOODIES PLUS
REQUESTS
ON
TOP TEEN TUNES
AT 5:15 DAILY
KUKA

Figure 2: KUKA Radio Show Advertisement
San Antonio Express, September 11, 1964

aforementioned artists, but their names have come up several times in interviews. From what is known, they were working in the nightclubs as rock & roll artists, under anglicized names.

During the mid-1950s, the Tiffany Lounge was a popular blues and rock & roll nightclub located at the 109 West Houston Street which hugged the west edge of downtown before entering the Chicanao barrios of the west side. The club, run by Johnny Jowdy, featured local rhythm & blues, and rock & roll bands and on occasion hosted popular artists for weeklong engagements such as Joe Turner and Bill Haley & His Comets. The shows at the Tiffany brought together a racially mixed crowd and many underage fans. One of those fans was Doug Sahn, the European American artists who became popular in the 1960s with his group The Sir Douglas Quintet. Doug and other Chicano and African American teens would sneak into the Tiffany to watch and learn from the professionals. One of Doug's mentors at the Tiffany was a singer and bass player named Little Sammy Jay (Jaramillo). Doug eventually played in Sammy Jay's band, which consisted of two Chicanos, two African Americans and himself (Reid & Sahn 2010: 19). Much of Little Sammy Jay's history is still a mystery. Many Chicanao musicians have faint memories of seeing him at the Tiffany and agree that he was a popular name in the mid-1950s and led a house band at the Tiffany called The Tiffaniers. By 1958, he was playing various engagements around town and toured in San Jose, California that year (San Antonio Light, January 21, 1958; April 30, 1958; November 28, 1958). He also was still active in the 1960s and apparently made a few recordings on the London Label in 1965 (Billboard Magazine, October 2, 1965: 10).

Another musician who got his start at the Tiffany was Enrique Aguirre who went by the stage name, Ricky Aguary. As with Sammy Jay, there is little known about his career in San Antonio, although people remember seeing him play at the local nightspots in the 1950s

and was supposedly a big name in town. According to one music fan of the time, Ricky was the house band at the Tiffany sometime in 1956 (Garcia 2010). Ricky eventually left to California, and is most likely when Sammy Jay took his spot. Ricky was born in 1933 in Kerrville, Texas and later moved to Bandera, Texas. While living there, Ricky learned to play the drums and saxophone. A friend of his from Kerrville, Joe “Junior” Pruñeda, convinced Ricky to play drums in the band called Larry Nolan & The Bandits (Source from online blog at: jazzandsuchpotpourri.tumblr.com). At some point Ricky came to San Antonio and started a band sometime in 1954-55 and secured a regular gig at the Cadillac Club on Navarro Street in downtown. In 1957, Ricky left for California with African American friend Jitterbug Webb to look for better opportunities. According to an interview with Webb, Ricky formed the band “Ricky & The Four Keys” in California. In the beginning they were unsuccessful which prompted Webb to head back to San Antonio (Bogdanov, Woodstraw, and Erlewine 2003: 594). James Woods, a European American tenor sax player who grew up in the Bay Area, joined the band sometime in 1957. According to his online autobiography, The Four Keys toured in California and towards the end of the year, things began to pick up for them.⁶⁴

In December of the same year The Four Keys went to San Antonio to play at the Texas Theater as part of a showdown with another band called The Knights (Figure 3). The promotional event was for the rock & roll movie called “Jamboree.” While in San Antonio, they played again at the Tiffany Lounge (Figure 4). In January 1958, they went to Las Vegas to play a limited engagement at the Sans Souci Hotel. It so happened that the actor and comedian Jerry Lewis was in town looking for a rock & roll group to feature in his upcoming

⁶⁴ Frank woods’ online biography contains a scrapebook of newspaper clippings and photos from his time with The Keys. It can be viewed at: <http://www.frankwood.net/scrapbk.html>

movie, “Rock-A-Bye Baby” (1958). The hotel owner recommended that Jerry see The Four Keys. Once he did he booked them right away and flew them to Hollywood (Las Vegas Sun, January 9, 1958). The band is featured in the last part of the movie when Jerry Lewis performs a rock & roll song. Ricky is playing the baritone sax. The standup bassist, guitarist, and the second drummer were extras and not part of The Four Keys.

Another group that made its debut at the Tiffany Lounge was The Flat-Toppers. The band formed sometime in 1954 with friends Mike Villa on guitar, Philip Bustos on sax, Adam Hernandez on drums and vocals, Joe Elisondo on sax, and Jimmy Casas on bass (Figure 5). They belonged to a car club called the Lions Club and on the weekends the band would play at the club’s car races (Villa 2012). By June 1956, the band was drawing enough attention that they were mentioned in the local paper, as a “snazzy local musical combo” (San Antonio Light, June 13, 1956). Domingo Solis, who would later become the singer Sonny Ace, recalls that The Flat-Toppers were students from Edgewood High School and remembers seeing them perform as a rock & roll band at the Tiffany Lounge sometime in 1956 (Solis 2010). Sonny asked if he could sing with them, but before responding, one of the members asked Sonny if he belonged to the musicians union. Sonny said “no.” The Flat-Toppers did not let him play in fear of breaking union policy. It is surprising that The Flat-Toppers who were still in high school were already part of a musicians union and playing professionally in an adult nightclub, but as will be the case throughout this narrative, this was common practice in San Antonio.

The Flat-Toppers’ saxophonist, Joe Elisondo, left the group sometime before mid-December, 1956 to join another seminal group to be discussed later – Mando & The Latineers – who had just received an invitation to work in Las Vegas (San Antonio Light,

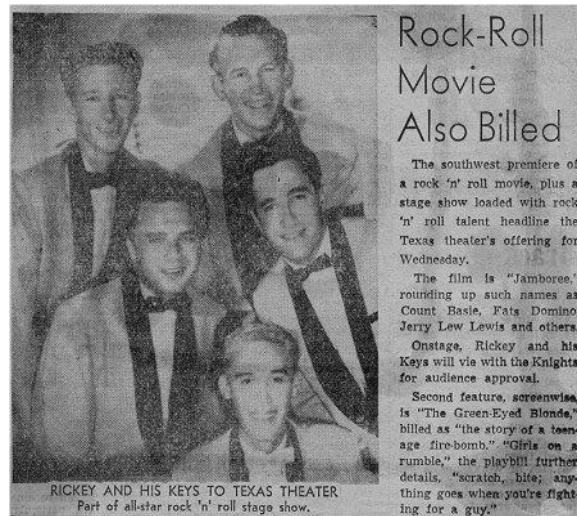


Figure 3: Rickey & The Keys at the Texas Theatre
Ricky Aguirre is at the bottom
Courtesy of www.frankwood.net/scrapbk.html

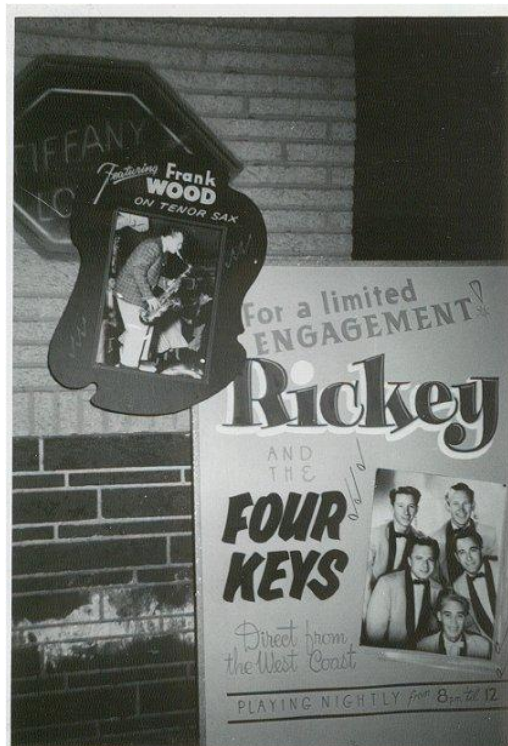


Figure 4: The Four Keys at the Tiffany
Courtesy of www.frankwood.net/scrapbk.html



Figure 5: The Flat-Toppers 1954
Courtesy of Bobby Villa



Figure 6: Mike & The Belaires
Courtesy of Nando Aguilar and Jesse Garcia

December 21, 1956; Chucho 2007). The following is not clear, but the guitarist and leader of The Flat-Toppers, Mike Villa either renamed the band or formed a new one calling it Mike & The Bellaires sometime in 1957 (Figure 6). The racially mixed band was named after the Chevy Bel-Air of singer Bud Harper. In 1963, The Bellaires recorded the only known single by the group with the songs, “She's mine” and “Buscando” a Spanish/English cover of The Coaster’s “Searchin.” Sometime that same year Mike left the group and Al Pinckney became the lead vocalist, changing the name to Al & The Exclusives (Alvarado 2010).

While Sammy Jay, Ricky Aguayo, and The Flat-Toppers were already playing professionally in the mid-1950s, the following artists represent another trajectory from conjunto music into rhythm & blues starting about the same time: Mando & The Chili Peppers, Rudy & The Reno Bops, and Nando & The Rhythm Aces. Many young Chicanaos on the west side grew up “bicultural,” meaning that they were immersed in “lo Mexicano” at home with their families where they spoke Spanish and retained Mexican cultural practices with Spanish language music providing the background to those experiences. By the 1950s, conjunto musicians and audiences had established an alternative space for conjunto music to flourish when the popular music industry had largely ignored it. Young Chicanaos from the west side grew up with conjunto music, but their experiences outside the barrios, in the schools, interacting with African and European American youth, and the influence from the media engaged them a process of identity transformation that found a balance between multiple worlds. Mando & The Chili Peppers is the first example of this transition.

Arguably the first successful pioneers of Chicano soul, Mando & The Chili Peppers evolved from previous conjunto groups held together by long-time friends Armando Almendarez (now known as Mando Cavallero) and Chucho Perales. Armando had a talent



Figure 7: Young Chucho Perales Playing Bajo Sexto
Courtesy of Chucho Perales

for music and at a young age began to play the acoustic bass and the accordion. Chucho began learning 12-string guitar and bajo sexto at the age of 10. It was in 1950 when Chucho and Armando reconnected and decided to form a group called Conjunto San Antonio Alegre. Chucho remembers that Armando was a musical genius who could play anything on accordion, “he could play Flight of the Bumblebee on a two row button accordion, Mando had always been – what do you say? – bilingual in his music” (Perales 2007). At that time Mando had already recorded conjunto tunes for various local labels. Although they both loved conjunto music, they were also fond of jazz and rhythm & blues, especially the Louisiana sound. Mando would learn songs from the radio and play them on accordion, and Chucho put down his bajo and started playing the six-string guitar. In the beginning, they added boogie tunes to their set, and people loved it. They recorded a few of them such as “Mi Dolorcito” (My Little Heartache, 1954) on Hymie Wolf’s Rio Records.⁶⁵

As the popularity of rhythm & blues and rock & roll were increasing in the 1950s, Conjunto San Antonio Alegre’s audiences kept requesting their renditions of popular tunes that, according to Chucho, “before we knew it we weren’t playing any *polcas*.” They began to entertain the idea of becoming a rock & roll band, first as a joke but when they were getting a lot of attention and request to perform, they took it more seriously. In 1955, under the name Conjunto Mexico, they recorded two covers songs, “Boppin’ the Rock” by Louisiana accordionist Clifton Chenier whom Mando idolized, and “Maybellene” by Chuck Berry. Both recordings were made at Rio Records and recorded straight to wax using one microphone. On a two row button accordion, Mando hammers out blues licks on “Boppin’

⁶⁵ This recording can be heard at: http://youtu.be/_nZY3w9WhVU.

the Rock” and takes a solo in “Maybellene” in place of Chuck Berry’s guitar solo.⁶⁶

In 1956, Mando and Chucho were courted by Raúl Cortez, founder of KCOR Television, to have their own one-hour show. KCOR, founded in 1955, was the first Spanish-language television station in the U.S., which later became Univision. According to the newspapers KCOR began advertising the show, called “Rock ‘n’ Roll,” on March 4, 1956 (San Antonio Light, March 4, 1956). Mando recalls that Mr. Cortez gave them full reign on how they wanted to do the show. Chucho explains that they did not have a plan for what they were going to do each show, they improvised on the spot. They played an eclectic mix of *polcas*, *rancheras*, rhythm & blues and rock & roll on the show. Later they expanded the band, bringing in Rudy Martinez on piano and Joe Elizondo on tenor sax, and renamed themselves Mando & The Latineers. They also brought in Scratch Phillips to host the show. After getting Scratch, Chucho says, “from there it took off. Scratch would come in wearing a zoot suit and would tell jokes and dance in between songs” (Perales 2010).

Sometime in December that same year they were invited to play at the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas (San Antonio Light, December 21, 1956). According to Mando, they secured the job through a woman named Hacha who had many Las Vegas connections, one of whom was Major Riddle, the owner of the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas. One day after their television show, she invited The Latineers to come to her place “to meet someone.” Skeptical at first, they decided to go, and at the end of the night, Major Riddle arrived to meet Mando and the band. Mando recalls at that time they did not know who he was. He asked them to play some music, and after the third song he asked them to stop and said, “I’m gonna do something for you guys, I’m gonna take you to Vegas.” Mando recalls he took a brown paper bag and tore a

⁶⁶ “Boppin’ the Rock” can be heard at: <http://youtu.be/9SDMH4mnwBY>.

piece off and asked for Mando's contact information, then "took out a wad, man, of \$100 bills and gave us one for those extra three songs...where are we going to get change?" About a week later, Major Riddle called Mando and made arrangements for them to go to Las Vegas for a 4-6 week engagement (Cavallero 2010).

Mando recalls an incident that persuaded him to leave Vegas for Denver, which became the Chili Peppers' home base for some time:

We met some people from Denver who said I should try the waters there [Denver] because there were no good rock & roll bands at the time in Colorado. So we went and on January 3, 1957, in the middle of the biggest snowstorm I had seen man! We arrived! It was dark and we saw this marquee that said "Saddle Club – Live Music," so I walked in there and it was an all-Black club. The owner was an old Jewish guy and I just sat down and started talking to him. I told him we had just come from Vegas and he said, "Well, I've got the best band here. Why don't you guys come in?" We sat in with the band and did three songs and right then and there he hired us (Mando 2010).

Mando remembers that as soon as the band was established, local musicians took interest in them such as Virgil del Toro whom Chucho mentored as a musician. Later Virgil del Toro formed the group, The Rockers.

In the three years Mando & The Latineers were in Denver, they had a big impact and are documented in *Colorado Rocks!: A Half-Century of Music in Colorado* (2004) as one of the "bands to remember." Chuck E Weiss a drummer who grew up in Denver recalls,

We used to take the bus down to Larimer Street to go find stuff in pawnshops. You could hear a million great Mexican rock'n'roll bands. There was one I liked called Mando & the Chili Peppers. Of course they never went national, but there were always little things like that happening. I don't think anyone was ever there to document it. I don't think anybody ever took it seriously. Of course it molded me, I took it seriously (Brown 2004; 93).

Virgil del Toro's group, The Rockers, were making a name for themselves on the east side.

Virgil later met Gary Stites and formed a band with him called The Satellites that became very popular in Denver. Sometime in 1958 Stites was approached by a record label to make a recording. Not surprisingly, the record producer convinced Stites to ditch the band and go solo. Stites was taken to New York to record “Lonely for You” which became a hit, getting him an appearance on the Dick Clark Show (Brown 2004: 62).

One night while playing at a local club in Denver, Clark Galehouse, president of Crest Records in New York, was stranded in Denver on his way to a convention in Idaho. To pass the time he went to the Saddle Club and walked in on Mando and his group. At intermission, Galehouse approached Mando and said he would like them to come to Long Island, NY and record a couple of sides. Three weeks later they got the call and went to New York. They recorded a single with “South of the Border” and “Don’t Say Goodnight.” Before they left to New York, Aaron Lasater got a job back in San Antonio and left, leaving Mando to play bass for the group. After the band returned, they received a copy of the single and Mando noticed the name changed from “The Latineers” to “The Chili Peppers.” The single did well especially in Louisiana. Billy Delle, an oldies disc jockey in New Orleans recalls the impact the single had there,

“These Guys” were the Chili Peppers whose Golden Crest release, “South of the Border” received heavy airplay on New Orleans radio... The music so closely related to New Orleans Rhythm & Blues was actually the emerging Tex-Mex sound. A sound we began to enjoy more and more (Quoted in Finnis 1998: 8).

The single did well enough that it was featured in Billboard Magazine on May 13th 1957 under “New R&B Records.” The reviewer states, “The singer is not identified on these sides but the cat comes on with fine flavor. The rock & roll band lays down a strong beat on this standard. This could pay off if it gets plugged” (Billboard Magazine 1957: 75). A month

TWO FOR THE MONEY!

A hit single—

"SOUTH OF THE BORDER"

b/w "DON'T SAY GOODNIGHT"



THE CHILI PEPPERS

CR #105

Figure 8: Chili Peppers Billboard Magazine Feature
 Billboard Magazine, June 24, 1957



Figure 9: Mando & The Chili Peppers
 Courtesy of Chucho Perales

later, The Chili Peppers were featured again in the magazine with a picture of the five young musicians with a headline that read, “Two for the Money! A Hit Single” (Figure 8).

About six months later, Gailhouse called back to record an album. Mando and the Chili Peppers recorded twelve songs for the album titled “On the Road with Rock ’n’ Roll.” While they were back in New York, The Chili Peppers toured the east coast. “It was like a wild spin, in about 3 days we covered about four to five states.” The band even appeared on Bob Horne’s “Bandstand” in Philadelphia in 1957 before it had been taken over by Dick Clark as “American Bandstand.” Chucho remembers it was a whirlwind. When they arrived at the studio of Bandstand, there was a line of teenagers going around the block waiting to get in. Chucho recalls that they were asked a few questions and then lip-synced to their recording. The Chili Peppers were possibly the first Chicano band to appear on Bandstand.

After their tour, they returned to Denver for a short period and continued to tour the southwest. At this time they had connected with the ex-boxer-turned-Chicano-revolutionary, Rodolpho “Corky” Gonzalez, who became their road manager. After retiring from boxing Corky Gonzalez opened up a sports bar called “Corky’s Corner” circa 1955. Corky would later write the epic poem “Yo Soy Joaquin” and establish an alternative school for Chicano youth called *Escuela Tlatelolco*. Under his management, The Chili Peppers toured and played with big names such as Fats Domino with whom Mando later became friends. They first met Fats Domino in Denver when they played during his intermission. As a joke The Chili Peppers did a thirty minute set of Fats Domino covers. According to Chucho, when they got off the stage, Fats told his band to leave, probably as a joke too. Fats said, “Come here! Hey boys, where you from? You play, you guys play just like my boys! But better, you hear? I’m going to hire these guys!” (Cavallero 2010). After that Mando became good

friends with Fats Domino spending time with him when their paths crossed on the road, and visiting him in Louisiana. Mando and Fats would get together and play music, and according to Mando, Fats bought one of his songs he wrote, but does not remember which one or if he ever recorded it (Cavallero 2010).

Sometime in 1958 they were touring in California with regular bookings at El Monte Legion Stadium. According to Mando, they became kind of a house band, "They would bring the big stars there to play a couple of tunes to promote their record. We would open up for them, then come back and finish out the night" (Cavallero 2010). The Chili Peppers played alongside Johnny Otis, Chuck Higgins, Don and Dewey, Joe Houston, Duane Eddy, The Big Bopper and others. One night they met Ritchie Valens in Anaheim just before he became famous. Chucho remembers the announcer said, "Introducing Mando & The Chili Peppers, the band that made the Rocky Mountains rock!" Then Chucho and Mando struck a chord on their guitar and bass, unexpectedly both amps blew out,

Mando didn't know what the heck he was playing, I didn't know what I was playing...the piano was going, the drums were going, the sax was on the mike, Mando was on the mike singing, but he was too far away from the amp to know that it blew. You could hardly hear what the hell was going on with all the kids yelling (Chucho 2007).

Chucho looked back and Ritchie was behind the curtain calling him. Ritchie told Chucho that he could use his amp, which was a lot smaller than Chucho's amp. Ritchie said, "See all those microphones that you have over there? Why don't you get one of those mics, put the amp on the piano and put a mic to it?" (Perales 2007). Chucho says they did about four gigs with Ritchie, but it was not very long from their meeting that Ritchie Valens was involved in the plane accident that killed him, along with Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper.

Another important band that transitioned from conjunto to rhythm & blues and rock & roll was Rudy & The Reno Bops. Leader and vocalist Rudy T. Gonzales and his brother Manuel “Red” Gonzales started learning music at a very young age in the late 40s. Rudy with a beat up guitar given to him by his cousin and Red with self-made drum set from a washing machine hub and aluminum cans formed their first band called Red y Su Conjunto in 1952. A year later, they were joined by Adalberto Ruiz on guitar and vocals, Tony Lozano and Fred Ybarra on accordion and called themselves Conjunto Los Panchitos (Figure 10). Circa 1954, when Rudy was in ninth grade, the rhythm & blues and rock & roll he heard on the radio struck him. In 1955, Rudy added more members to make a rock & roll band: Ralph Sánchez on sax, Arturo De Los Santos on sax (Later called Arthur Dee), and Lawrence Butch Walters on guitar. After they entered a talent show at Lanier High School, they changed the name to “The Rennal Bops,” but the poster maker misspelled the name, writing it as “The Reno Bops.” They kept the name and recorded their first single with “Cry, Cry” and “Ramblin” for Jaimé Wolf’s Rio Label in 1958. Again in 1959, The Reno Bops recorded another single on Warrior Records with “Indian Rock” and “Why did you Leave Me” (San Antonio Light, April 23, 1959).

That same year, Rudy – who was still in high school – landed a job working for Joe Anthony’s record shop. There Rudy came across all the latest recordings of rhythm & blues, doo-wop, and rock & roll. He later met Jesse Schneider of Renner Records who convinced him that there was a market for rock & roll in Spanish (Figure 11). So he took songs such as “Tossing and Turning” from Smiley Lewis, “The Twist” from Chubby Checker, “Pushing Your Luck” and “Don’t Cry No More” by Bobby Bland and translated them into Spanish versions. His Spanish versions got some recognition and in 1959 he appeared on KCOR



Figure 10: Conjunto Los Panchitos 1953
 Courtesy of Ramón Hernández
 Founder/curator Hispanic Entertainment Archives



Figure 11: Rudy & The Reno Bops 1962
 Courtesy of Jesse Garcia



RUDY and THE RENO BOPS will entertain you. These famous recording artists feature Freddy Hill. You'll love these great show performers.

Figure 12: Advertisement for The Reno Bops with Freddy Hill (Nando Aguilar)
 San Antonio Express & News April 29, 1967

Television with Scratch Philips. A Mexican rock & roll group called The Teen-Tops was in town at this time, saw the show, and convinced Rudy to join them for a two-week tour in Mexico. As will be discussed later, Rudy was an important figure who opened up new markets outside of San Antonio that brought more opportunities for west side musicians.

One musician who later became a member of The Reno Bops, Fernando (Nando) Aguilar, presents the last example of the transition from conjunto to rhythm & blues. Nando was about nine years old when he began to take up music. Like many from the west side, he was introduced to the world of music through conjunto. His uncle was a conjunto musician who rented a little shed in the back yard of Nando's home. During the week, his uncle always practiced the accordion in the back yard where Nando could hear. He became very interested and began learning from his Uncle. Nando recalls the first song he learned was a *polquita* called "San Antonio." Nando demonstrated a talent for learning songs quickly and learning to improvise.

Circa 1956, Nando formed a band with friends called Conjunto Mirasol that played in his father's cantina. Even though he was too young, his father let him play there because, "there is no law that says you can't play, just don't drink" (Aguilar 2010). When he was in junior high he started getting interested in Fats Domino and Little Richard, and began playing rhythm & blues with his conjunto band mates. Later, he met some fellow musicians at school and eventually formed The Rhythm Aces. Members included Carly Luke (African American) on sax, Felipe Quiroga on sax, Joe Dominquez on guitar, Joe Alvarez on drums, and Armando Arriega on bass. Nando dropped the accordion and became the singer, and shortly after took up the bass because he always had trouble with keeping bass players. Nando quickly became a proficient bass player and singer, which made him very desirable by

other bands. Nando disbanded The Rhythm Aces and bounced around with many bands such as Big Ralph & The Gigolos, Mike & The Bellaires, and later, played with Rudy & The Reno Bops under the name “Freddy Hill.” Nando later became a popular studio musician recording bass for many of the local record labels (Figure 12).

An Infrastructure Coalesces

By the late-1950s, San Antonio’s rhythm & blues scene began to coalesce with the support of the radio stations, nightclubs, theaters, and independent record producers who invested in emerging Chicanao bands. The following narrative details this development of an infrastructure, highlighting the interracial exchanges between musicians.

Many of the bands that emerged in the late-1950s were interracial, particularly those coming from the predominantly Chicanao west side. According to one musician, “it didn’t matter what color you were as long as you can play,” and record producer, Henry Carr, asserted, “race was not that important...The Hispanic bands were always integrated” (Alvarado 2010; Wired for Sound, September 25, 2011). Examples of interracial collaboration are many, for example, the doo-wop group, The Lyrics. The group consisted of leader, Abel Martinez, and the talented young songwriter, Dimas Garza; and African American singers, Alex Pato and Carl Henderson. The Lyrics made their first recording for Joe Anthony’s Harlem label in 1959, which was also the label’s first recording. According to business partner Henry Carr, Joe and Henry saw The Lyrics perform at the King of Clubs in downtown. They immediately approached the group to talk about a recording opportunity. The recording of “The Girl I Love” and “Oh, Please Love Me” which was written by Dimas Garza, was released in August 1959 and of course did well on KMAC’s charts, but it also

rose to #14 on KONO's hit charts. The following year it was re-released on the Wildcat label and then again in 1962 for the national Coral label (Wired for Sound, September 25, 2011). The single also appeared in Billboard under "Moderate Sales Potential" (Billboard Magazine, November 16, 1959). The single made The Lyrics one of the top groups in the city. The Lyrics lasted until 1962 when Dimas left to join another influential group, The Royal Jesters. Carl Henderson went to California and recorded some minor hits for Renfro Records in Los Angeles.

Another example of interracial collaboration is the experience of the well-known European American musician Doug Sahm. Although many texts focus on Doug's inspiration from African American artists in his early years as a recording artist, he was part of a multiracial cohort of upcoming musicians that included many Chicanos. Doug's first big hit in 1960 that established him as a top musician, "Why, Why, Why" was backed by saxophonists Rocky Morales' band, The Markays which grew from a previous band called The Silhouettes. Doug and Rocky were longtime friends, both mentored by the same local musicians, including Spot Barnett, Clifford Scott, Little Sammy Jay, and others. A year later Doug Sahm worked with another Chicano group called The Dell-Kings led by Frank Rodarte which in 1962 became a premier band, traveling to California and then landing a job working as the house band for Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas. That same year, Doug sang with Spot Barnett's band. Spot's band played at the Ebony Club nightly from 1954 to 1963 and Spot was known as "the King" of the east side and was idolized by many young aspiring musicians.

As bands from the west side included European and African American members, Chicanos from the west side played with bands from the African American east side. For

example, Chente Montes, a 13 year old bass player who learned from Jimmy Casas of The Dell-Kings, was playing with an all-African American group called the Bobby Shannon & The T-Birds at Little Jack's Inferno next to the Texas Theater (Molina 2007: 23). Another example is Armando Lucio, a bass player for The Spot Barnett Band, and according to Spot himself, "a damn good one!" (Barnett 2010) (Figure 14). The exchange between the west and east side was as Rudy remembers, "It was beautiful, many Black musicians would come to the west side to play and vice versa. There was Jitterbug, Big Bud Harper who sang with Mike & The Bellaires, and Billy Wilson played sax with my Reno Bops" (Gonzalez 2010).

Local record producers took notice of the growth of local talent and began recording some of the bands, hoping that one of them could break into the mainstream. Manuel Rangel who started Corona Records in the late 1940s to record conjuntos, created Rival Records. One of his early recordings featured a group fronted by Dimas Garza (who also sang for The Lyrics) called The Kool-Dips. Other producers include Jesse Schneider, who was appointed head of the record department for the return of an RCA Victor distributorship in 1954. Seven years later he started Renner Records to record local rock & roll talent. There was also Bob Tanner's Tanner 'N' Texas (TNT) Records, which also had a studio and a record manufacturing plant in the city. A co-owner of Joe Anthony's Harlem label, E.J. Henke, also owned the Satin, Warrior, and Wildcat labels. Huey P. Meaux recorded and released San Antonio bands on his Houston Teardrop Records (Hickenbthem 2004: 13; Molina 2007; Wired for Sound, September 25, 2011). Joe Anthony who was running sock hops at Arthur Murray Studios realized he could use the sock hops as auditions for potential teen talent to record, and in turn, he could plug these recordings into his radio show to create "buzz" to sell his records. Together with his friend Henry Carr, and with E.J Henke as part-financer, he



Figure 13: Bobby Shannon Singing with Tito & The Silhouettes
Courtesy of Raul Velasquez and Jesse Garcia



Figure 14: Armando Lucio Playing Bass in The Spot Barnett Band
Courtesy of Spot Barnett and Jesse Garcia

created the Harlem label in 1959.

After Anthony's Harlem label lost steam in 1960, another producer named Abe Epstein stepped in with his Cobra and Jox labels to take advantage of the money making opportunity. Although some of his ethics were questionable, Epstein helped produced many Chicano artists in the early to mid-1960s. One such artist was Vic Montes, the brother of Chente Montes, who at a young age was making himself known as a talented guitar player. Sometime in the early 1960s, after playing with numerous bands, he was approached by Epstein to be a recording session musician. Still in his early teens, Vic's father had to sign the contract for him. As a session musician Vic recorded on numerous records of African American, European American, and Chicano bands, but has never received credit for his work. According to Vic, some of these bands include The Royal Jesters, a Chicana vocal group called The Dreamliners, another African American female vocal group called The Uniques, a local favorite Big Bud Harper, an African American group from Gonzalez called Otis Grin and The Downbeats, and another interracial vocal group called The Commands (Montes 2010).⁶⁷

Another important factor in the growth of the musical scene were the nightclubs, dance halls, restaurants, military bases, and other venues that provided steady work for rhythm & blues and rock & roll bands. Many of these venues provided long-term contracts for house bands. Two bandleaders, Charlie Alvarado and Sonny Ace, were important because they had secured steady work in downtown and were able to bring in a lot of new young talent into the scene. Able to provide a steady salary and experience, many young musicians eagerly waited to work for them.

⁶⁷ You can hear his guitar work on the recording "No Time for You" by The Commands:
<http://youtu.be/DACC76INWDs>

Charlie Alvarado got his start in music through church and school bands. He actually wanted to be a priest and got involved at Guadalupe Church. A sergeant from Fort Houston started teaching music at the church and taught Charlie solfège and the trumpet, but his older brother was already playing trumpet so he changed to the French horn. As he immersed himself in music, he desired to play in a jazz big band, so his teacher told him that he should play clarinet and sax. Taking his advice, he took up the clarinet in the school band. Around the time when he was about ten years old, he started listening to the radio stations. Charlie heard the blues and bands like the Ink Spots which impressed him. He noticed those bands did not have clarinet players, so he switched to saxophone. He continued to develop his skills in school band, but also the radio became his teacher. One of his early influences was the sax player Earl Bostic.

Charlie's professional music career started when he was about fourteen and a school band mate Johnny Saro formed a big band to play for public engagements. They had four saxophones, two trumpets, two trombones, piano, and rhythm section. The band got work at schools for small amounts of money. Later the band secured a job at the Taxco Dinner Club playing six nights a week. Charlie was getting paid \$36 a week, which was more than his father was making. He later joined another smaller group that played around town. In these bands he was still reading charts and playing covers of popular jazz and Latin-Caribbean songs, and on occasion, a *polca* when requested.

In 1953, Charlie joined the Marine Corps and shortly after was sent to Korea. While there, he founded small group called The Rotor Heads. They chose the name because they were all in the helicopter squadron. He also found another place where African American servicemen played jazz. He was younger, but they let Charlie play with them. About 1955,

Charlie was stationed in San Diego, CA where he got a chance to meet Fats Domino who was in town and playing for the servicemen at a recreation center. People there knew Charlie played music and somehow convinced Fats to let Charlie sit in with his band. After his service in 1956, Charlie returned to San Antonio and soon tried to figure out what he wanted to do musically. On the advice of his friends, Charlie frequented a nightspot called the Latin Village where he saw Little Sammy Jay, Mando & The Chili Peppers, and the African American band The Five Stars which had Willie “Jitterbug” Webb who later joined Charlie’s band. Charlie also frequented the Ebony Club to see saxophonist Spot Barnett.

Within a few years after his return, Charlie founded his own band. In 1957 his friend and talented sax player, Ernest Cortez, came to Charlie’s place with Mike Villa because their band, The Bellaires, needed a sax player to replace Ernest. Charlie joined the band and recalls playing at a small place on Larimer Hwy named Smitty’s, a rock & roll bar patronized by hillbillies, but also featured rhythm & blues groups certain nights of the week. Besides Mike on guitar and Charlie on sax, the band had Jimmy Casas on bass, African American vocalist Bud Harper, and Eloy Martinez on drums. The band was having issues and a few members, including Charlie, left in 1958. Shortly, Charlie started playing with Angel “Jimmy” Carranza, a bass player that had just joined a group that formed out of another group called Arthur Dee & the Beboppers. Angel was managing the band and had secured regular work playing at the military bases in the area, but he repeatedly missed performances because he was also playing for a conjunto group that offered more paying gigs. One day the band was scheduled for a try-out at Oasis Club, and Angel did not show up. Another young musician named Jesse Garza was there with his guitar waiting for his band to show up too, but they never did. Charlie convinced him to help out and play bass, but Jesse didn’t have

one. Charlie had Arnold de la Garza, the guitar player, change Jesse's top four strings on his guitar to make it sound like a bass. At first they didn't believe it would work but it did. Jesse joined the band right there with members: Little Henry as singer, and ex-Beboppers Arnold de la Garza on guitar and Ernie De Los Santos on drums. Charlie was appointed bandleader and it was he who came up with the name "The Jives" (Alvarado 2009).

After Arnold left the group to play conjunto music, Charlie replaced him with Jitterbug Webb. Charlie remembered seeing him earlier at the Latin Village and was very impressed with his guitar playing. Charlie scouted him out and luckily Jitterbug had just returned from an unsuccessful venture in California. Jitterbug was about seventeen years old at the time, so Charlie had to talk to Jitterbug's mom to get permission for Webb to play with group. Jitterbug grew up on gospel and blues from his mom, and like many youth, he was turned onto rhythm & blues played on the radio. He connected to the local scene at an early age, already performing at the age of fourteen. When he joined Charlie's band, he had to know a lot more than just the blues and jazz. San Antonio audiences demanded good rhythm & blues tunes for dancing but also wanted *polcas*, *boleros*, and the top rock & roll tunes as well. Charlie had Jitterbug learn the *polcas* and *boleros* too which must have influenced his playing style in some way. After his time with Charlie he joined many well-known groups such as Ike and Tina Turner, Johnny Otis, and Lowell Fulson where he earned the moniker, "the funkiest guitar player in the world" (Bogdanov, Woodstra & Erlewine 2003: 594).

In 1959 Charlie got a permanent job at the George Montalbo's Fiesta Nightclub where he spent four years, playing six nights a week. Located on West Commerce Street in downtown, The Fiesta Club was a very popular place to go. Charlie remembers that mostly Chicanaos frequented the Fiesta, but African and European Americans attended his shows

too. After Charlie finished the night at the Fiesta, he would go to the Eastwood Country Club, where he remembers it being mostly African American, but many Chicanaos and Whites went there to have a good time. “They were all mixed, no problems. San Antonio never had a problem racially, I don't think” recalls Charlie. The owner, Johnny Philips, hired Charlie on occasion to play or for help hiring house musicians. At the Eastwood, Charlie mingled with local African American musicians like Curly Mays who was making a name for himself as a good and unique guitarist who could play with his toes. He also met the famed Spot Barnett there and got to sit in with him some nights. At the African American clubs, Charlie recalls always being welcomed and making a good impression on audiences, “Black folks would come up to me and ask what I got in my sax. They were surprised that it sounded good” (Alvarado 2009)

Charlie's growing reputation landed him a job with the nationally known Big Joe Turner when he was in town for a nine-day gig at the Key Hole Club. When Joe Turner arrived, he went around listening to all the bands in San Antonio to find one to his liking that could back him up. At the end of his search, he chose Charlie's band. Joe Turner once told Charlie, “These Mexican boys play better than my niggas over there!” (Alvarado 2009). Charlie was surprised because he heard Joe Turner even went to see Spot Barnett's band, but still chose The Jives. According to the local paper, Joe Turner recorded two songs with The Jives sometime in 1961-62 (San Antonio Light, March 3, 1962) but Charlie does not recall doing so, and I have not been able to confirm any recordings.

Charlie met Joe Anthony who was broadcasting out of Arthur Murray Dance Studios when he went to promote his shows at the Fiesta Club. Charlie would go there and perform for free and in exchange Joe Anthony would announce his shows on the radio. Charlie

explains, “If a band could get connected to Joe they had a chance of breaking out because Joe had connections with other record labels and disc jockeys, I think even Alan Freed” (Alvarado 2009). Late in 1959, Charlie got a call from Joe Anthony because a young vocal group, The Royal Jesters, had caught Joe’s attention for an upcoming sock hop, and they needed a band to back them up. Charlie met with Joe and the band and worked out a song written by one of The Royal Jesters called “My Angel of Love.” Joe aired a live performance of the song on his radio program and later recorded it. The song became a local hit, putting The Royal Jesters on the map and bringing them more opportunities to perform, and bringing even more popularity to The Jives. But Charlie’s band could not keep backing up the Jesters because he had his own gigs, six nights a week at the Fiesta Club, so he helped the Jesters put together their own band.

By 1960, Charlie had many different people coming through his band because he had steady work at the Fiesta Club, “I would always have two, three, sometimes four people for every position wanting to get in my band” Charlie recalls (Alvarado 2009). His band was also racially integrated which earned The Jives the nickname, “The United Nations Band.” Some notable musicians who went through his band are the bluesman Randy Garibay (Ramiro Beltrán Garibay) who had a big impact on San Antonio scene (Figure 16). Nando Aguilar recalls, “Randy would teach you something without even trying to teach. It could be the lyrics or his cadence, or how to work the crowd. He would just do things and I would observe carefully” (Aguilar 2010). Garibay began singing lead in vocal harmony groups at Burbank High School. He first sang with a group called The Velvets and then later with The Pharaohs. At a young age, Garibay’s group The Pharaohs performed in Texas as a regular act at the Eastwood Country Club and in Mexico. The Pharaohs sang backup vocals for Doug

Sahm's earliest recordings, including "Crazy Daisy" (Brown 2000). After receiving a Sears and Roebuck guitar from his brother as an eighteenth birthday gift, he quickly learned to play. About 1958 is when he joined Sonny Ace for a short time and in 1959 joined Charlie & The Jives. In the 1960s, Garibay left the Jives to join saxophonist Frank Rodarte's group, The Dell-Kings. The Dell-Kings went to California and then secured a 280-week gig as the house band at the Las Vegas Sahara Hotel where they backed headliners such as Jackie Wilson, Judy Garland, and Sammy Davis Jr. Later they changed the name to Los Blues and went on to play the nightclub circuit where they backed nationally popular artists such as Curtis Mayfield and the O'Jays (Bogdanov, Woodstra & Erlewine 2003: 199).

Another ex-member of Charlie & The Jives was Ernie Durawa, a jazz drummer who filled on recordings such as the 1961 recording of "Bobby Socks and Tennis shoes" on Joe Anthony's Harlem label. Ernie was exposed to the world of music through his mother's club called *Casa Virginia* that was attached to the front of their house. She hired a conjunto band to play there in the evenings, so Ernie would always hear them. When the club closed the band would leave their instruments overnight. After the place cleared out, Ernie would sneak in and mess around with all the instruments. His mom noticed his interest in music so she put him in piano lessons, and later got him an accordion, and after that a bass. One night the band invited him to play the maracas to see if he had any rhythm. At age 10, he was able to keep up with the maracas, and eventually grew a liking to percussion. That is when his mother got him a drum set. He started to learn conjunto music, because that is what he heard at the club and what he had quick access to, but growing up in San Antonio, he was also exposed to rhythm & blues (Durawa 2011).

Like many others, Ernie would go to the Tiffany Lounge to hear local artists. One he

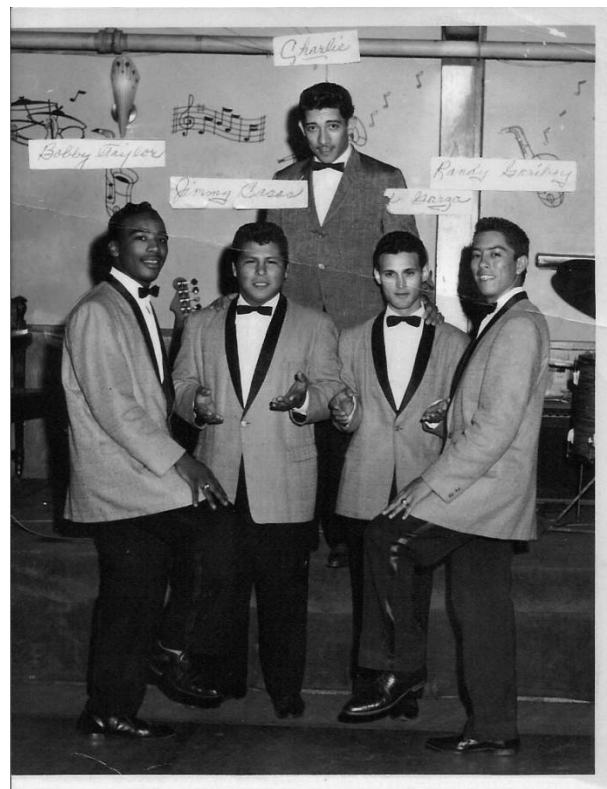
remembers was his favorite was Little Sammy Jay. He couldn't get into the club but he and his friends could get close enough to the door to hear the music. About 1958, at age 16, he joined Reggie Lymon & The Elk-Hearts, a cover band of rhythm & blues, and rock & roll. Members were Reggie Lymon on sax, Little Henry Hernandez as the vocalist, Mucio Morales on bass, Felix Villareal on guitar, and Ernie on drums (Figure 18). An interesting innovation of the group was that Mucio played the bajo sexto as a bass by changing its strings around (Durawa 2011). The band was short lived and around 1958-59 he joined Mike & The Bellaires. In the 1960s he was in high demand playing with Spot Barnett, Doug Sahn, and The Dell-Kings before they left for Vegas.

Many African American musicians also fine-tuned their skills with Charlie before moving on. The aforementioned Jitterbug Webb was one such musician (Figure 15). Another was Benny Easley, who sang for Charlie when he lost his job with another band in town. He recorded with The Jives on "Coffee Grind I" and "Part II" which were based on Hank Ballard's song of the same name. Bobby Taylor was another musician who Charlie had scouted out one day when Taylor was playing at the Tiffany Lounge with a vocal group made up of military people stationed at nearby Air Force base, Fort Sam. Charlie liked the way Taylor sang. The other guys in the group were about to be discharged and go back home. Bobby didn't have any reason to go back so Charlie offered him a job on the spot to sing with The Jives (Figure 16). In 1961, The Jives recorded "Seven Steps to Heaven" and "Ubangi Stomp" with Taylor for Joe Anthony's new Hour label. Taylor left soon after, moving onto Motown Records where he formed Bobby Taylor & The Vancouvers.

About the same time as Charlie Alvarado got started, another aspiring singer named Domingo Solis – later becoming "Sonny Ace" – had a similar introduction into rhythm &



Figure 15: Charlie & The Jives with Jitterbug Webb
Courtesy of Charlie Alvarado



**Figure 16: Charlie & The Jives with Randy Garibay
and Bobby Taylor**
Courtesy of Charlie Alvarado



Figure 17: Charlie & The Jives with Joe “Bones” Stevens
Courtesy of Charlie Alvarado



Figure 18: Reggie Lyman & The Elk-Hearts
Courtesy of Ernie Durawa Papers
Wittliff Collections, Texas State University-San Marcos

blues. Sonny Ace became a bandleader of a group called The Twisters which also was like a revolving door for new talent, sometimes swapping the same musicians with Charlie's band. Sonny Ace started singing in school choir, and like many others, discovered rhythm & blues began singing along to the songs he heard on the radio. Sonny also had an ear for Spanish-language music. For some time, he fronted a *trio romantico* as the lead singer and maracas player, but there was something about rhythm & blues that just spoke to him and made Sonny switch from singing in Spanish. Sonny explains, "My heart for music was in English." He became a fan of Joe Turner, Fats Domino, Little Richard, and Ray Charles. As he was training himself for future ventures as a rhythm & blues singer, his mother was constantly upset at him, "Why you listening to that Black person?" she used to ask (Solis 2010).

Nevertheless, he pursued his passion and started singing semi-professionally in the Navy circa 1953 when he was stationed in Long Beach, CA. There was a club called the EM Club that had regular talent shows. He participated in one and through that he met other musicians such as an African American pianist from Houston named Gino. On their time off Sonny and Gino would get together and work on songs like "Unchained Melody." While Sonny was working on his singing, he was also getting lessons from Gino on piano and by a short time he was able to hold down the chords to some songs. They entered together at the talent show at the EM Club and won first place. From there he was sent to San Diego, to play in another show called "The Armed Forces Talent Show." Sonny and Gino did not have good luck there but they were getting good experience. Sonny and Gino continued working together and according to Sonny they entered one of the talent shows run by Johnny Otis and won first place. Sonny formed a trio called The Flames Trio and played wherever they were stationed such as in Japan, Hawaii, Hong Kong, China, and the Philippines.

He finished the service on June 6, 1956 and returned to San Antonio. As soon as he arrived, he started looking for musicians to put a band together. He had a trio for a while that played at Edgewood High on occasion. According to Charlie Alvarado, sometime in 1957 Sonny sang with Mike & The Bellaires for a few weeks to fill in for Bud Harper when he got sick. Around the same time, another band led by Sonny's old friend Al Gonzales, called Al & The Blue Notes, were up and coming in the San Antonio scene. At that time The Blue Notes consisted of Al Gonzales as vocalist, Big Ralph Sanchez on sax, Felix Velasquez on bass, Joe "Moco" Sanchez on guitar, and Raul Garcia on drums (Figures 19 & 20). Al was in the process of recording and asked Sonny if he wanted to sing on a side and join his band. He was hesitant at first because he was confident in his piano skills, but after Al told him he could guarantee four shows a week at \$10 per show, Sonny could not pass up the opportunity. Before they recorded, Al encouraged Sonny to change his name, because he knew they would not get anywhere with Spanish names. Sonny recalls, "We couldn't, I figured we were Mexican Americans. My name is 'Domingo Solis,' I couldn't be singing in English with that name" (Solis 2010). Inspired by one of his singing idols, Johnny Ace, he took the "Ace" and added his childhood nickname "Sonny." By the end of 1957, they recorded their first single on the TNT label with a ballad called "Darling of Mine" sung by Sonny and rock & roll tune, "I Love You So" sung by Al Gonzales.⁶⁸

Sonny's time with The Blue Notes lasted less than a year. Al's single was taking off and in March of 1958, it was picked up by Dot Records in California which prompted Al to go west to explore other opportunities (Billboard Magazine, March 17 1958). When Al left, Sonny took his band members Joe Sanchez (guitar) and Big Ralph Sanchez (Tenor sax) to

⁶⁸ "Darling of Mine" can be heard at: <http://youtu.be/0p74u4HxGU8>, and "I Love Her So" at: <http://youtu.be/jmb11fhjnII>.



Figure 19: Al Reed & The Blue Notes
Courtesy of JoAnn Gonzales



Figure 20: Al Reed & The Blue Notes with The Moonlites
Courtesy of JoAnn Gonzales

form his own group. Sonny recalls,

Big Ralph was a great showman and played in many groups, he had own too, called The Gigolos. Big Ralph would play his solos jumping around on the floor, or on his back, on top of tables, or he would move through the crowd, and then go out the back door and come back in through another door still playing to the music (Solis 2010).

As Sonny's band started getting work in the local clubs, he landed a regular job at the Cadillac Club. His band went through various names like Sonny & The Montclairs and Sonny & The Rhythm Rockers before settling on the Sonny Ace Quintet (then later in 1963, The Twisters).

Later in the year of 1958 Randy Garibay knocked on his door after leaving The Pharaohs and said "you don't know me, but I play guitar and I understand you need one." The guitarist Joe Sanchez had just left the group, so Sonny asked him to come to rehearsal that night so he could hear what Randy could do. Sonny was impressed by his singing and guitar playing, so he asked him if he wanted to sing too. But Randy was hesitant because Sonny was "the star" and he didn't want to take his place, he would just play guitar. They left to tour the local Texas Clubs ending up in Houston for a while. When they got back to San Antonio, Sonny told them he won't have any work for about thirty days. About a week later Randy and Richard Garza left to play with Charlie Alvarado. Others came through the band such as Jimmy Casas, brothers Vic and Chente Montes, Ralph Mendez, Isidro Cortez, Tony Villareal; and non-Chicanos such as European American saxophonist Bobby Jack and African American saxophonist Billy Williams.

Sonny Ace almost got a chance to break through to the national spotlight, but the long-entrenched culture of record producers taking advantage of their recording artists kept him from getting there. Sonny had signed a contract with local producer, Abe Epstein, and in



Figure 21: Sonny Ace & The Twisters
 Courtesy of Sonny Ace and Jesse Garcia

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DISPLAY AD SIZES
 Pages 1/2 Page

MARK JACKSON — Heaven (Conway Music) (1:18)—I Told You Not to Tell 'Em (Dare, BMD) (2:15). **STARFIRE 719**
LENNY FRANK — Let's Go Steady for the Summer (Dawn, ASCAP) (2:16)—Hey There Little Girl (Dawn, ASCAP) (1:45). A-3-6-314
SONNY ACE & THE TWISTERS — You'll Tear Our Dreams Apart (Dop's, BMD) (2:32)—Oh, Marie (Dop's, BMD) (2:10). **COBRA 444**
ANITA WOOD — Two Young Pools in Love (Hi-Lo, BMD) (2:35)—Memories of You (Sante, BMD) (2:15). **SANTO 806**
RON BAXTER — True Love is a Stranger (Gradick, ASCAP) (2:18)—In Time (Gradick, ASCAP) (2:32). **AGON 1006**
BOBBY V — Two Fast Guns (Claridge, ASCAP) (2:00)—Mrs. High School U.S.A. (Claridge, ASCAP) (2:04). **LAWN 299**
THE QUAILS — Over the Hump (Fugate, BMD) (2:30)—I Thought (Fugate, BMD) (2:35). **HARVEY 120**
MAURINE EVANS — Pick the Petals (Hollis, BMD) (2:18)—Melancholy Me (Chappell, ASCAP) (2:15). **LONDON INT'L 10609**
CHARLOTTE O'HARA — Daydreams (Monist-Manayella, BMD) (2:17)—What About You (Sherman-DeVorzon, BMD) (2:30). **AVA 120**
BURRELL MERRITT — Will You Be My Love (Vandenburg-Glad, BMD) (2:12)—Go Ahead and Hurt Me (Vandenburg-Glad, BMD) (2:18). **VANDAN 841**
DAVE FLANERY — Tears (Buna, BMD) (2:10)—Sneaky Baby (Buna, BMD) (2:09). **SKOOP 1665**
STAN BEAVER — That Little Old Bomb Maker (Tom-Cat, BMD) (2:00)—I Got a Rocket in My Pocket (Hobbins, ASCAP) (2:30). **KASH 1008**

COUNTRY & WESTERN
JIMMY MURPHY — I Long to Hear Hank Sing the Blues (Shepley-Mann-Lee, BMD) (2:30)—Swing Steel Blues (Shepley-Mann-Lee, BMD) (1:30). **ARK 269**
MAC SCOTT — I Created My Own Hell (Tom-Cat, BMD) (2:43)—Gossip of the Town (Tom-Cat, BMD) (2:29). **ASH 81015**
HANK ROBY — Might as Well Stick With You (Glad, BMD) (2:30)—Wasted Love (Glad, BMD) (2:15). **D 1246**

Figure 22: Sonny Ace's Recording Review in Billboard Magazine
 Billboard Magazine, May 18, 1963

1963 he recorded a single with a cover of Louis Prima's "Oh Marrie" with his own composition, "You Tear my Dreams Apart." It quickly became a double hit, Sonny recalls, "the two major stations KTSA and KONO played it, when they play something it means it is a hit" (Solis 2010). Sonny's recording also got a three-star rating in Billboard Magazine, which meant that it had potential if a major label invested in it (Figure 22). One day Epstein got a letter from Imperial Records of Hollywood, a label that had signed artists such as Fats Domino and other big stars. Imperial Records wanted the master recording of "Oh Marie/You Tear My Dreams Apart" and were willing to distribute it nationwide. Epstein knew he could get a lot of royalties, so he asked Sonny to sign another four year contract with Epstein as manager. Sonny declined because he felt he did not need a manager since he did all is promotion and footwork himself, but Epstein was not willing to release the master unless Sonny signed the contract. After some arguing, Sonny ended up walking out on Epstein and therefore breaking his previous contract. Under union rules, Sonny was not allowed to record for two years (Solis 2010).

The Chicano Soul Sound

As discussed in chapter three, Chicano soul in San Antonio reflects a mixture of influences that make it difficult to identify specific and consistent musical characteristics that would define it as Chicano, but some patterns do exist. For most of the 1950s and early-1960s, most ensembles modeled themselves after popular rhythm & blues and rock & roll combos that consisted of drums, bass, guitar, saxophone, and piano on occasion. Their repertoire was a mix of popular rhythm & blues, rock & roll, and doo-wop covers and original material inspired by African American artists such as Johnny Ace, Big Joe Turner,

and The Moonglows. Musicians also liked European American artists, especially local ones such as Johnny Oleen or Ray Liberto,⁶⁹ but also the Cajun rockers from Louisiana.

The Chicano soul sound clearly is connected to Louisiana by the fact that bands covered many songs by Cajun and African American artists, the most obvious being Fats Domino, but also Cookie & The Cupcakes, Warren Storm, Joe Barry, Roland Stone, Lloyd Price, and Smiley Lewis. Talking about the style of rhythm & blues in south Texas, Freddy Fender once remembered when Billboard Magazine called his 1959 song “Wasted Days and Wasted Nights” a “bastard type of rock & roll,” he defended himself explaining that was the style of the region. Freddy called it “the old triplet, Fats Domino kind type of music that you can hear in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas” (Govenar 2004: 483). What Freddy was pointing to is a long historical musical dialogue between Texas and Louisiana that started with jazz of the early 1900s and continued in the 1960s with rhythm & blues.⁷⁰ Also Freddy Fender was pointing to a kind of blues based music referred to as “swamp pop” that, according to Tom Aswell in *Louisiana Rocks!* (2009), is indigenous to south Louisiana and southeast Texas (Aswell 2009: 237). The record producer Huey P. Meaux, the “Crazy Cajun,” added to the dialogue by recording and managing bands from Louisiana, Houston, and San Antonio, and bringing them in contact with one another. The Chili Peppers 1957 album had cover versions of songs by Louisiana artists and their own compositions made radio disc jockeys in New Orleans think The Chili Peppers were a local band.

In the early 1960s, The Dell-Kings, a band that started circa 1958, popularized the double tenor sax sound (Figure 23). Tenor saxophonist and leader of the Dell-Kings, Frank

⁶⁹ Interestingly Billboard describes his 1958 song “Wicked Wicked Woman” as “Rocker with Latin flavor” (Billboard Magazine, December 22, 1958). Upon Listening to this song it is typical of the Texas/Louisiana style, perhaps the habanera-like melody of the sax is the “Latin” part referred to by the writer.

⁷⁰ Tyina Steptoe examines the historical connection between New Orleans and eastern Texas, which may give some insight to its connection to San Antonio. See Steptoe (2008).

Rodarte, was heavily influenced by Clifford Scott, the saxophonist who played with Bill Doggett and had a 1956 hit song “Honky Tonk.” Growing up on the east side, Frank recalls that he bought a copy of Honk Tonk and studied it note for note. At age 14, Frank formed a group with other Central Catholic High students called The Premiers in 1957. A year later, Henry Carrera – also a Central Catholic High student – recruited Frank to join The Dell-Kings. Sometime later Frank became the leader after the African American vocalist and leader, Leonard Springs, was drafted into the army (La Prensa, February 18, 2008).

Circa 1961 a second tenor saxophonist was recruited, Cleto Escobedo, along with Randy Garibay on guitar and Jimmy Casas on bass to replace parting members. The Dell-Kings played at the Town Lounge and then six nights a week at the Tiffany Lounge for seven months. During that time, the band recorded their first single backing up Doug Sahn and released on Joe Anthony’s Harlem Label (Wired for Sound, September 25, 2011). One side featured “Slow Down” written by Larry Williams of New Orleans and other side featured “More and More” which sounds like a Webb Pierce song with the same name, but in the style of Louisiana rock & roll. Upon listening to these recordings, they have a similar sound to rock & roll coming out of Louisiana.⁷¹ Sometime circa 1962, the band recorded another single with “The Big Mistake” on one side sung by Randy Garibay, and “Just Remember” on the other side sung by African American vocalist, Carl Henderson,” both making three stars in Billboard (Billboard Magazine, June 16, 1962).⁷²

Their steady gig at the Tiffany Lounge and their unique twin tenor sound placed them in the spotlight of top bands in the west side scene. Other bands followed, adding a second sax, not always doubling the tenor, but sometimes a combination of alto/tenor or tenor/

⁷¹ The recording “Slow Down” can be heard at: <http://youtu.be/mZENHkHndXg>, and “More and More” at: <http://youtu.be/RpRYrc1jjDI>.

⁷² “Just Remember” can be heard at: <http://youtu.be/2ycIfqZwqGc>.

baritone. Sometime in 1962 or 1963, The Dell-Kings left to southern California where they spent about a year, before relocating to Las Vegas where they landed a regular job as house band at the Sahara Hotel (San Antonio Light, December 24, 1965). According to Mando of The Chili Peppers, “There’s one group who didn’t get the recognition they deserve, that’s The Dell-Kings. When they came to Las Vegas they blew everyone away!” (Cavallero 2010).

Circa 1962 the west side sound began to change again with the addition of the organ, particularly the big Hammond B3 and the more portable M1. This change is attributed to Manny Guerra, a former drummer of Isidro Lopez who was an orquesta leader that had pioneered a new blend of orquesta and mariachi in the 1950s he called “Texachi” (Peña 1999: 158-165). Manny Guerra envisioned an ensemble that could play the popular rhythm & blues tunes and the popular *polcas*, *rancheras*, and other Spanish language music of the time, so he combined the orquesta with the rhythm & blues ensemble to create his “bilingual” group. Similar to what jump blues bands did in the 1940s with the big bands, Manny added a trumpet with the two saxes to create a stripped down orquesta horn section. To play the popular *polcas* and other Spanish language music, Manny brought in the organ because it was popular with African American rhythm & blues artists, but also it could produce the similar droning sound of the accordion for *polcas*. The Sunglows keyboardist, Arturo “Sauce” Gonzalez says Jimmy Smith and his use of the Hammond was a big influence on him and other musicians. The Hammond B-3, originally a pipe-organ replacement for churches, had first become popular in jazz groups in the 1950s. Although somewhat smaller than a piano, it required a two Leslie speakers – which were large and heavy – to be heard over the horn section, making it difficult to move around.

Another change occurred in the mid 1960s after Sunny Ozuna had left The Sunglows

and formed another group called The Sunliners. Building on Manny Guerra's idea of a bilingual band, he added a third sax, a trombone and later a second trumpet. His expansion of the horn section was not completely from a desire to be *jaitón* (high-class) and look down on his working-class roots, as argued by Manuel Peña (Peña 1999, 1999b). In an interview, Sunny explains that he was heavily influenced by the blues singer Bobby "Blue" Bland who had made a big impression on Sunny with his recordings backed by a big band. Sunny recalls that Bland's big sound resonated with him, especially the song "Don't Cry No More" (Govenar 2008: 470). The kind of class Sunny referred to is an African American sophistication, elegance, and humanity he heard Bobby Bland and another favorite, Johnny Ace, which inspired him to do the same with his own ensemble. With a national hit under their belt, and a tight and powerful horn section, The Sunliners established themselves as the best in San Antonio. The Sunliners were "the measuring stick" says Gilbert Sanchez of Danny & The Dreamers, "everybody wanted to be like or sound like Sunny. He was the leader, he was the pioneer" (quoted in Molina 2007: 39).

Also starting in the mid 1960s, other influences such as the Motown sound entered into Chicano music making on the west side, as well as, Spanish language music increasingly entered group's repertoire. Bands such as The Dell-Tones, The Sunliners, Rudy & The Reno Bops and many others were playing and recording a balance of rhythm & blues and popular Spanish language music. This combination would eventually lead to the beginnings of what we now call *tejano* music to be discussed in the next chapter.



Figure 23: The Dell Kings
Courtesy of Cleto Escobedo and Jesse Garcia



Figure 24: The Sunglows Mid-1960s
Courtesy of Jesse Garcia



Figure 25: The Sunliners Horn Section Late 1960s
Courtesy of Jesse Garcia

Challenges with Race

Many musicians recall there were little racial problems in the music scene, and if so, it was usually with European American city officials, individuals from the more affluent neighborhoods, or with rural European Americans they called “rednecks.” The multiracial music scene in San Antonio provided a space for encounter and understanding between European Americans, African Americans, and Chicanos as expressed by Dimas Garza,

We got to – there was a mixture of different people, so you had to cater to Blacks, Mexicanos, Whites. So the music we were playing, it was ideal for them because everybody was having a good time (Garza 2007).

Many of those interviewed claim that there were little to no racial problems among rhythm & blues musicians and fans. Generally, Chicano soul musicians were accepted by African Americans, even if skeptical at first. Chicanos still had to work hard to get passed people’s initial racial perceptions as the vocalist Little Roger Gonzales who of The Rhythm Kings points out,

When you walk into a Black club with eight Black musicians, and you’re the only Chicano, and when someone asks “where’s the singer” and the band points at you, you’d better be able to sell that music (quoted in Molina 2007: 16).

Sonny Ace remembers that he was welcome at most places “as long as you were good.” Yet people were still surprised to see a “Mexican” singing rhythm & blues. Sonny Ace recounts an experience he had in Victoria:

There was a little club out in Victoria, it was a Black joint, I can’t remember the name. The booker for the club brought my band there, so we show up and they say “You Sonny Ace...we thought you were Black, man,” and then they look back at the other guys, and see all Chicanos, “what are all these Mexicans doing here, well anyway, come on in you were booked here!” We start playing and the place started jumpin’ people were hollering and dancing. Then they wouldn’t let us go, we went there once, twice a month (Solis 2010).

Many of the musicians interviewed expressed frustrations with antagonisms directed at them for having an integrated band. They describe many encounters with European American owned restaurants where they had trouble getting service for their African American band members, and sometimes for themselves (Alvarado, Lawson, Hernandez, Solis, Gonzalez 2010). Other instances involve club owners who did not want an interracial band in their establishments. However, the popularity and demand for rhythm & blues and rock & roll, and the growing number of interracial collaborations between bands forced these club owners reconsider. One particular example involves an encounter with the Fiesta Club owner, George Montalvo. Charlie Alvarado recalls when he had hired Joe “Bones” Stevens, an African American, to play in his band:

Bones was a Black drummer who used to play with Jimmy Johnson. We were rehearsing and his wife, era [she was] Mexicana, she was sittin’ back there listening to us play with their baby, a Black baby. Then the owner came to me and he says “what the hell is that Mexican lady doing with a Black baby here.” I told him “that was disrespectful, you can’t do that, the club is closed, ain’t nobody in here, we’re just practicing... So I had to tell Joe, I forget how, I felt really bad because, you know, Black people came in here to dance, I didn’t understand (Alvarado 2010).

This example shows the contradictory relationship between Chicano and African American communities and the class and gender intersections that play out in such encounters. It was okay for Mexicans and Blacks to work in the clubs as musicians and attend the shows, but the sight of an interracial couple sparked long-instilled fear of interracial mixing that cut across racialized lines.

If not their African American band members, Chicanos suffered racism directed at them for being a “Mexican” rhythm & blues or rock & roll musician. Generally, the “White” radio stations like KONO or KTSA did not air explicitly Chicano bands on their radio shows. This is one of the reasons Chicano musicians changed their names, as Sonny Ace asserts,

“Now with the name ‘Domingo Solis’ – back then we couldn’t sing in English with a Mexican name like that, so I changed it, many of us had to” (Solis 2010). Chicano musicians sometimes found themselves working by mistake in clubs with racist audiences, because their names did not explicitly identify them as nonwhite. Sonny Ace recalls being threatened when he played at a European American club in Houston. A group of men kept heckling Sonny, asking him if he knew “The Mexican National Anthem” and then asked him to “step outside” (Solis 2010). On another instance, Charlie Alvarado recalls his experience at a military base,

One time we were playing at Fort Sam for mostly White service people. They were giving us weird looks, I felt something was wrong. We barely played one set, then the sergeant came up to me and gave me a check for the job and said, “Thanks, you guys can go” and I said, “We just started playing, we got a lot of time to go.” He told me it was okay...I think it because we were Chicanos and people there didn’t like it.

One last example that shows Chicano soul artists being excluded is the experience of Bobby & The Premiers, a band from El Paso that was playing all over Texas. The story is told by C.L. Milburn, the manager of The Premiers and the owner of Sold Out Records in Pasadena. One instance in the 1960s he recalls,

There was a big gig in Odessa and I played the principal a tape (of Bobby & the Premiers) He said, “I love it. Where are they from?” I told him and his face turned flush. He said, “Sorry but we can’t have them. If they were Black then fine, but Mexican, no way!” This guy was prejudiced against Mexican-Americans. He thought Blacks were cool, but there were no Mexicans in that area, he wanted to keep them down (quoted in *Texas Funk* liner notes 2005: 6).

The above examples show that even though San Antonio was known for its egalitarian environment, racialized discrimination and prejudices still existed, especially from European American communities and establishments in and outside of San Antonio. The very presence of interracial groups challenged personal and institutionalized boundaries

in all three communities.

Creating New Audiences Outside of San Antonio and Texas

As the scene in San Antonio continued to grow in the 1960s, artists were expanding its reach to new audiences outside of Texas and influencing those audiences to start similar kinds of bands. Ricky Aguirre, Sammy Jay, Al Reed, and Mando & The Chili Peppers had already created connections in California, Las Vegas, and Denver; and Rudy Tee had already done the same in Mexico. Also important is that Chicano soul did not start in San Antonio alone, but in different parts of Texas at the same time. By 1960 there was Little Joe and the Latinaires up north in Temple, Los Dinos in Corpus Christi, Junior & The Starlites in Waco, The Playboys in Seguin, Freddy Frender in San Benito, and the Rhythm Heirs in El Paso. Bands such as these established new audiences on the old conjunto and orquesta circuits and in new locations where Texas Chicanos migrated for work. Touring routes went south to cities such as Laredo or Corpus Christi; east through Houston, Beaumont, and over to Louisiana; west through Abilene, Odessa, El Paso, and out to Albuquerque, Phoenix, and California; and north through Austin, Waco, Dallas, and up to Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan (Molina 2007: 27).

Mando & The Chili Peppers returned to San Antonio in the early 1960s, disbanding shortly after. Mando and Chucho did not stay in San Antonio long, both relocated to Chicago in search of more opportunities. Mando found other musicians to collaborate with including an African American sax player named Chuck Smith who was friends with blues guitarist Eddy Clearwater. Eventually Mando joined Eddie Clearwater as a bass player, performing



Figure 26: The Bossmen of Chicago
Courtesy of Chucho Perales

and recording with Clearwater for some five years, before settling down in Las Vegas.

Chucho and Mando went separate ways upon arriving in Chicago, with Chucho joining a group called The Bossmen (Figure 26). Sometime in 1964, Chucho returned to San Antonio and back to playing bajo sexto and conjunto music.

Charlie Alvarado from The Jives also ended up in Chicago for a short time. His band was still playing at the Fiesta Club until 1964 when Charlie's contract ended. A handful of San Antonio Chicanos had gone to Chicago including a friend named Rudy Ortiz who also played bass for Eddy Clearwater at one time. Rudy convinced Charlie to check out Chicago, so after finishing at The Fiesta Club, Charlie left for the Windy City. Shortly Charlie got a job playing sax with Clearwater. Charlie remembers,

Working with Eddy was fun...but Eddy was left handed and played the guitar chords backwards which didn't always sound good because in certain parts of the song you want the high note of the chord to ring out. I gave him some pointers one time and he got mad, sad I was bossing him around...So one time, we were recording, and he was playing the chords weird again. Then the recording guy told Eddy to not mess up the chords like that, he said, "Look there are some Mexican musicians in Texas that are way better than this!" He was a Black guy too (Alvarado 2009).

The recording engineer's comment is telling of the reputation that San Antonio Chicano musicians had in the 1960s.

Rudy & The Reno Bops were touring heavily in Chicanao communities outside of Texas, opening up cities on the conjunto and orquesta circuit to the San Antonio rhythm & blues groups. In the summer of 1964, The Reno Bops toured California, playing for Chicanao communities in San Jose, San Francisco, Watsonville, Fresno, and Bakersfield; then in other states. Johnny Gonzalez from Zarape Records booked Rudy Tee to perform in Phoenix, AZ, a place only where only Isidro Lopez had been by that time. The Reno Bops tested the waters there at the Calderon Ball Room, and were a hit with audiences. Afterwards more groups

such as The Sunliners played at the Calderon Ball Room, establishing it as a regular spot on the circuit.

Rudy Tee continued to expand his reach and influence when he produced a young band he encountered in Michigan. Circa 1966 Rudy was performing in Segenal, Michigan where he met Jose “El Pato” Gonzalez who helped finance Paulino Bernal of Conjunto Bernal with his label Bego Records. El Pato worked with Rudy to establish his own record label, Pa-Go-Go,⁷³ to record orquestas, but in turn Pato wanted a favor. Rudy explains,

We had to record a little group that was hanging around the house there, they were in English, but he said record them anyway. I asked him about the name, and Jose said “and The Mysterians” (Gonzalez 2010).

Rudy agreed, and mentored the musicians in rhythm & blues and rock & roll. Rudy recalls helping ? work on his “blues yell” and recommending songs that fit the band. When The Mysterians were ready to record “96 Tears,” the bass player was drafted into the Vietnam War. Rudy brought Nando Aguilar, who had recently joined The Reno Bops as a bass player, to fill in. While preparing for the recording and listening to a previous demo of the song, Nando recalls:

They had the bass line wrong. I learned it there at the studio but I thought the line the bass player had was fighting the song. ? asked “what do you mean?” It sounds like he is playing, like, another rhythm to it and you’re not doing the song justice. ? asked if I could fix it, and I said, “yeah! I got something in my head I can put in there.” He loved it so they recorded it like that. Everything else is history (Aguilar 2010).

Looking back, Nando is conflicted about the experience because it was a highlight of his career, but at the same time, a downfall because he only got paid \$10 for the session when the song sold millions. At that time, Rudy was just starting out, so he did not have the money

⁷³ The name comes from the first two letters of Jose’s nickname, El **P**ato, and Rudy and his brother’s last names, **G**onzalez and **G**onzalez.

to pay well for recording sessions. Rudy gave Nando the option of taking \$10 for the session, or sign for royalties. Thinking that the song was not going to be a big hit, Nando opted for the money; he considered it a favor for a friend. The record rapidly became popular, and Rudy could not deal with the sudden rush of logistics that came with the popularity. Another label, Cameo, came to Michigan and strong-armed a friend of Rudy who was holding on to the song because Rudy did not have a Publishing Company yet to cover rights. Rudy's friend sold it to Cameo without contacting him first, and as Rudy put it, "you know the rest of the story" (Gonzalez 2010).

Conclusion

This narrative represents a small fraction of the histories of those involved in Chicano soul. There were approximately 125 bands and over 300 musicians in San Antonio alone (See Appendix). 1964 roughly marks the period when the Chicano soul scene reached its highest number of bands, and roughly marks the beginning of a musical shift to Spanish language music. Bands such as The Sunglows and The Reno Bops were performing and recording Spanish language songs since the late 1950s, but by the mid-1960s the line that had defined the Chicano soul bands and the orquestas began to blur as the soul bands incorporated more Spanish language music, and orquestas incorporated rhythm & blues and soul music. That line continued to blur further as bands traveled to perform for Texas migrant worker communities that wanted to hear the latest trends in popular music, but also wanted a taste of home.

The following chapter will look at this musical shift more closely through two prominent groups in San Antonio, Sunny & The Sunliners and The Royal Jesters.

Chapter 5: The Sunliners and The Royal Jesters

During the 1960s, two bands became prominent players in the Chicano soul scene in San Antonio – Sunny & The Sunliners, and The Royal Jesters. Aspiring musicians looked up to the groups, hoping for the chance to join one of the two. Joe Jama, who joined the Royal Jesters in the late 1960s affirms, “Like I said, to get into one of these bands, I mean, you were, you made it big. You made it big back then, you know” (Perales 2007). The Sunliners were catapulted into popularity by their national hit “Talk to Me,” and later pioneered a new sound other bands followed. The Royal Jesters won many fans with their sweet vocal harmonies and later took over a dance hall that turned into a hub for the west side teen scene.

With such success and support from Chicanao communities, members from both bands were struck with a reality that, as Chicano soul musicians, their access to and opportunity in the music industry was severally limited compared to their African American heroes who inspired them. Mainstream audiences of the 1950s, which predominantly catered to European American teens, were not ready to accept “Mexicans” performing music that belonged to “Blacks” and “Whites,” and for this reason the major record labels generally did not invest in Chicanao artists. Consequently, these limitations pushed Chicanao artists into the margins, but within this marginal space they created a vibrant musical movement built on inclusion and one that reflected the complexity of their urban, multicultural experiences.

Through the experiences of Sunny & The Sunliners and The Royal Jesters, this chapter examines the period between the late 1950s to 1969 when Chicano soul artists began to transition into *tejano* music, then called *la Onda Chicana*. The major threads in this narrative highlight their achievements and innovations, the challenges they faced as Chicano soul musicians, and the balance they found between the musical tastes of mainstream

America and the Texas Chicano community.

Sunny Ozuna and the Sunglows/ Sunliners

The Sunglows was a band fronted by a young Sunny Ozuna, a singer who later became an important figure in the San Antonio scene of the 1960s. Born in 1943 as Ildefonso Fraga Ozuna, Sunny got his name from a childhood nickname “Bunny.” Sunny grew up in the south side of San Antonio where there was also a large Chicano population. Growing up there he heard rhythm & blues, conjunto, and Mexican music coming from the west side and rhythm & blues coming from the African American east side neighborhood. Like many others, he was exposed to popular rhythm & blues and rock & roll from radio shows such as Joe Anthony’s “Harlem Serenade” or Scratch Phillips television show “Ebony Theater.” Sunny and Burbank High School friend and sax player, Rudy Guerra, formed their first rhythm & blues combo called The Galaxies in 1957. In the summer of 1958, Sunny and Rudy changed the name to “The Sunglows” after seeing a sign on their way to Houston that said, “Sunglow Feed Company.” In the early stage of their development Sunny explains, “We had a tenor sax, alto sax, and a trumpet doing a 1-3-5 harmony. That was as far as the horn section went” (quoted in The Austin Chronicle, July, 21 2006). They got the help they needed to improve their musical skills from Manny Guerra, Rudy Guerra’s older brother. Manny had recently left Isidro’s group and joined The Sunglows as their manager and drummer.

The Sunglows began to pick up more work playing wedding parties, church functions, and sock-hops on the west side. Their first recording was in 1959 for a Houston label called Kool Records. The two songs recorded were “Just a Moment (of Your Time),” which did well regionally, and “Up Town.” I have not been able to determine who originally

wrote “Just a Moment.” In Ruben Molina’s book *Chicano Soul*, he states that Sunny Ozuna wrote the song. Online sources say that it was a hit by Roland Stone (Leblanc) of Louisiana the same year.⁷⁴ Roland Stone joined Mac Rebennack’s (Dr. John) group called the Skyliners in 1959, but Roland’s “Just a Moment” was released by Ace Records in 1961. It is possible he performed it much earlier and recorded it later. Sunny might have heard a live performance on the radio or heard Roland perform in San Antonio. Doug Sahm also recorded the song in 1960 on Joe Anthony’s Harlem label, backed up by Spot Barnett’s band. Whether Sunny wrote the song or not, this shows the connection between Texas and Louisiana referred to by Freddy Fender. Both places were musically engaged in dialogue that was creating similar styles rhythm & blues.

Sometime in 1960 the Sunglows met Joe Anthony to record another single with “From Now On” and “When I think of You” (Harlem 110). According to Henke, they could not sign Sunny because his parents did not want him to, but they released the single anyway in 1961. That same year The Sunglows band, without Sunny, backed up a vocal group called The Fabulous Flames who were ex members of James Brown’s Famous Flames. Apparently Big Bill Hollings, Louis Madison, and J.W. Archer were fired by James Brown in 1959, afterwards forming the Fabulous Flames (Brown 1996: 55). In 1961 they ended up at the Eastwood Country Club where Carr and Henke saw them perform. The songs “I’m Gonna Try to Live My Life All Over / So Long My Darling” were recorded in April 1961 (Wired for Sound, September 25, 2011). Later that year the Sunglows recorded “Golly Gee” in the laid back style of Fats Domino and was released on Manny’s Sunglow label. This recording became a bigger regional hit and eventually was picked up by Okeh Records. Discographies

⁷⁴ Comments can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJh0Zac6bEg>.

and record collectors note it was released in 1962, but it had to have been released before because in 1961 the local paper reported Manny Guerra's claim that it had sold 10,000 copies and announced his contract with Okeh Records (San Antonio Light, November 13, 1961). In addition, the song appeared in Billboard with a three-star rating and under Okeh's label (Billboard Magazine, December, 4, 1961).

In late 1962 Sunny Ozuna and the Sunglows recorded "Talk to Me," a song originally written by African American composer, Joe Seneca. Previously in 1958 singer Little Willie John recorded the song and took it to #5 on the R&B Billboard Charts and #20 on the Pop Charts.⁷⁵ About that time, Sunny frequented the Palm Heights Recreation Center after school. There he met Randy Garibay who also frequented the center to play the piano. Sunny was drawn to the song "Talk to Me" that Randy played on the piano. Every time he saw Randy at the center, Sunny requested the song (Govenar 2008: 462). Sunny remembered that Randy sounded "just like Johnny Mathis" (Austin Chronicle July 24, 2006). As a tribute to that experience Sunny recorded it in 1962. Under the guidance of Manny Guerra, the song hit locally, attracting the attention of Huey P. Meaux, the Cajun record producer based in Houston. Meaux frequented San Antonio looking for talent to put on his Teardrop label. He also had many connections in the music business in which he helped a number of Texas artist get national attention. During his visit, Meaux convinced Manny Guerra to let him manage The Sunglows and to re-release the song on his Tear Drop label. When rereleased, the song entered the pop charts and continued to climb reaching its peak at #11 on the charts in 1963 (Figure 27). At this point, Sunny left the group to work with Meaux and formed another Sunglows band in Houston with members of The Rockin' Vees led by brothers Jesse, Oscar,

⁷⁵ The Sunglows' "Talk to Me" can be heard at: http://youtu.be/BQu_zM0spMM, Willie John's version: <http://youtu.be/lkukAk0FwSQ>.

and Ray Villanueva (Figure 28). Guerra believed Meaux convinced Sunny to break with the group to capitalize on the success of the recording (Peña 1999: 261). Sunny was barely out of high school at the time and probably was easily tempted at the chance to stardom.

As “Talk to Me” reached number #11, the young Sunny was catapulted into the limelight. Changing the name of the band to The Sunliners, they appeared on Dick Clark’s American Bandstand in Philadelphia in 1963. The keyboardist from The Sunglows, Arturo “Sauce” Gonzalez recalls, “when Sunny left for Houston I was gonna go with him, but Sunny told me to stay until he gets the band going” (Gonzalez 2010). Sauce got the call and soon he was heading to Philadelphia to help Sunny direct the newly formed Sunliners. Sauce remembers the line of people waiting to get in, the craziness, meeting Wayne Newton; everything was happening so fast. Sauce was supposed to direct the performance, but he found there was not much to do because they had to pantomime the performance, which he recalls was an awkward experience. After their appearance on American Bandstand, they toured the northeast playing in Philadelphia, New Jersey, and New York.

Caught in the national limelight prompted Sunny to realize he was in a different world, an unfamiliar and uncertain “White world, which inciting a desire to return to the familiarity of his own community. Sauce remembers that the tour was very successful and that Dick Clark loved Sunny and people were telling the group to stay in New York. According to Sauce, Sunny had just gotten married and his wife was pregnant, and he had expressed fears of being forgotten back in Texas (Gonzalez 2010). Sunny himself expressed in interviews much later that he realized how competitive the pop industry was, and especially for a Chicano. Sunny explained, “We realized that trying to stay in the white market was going to be pretty much of an impossibility for us unless we were lucky to pop

SUNNY AND THE SUNGLOWS
(Tear Drop)

PM: Huey P. Meaux
BO: Continental

NAMES: Sunny Ozuna, vocal; Jesse, Oscar and Ray Villanueva; Tony Tostado, Gilbert Fernandez and Alfred Luna. **HOME TOWN:** San Antonio. **BACKGROUND:** The group has been working together now for almost four years. They were organized while still attending Burbank Vocational High School, at which time they approached independent producer Huey P. Meaux at a night club he owned in Galveston, Tex. Under his guidance, the group became a hot item in numerous personal appearances in the local area. Their early recordings of "Golly Gee" and "Just a Moment" got good action and spread their name in the industry so that with "Talk to Me" they found a ready, receptive market. Now that they are riding up the charts with their hit single, they've decided on a slight alteration. They have recently changed their name to Sunny and the Sunliners.

LATEST SINGLE: "Talk to Me," which has been on the Billboard Hot 100 for seven weeks, is in the No. 15 slot this week.

LATEST ALBUM: "Talk to Me," which will soon be released.



Figure 27: Sunny & The Sunglows in Billboard Magazine
Billboard Magazine, September 19, 1963



Figure 28: The Sunglows of Houston
Courtesy of Jesse Garcia

more ‘Talk to Mes’” (Interview in Govenar 2008: 471). Also in a later interview Sunny touches upon his desire to return to Texas,

The minute the song dies – “Sunny Who?” And la Onda Chicana, what is nice is that if you’re cold for a while, they still come see you. The white market is not that way. Chicanos hold on more to their roots, and hold on more to their stars. They back them better (quoted in Peña 1999: 262).

What Sunny touches upon is the expendability of musicians if they do not “produce” recordings that sell. He worried if he would be able to keep up, but more so, he points out that he had crossed a color line into a “White market.” Keeping in mind the overt racism and segregation during that time – even in San Antonio – “White” spaces were often unwelcoming and hostile spaces. Perhaps Sunny realized to be in such a space meant having to work even harder to stay in it, with little guarantee of ever being accepted as a Chicano pop artist. According to Sauce, the return to Texas was a bad move because he believed that was their one chance at stardom, if they had stayed in New York (Gonzalez 2010).

Back in Houston, Meaux had convinced The Sunliners to capitalize on their exposure by recording more Spanish language music of the kind that was taking shape in south Texas. Sunny took Meaux’s advice as a way to find a balance between his love for rhythm & blues and his obligation to the broader Chicano community. Sunny explains, “Since we were bilingual – we were all Spanish boys – he figured ‘we ought to try some new ideas.’ So the more we started to tinker with it, we came up with the song ‘Cariño Nuevo’” (quoted in Peña 1999: 157). Sunny was also able to take Meaux’s advice because when Sunny was with The Sunglows and working under Manny Guerra, they had learned popular *polcas* to include in their repertoire. Manny had always envisioned The Sunglows as a band that could perform popular English and Spanish songs. Early on Manny pointed this out when he reminded fans

that The Sunglows were not limited to rock & roll music, but “even play for weddings” (San Antonio Light, November 13, 1961). Even though Sunny did not like “Mexican music,” Manny’s persistence and audience demands for Spanish language music forced Sunny to learn it (Peña 1999: 267). Finally giving in, Sunny described his experimentation,

We didn’t know that we would be on the beginning end of what would be known as Tejano music today because it didn’t have a label. We didn’t know what we were building, either. Since we started playing the rock and roll of the day, we started applying Spanish words to a lot of the same licks that we were for rock and roll – not necessarily the up-tempo things, but the more slower, medium-beat song – and started to develop something. The Sunliners kept writing their own songs and covering popular songs (Interview in Govanar 2008: 468).

Their developing multi-musicality quickly made them popular with migrant Mexican and Chicano communities in San Francisco, Las Vegas, Chicago, Los Angeles, Arizona, New Mexico, and Miami.

Working with Meaux helped The Sunliners chart a few more songs, but some of the musicians felt limited working under Meaux and opted to go back to San Antonio. Seemingly, Meaux was using The Sunliners as studio musicians without communicating with the band about it, which probably wore on their relationship. Sauce expressed, “I was a bit confused as to what was happening at the time, we recorded some songs [instrumental tracks] in the studio and later Huey Meaux would bring in artists like T.K. Hulin, and Barbara Lynn too, to sing on them” (Gonzalez 2010). If Sauce is correct then it is possible The Sunliners provided the music for singers like Barbara Lynn who would later have some success in the industry. When The Sunliners left Huey Meaux and returned to San Antonio in 1964, Sauce helped Sunny put together a new band of talented and creative musicians. People such as Rudy Palacios, Chente Montes, Henry Parilla, and Sauce himself further advanced the

mixture of rhythm & blues, rock & roll, and Spanish language music (Figure 29). The following artists' experiences give some insight into the repertoires and experiences that shaped this mixture.

Sauce grew up on the west side and learned to play music from his father, who used to play *polcas* and other Mexican tunes at the house. Sauce expressed interest in music at an early age, so his Aunt gave him an old small piano. He would learn stuff from his father, but he became interested in the rhythm & blues he heard on the radio, especially by Fats Domino. At fourteen years old, Sauce was learning to play the blues by ear. To get more practice, he would play the piano in the school cafeteria during lunchtime and in return got free lunches out of it.

When he graduated from high school he joined the National Guard and in 1960 went to Fort Ord in California. While he was there he met Bobby Beard, a country singer who used to run a servicemen's club. Bobby offered him a gig to play with him in Santa Cruz. He was hesitant at first because he was not sure of his piano skills, but Bobby said he liked the way he played. Also in the service, they were only paid \$65 a month, so the opportunity to make some extra money was appealing. He ended up making \$75 in one night. Surprised at that amount, Sauce got more excited about playing professionally. He ended his tour in November, 1960 and returned to San Antonio. Immediately Sauce found work with Nando & The Rhythm Aces, a band he came across walking by an old storefront where they practiced. He played with The Rhythm Aces for a short time, eventually leaving to join Little Jessie & The Blue Devils at a small club in downtown. Sometime in 1961 is when he met Sunny. He remembers that Sunny & The Sunglows would come see The Blue Devils play on Monday nights. Upon hearing his group, Sauce was invited to audition for The Sunglows. He got the



Figure 29: Sunny & The Sunliners Back in San Antonio
Courtesy of Jesse Garcia

job as a piano player, joining Sunny Ozuna, Rick Ramirez on bass, Henry Nañez on guitar, Tommy Luna on sax, Manuel Guerra on drums, and Rudy Guerra on sax.

Sauce recalls the recording session for “Talk to Me” in 1962. As Manny suggested, he had switched from piano to organ and had just gotten a Hammond B3, after seeing jazz musician Jimmy Smith playing one at the Eastwood Country Club. Sauce explains,

The Hammond was a monster with the two big Leslie speakers. I had to load that thing on a huge cart to carry it around. When I was setting up for the recording, the organ wouldn’t fit through the doors of the studio, where the guys were playing, so I set up in the office looking through a little window and listening to the others on headphones (Gonzalez 2010).

According to Sauce, other groups picked up on the thick sound of the Hammond and soon it became an identifying part of the rhythm & blues bands and orquestas in San Antonio. For Spanish language music such as *polcas*, Sauce explains,

I would get a little bit of B.B. King or Fats Domino licks and put them into the *polcas* or vice versa, you know, put *polca* licks into the rhythm & blues. And it fit perfectly, it was just knowing how to place the notes, how to put them in the right place. Like the song “Honky Tonk” we would place the notes around into a *polca* (Gonzalez 2010).

The mix between rhythm & blues and *polcas* continued in “Battle of the Bands” shows in the mid-1960s that pushed musicians’ limits in creativity and versatility. Sauce recalls an experience in Corpus Christie where The Sunliners were participating in one such event. Paulino Bernal – of Conjunto Bernal – was playing accordion and competing with Sauce, who was playing organ. Then the accordion virtuoso Steve Jordon joined in and “blew them both away” (Gonzalez 2010).

The rhythm & blues sound San Antonio musicians were creating in the 1960s not only made big impressions on local audiences, but also on non-Chicanaos outside of Texas.

Sauce's recollections of the night he met one of his idols, Fats Domino, provides an example.

The group was on tour in Las Vegas with Huey Meaux sometime in late-1963, but before May 1964 because Sauce remembers that they were filming the movie "Viva Las Vegas" (1964) (Gonzalez 2010). Sauce continues,

Meaux knew Fats Domino who was in town at the same time we were. He was performing at the Flamingo Hotel just down the street, so he took us to eat and drink at the hotel, but most of us were underage. Fats Domino was there and Meaux introduced us to him. He said, "Fats I would like you to meet Sunny and The Sunliners," and Fats just kindly said, "nice to meet you," like it was nothing, you know. Then Meaux goes, "No Fats, this is the guy who recorded 'Talk To Me' – Sunny Ozuna." Oh! Fats lit up and said, "Oh Man! Let me shake your hand"... Fats was hugging Sunny, and he said that was his favorite song and he had a lot of respect for him (Gonzalez 2010).

Rudy Palacios, a young guitar player who had just joined the band, also remembers that night, recalling that "Fats loved Sunny and invited us to play with him there in Las Vegas" (Palacios 2010). Fats Domino's reaction to Sunny Ozuna validates the long-held musical dialogue between Texas and Louisiana, and between European American, African American, Creole, and Chicano communities.

Rudy's Palacios' experience is further telling of the mixture young Chicanos brought to their explorations in rhythm & blues. Before joining The Sunliners, Rudy's experience with music started when his mom bought him a guitar at the age of nine.

I practiced, and I practiced, and once he got a handle on it, a conjunto group hired me to play in a *cantinita* [little bar] here in the west side. I was really young. They really just wanted to use my guitar because the band's guitar player didn't have one. I went to the cantinita and they let me play one song, then they gave the guitar to the other guy, and gave me a plate to go around and ask for money (Palacios 2010).

As did many, Rudy fell in love with rhythm & blues and learned all that he could from the radio. Eventually Rudy was good enough to play with local bands such as Manuel & The

Moonglows, and even got an opportunity to audition for a popular group called Frankie & The Flippers. At the audition he was asked to play an instrumental called “Sliding.” Rudy remembers being “totally lost, sweating and nervous.” They made him take a solo and he could not do it. After his audition, they gave him a record and said, “Take this record home and learn it and we’ll call you.” Rudy never got the call, but it did not discourage him from playing, it only made him work harder to develop his talent (Palacios 2010).

When Rudy got the job with The Sunliners, he was only sixteen. He recalls the day he got a call from Sauce,

I knew him [Sauce] when we were playing in the local scene here in San Antonio, and he would always promise me, he said, “Rudy, one of these days I’m going to get you in with the Sunliners.” And so I just, I kept practicing ‘cause I wanted to play with the Sunliners, you know. And one day, Sauce gave me a call and he says, “Rudy, are you ready?” He says, “Because, you know, I got you a job with the Sunliners.” I’ll never forget (Palacios 2010).

He remembers that a truant officer, a school investigator that looks into student absences, came to his house because he was missing school to rehearse with the group in preparation for a southwest road tour with The Sunliners. Rudy recalls “My mother was crying in the living room ‘cause I was going to leave on tour, and I was sneaking out the back door and the van was waiting for me on the other side of the street.”

Many musicians acknowledge that Rudy had his own style of guitar playing and his creativity and talent at song writing helped push The Sunliners further into developing their own style of rhythm & blues. A fellow band mate agreed:

[Rudy] is a great guitar player...and a very talented writer. And so I would always say “Why don’t we write our own songs?”...we could copy down everybody else’s songs and then people say, “Well, that’s not as good as the original”...And so Rudy came up with some stuff, and then Rudy, and Chente the bass player, and myself, and

Sunny, would, you know, get together, or going down a road, and work out on some songs. But mostly Rudy would come with the ideas. He had a knack for doing these guitar licks that...the kind that stay, like on “My Girl,” he would always have a signature guitar lick on his songs (Parilla 2007).

When asked about his signature guitar style Rudy attributed it to his upbringing in San Antonio and being exposed to many styles of music. During his youth, he learned how to play *polcas*, and the romantic songs of the trios, but also the popular rhythm & blues and rock & roll songs from the local groups. I asked if the *polcas* figured into his style, and Rudy said, “Oh yes! It’s all mixed up in there.” I pointed out that his guitar licks are similar to the role of the bajo sexto in the conjunto – short bass runs in between chords. Rudy responded, “Oh yeah, I never thought about it that way when composing guitar parts, I think it just came naturally without having to think about it, tejano music was part of my background and I’m sure it got mixed in there” (Palacios 2010).

Another musician who became part of the song writing team for The Sunliners is Chente Montes. Chente knew Rudy from playing together in an earlier band and got a recommendation from Rudy. In 1964, he was working at a meat packing company when Sunny showed up to meet him and offer him a job with The Sunliners as a bass player. Chente recalls, “there was about 40-50 guys on the killing floor, you know, just cutting up meat and all. They saw him [Sunny] and – oh my gosh! you should have heard the noise they were making!”

Sunny was a demanding and strict bandleader, making them rehearse five days a week. Rudy recalls, “I remember Sunny, boy, he was a stickler for rehearsing, real tough on rehearsals, which is why we had such a tight band, you know, because we would rehearse so much” (Palacios 2007). Like James Brown, Sunny would fine his musicians if they came

unprepared, did not have their proper uniforms, or if they messed up during a performance.

Rudy confesses,

I remember one time, and I'm sure Chente did the same, we used to wear black handkerchiefs, and sometimes I'd forget mine at home or something like that, and I remember putting a sock in there, you know, and Sunny would never catch it, you know! Anything to avoid that \$10 fine, man! (Palacios 2007).

Another moment is when they performed at the Hollywood Palladium in California. They shared the bill with Pablo Beltrán Ruiz and La Sonora Santanera from Mexico, and The Midneters from Los Angeles. Chente recalls,

We were trying to act real cool, we had practiced before the show to say your name in the microphone and then you would throw it to whoever was next to you...I'll never forget, when they threw it at me, I missed the microphone. It hit my strings, and that thing started making all this noise, and I was on a little platform. I couldn't get to the microphone, so by the time they gave me the microphone. That Sunny was going like this, \$5 fine! (Montes 2007).

These stories tell of Sunny taking James Brown's moniker "The hardest working man in show business" to heart. His demand for professionalism and somewhat over-the-top militancy made the band "one of the tightest" in Texas.

With a national hit, musical innovations, and steady work in Chicanao and Latinao communities across the U.S., The Sunliners were still marginalized by record producers of the major labels. An example is the collaboration between The Sunliners and a new African American group called The Drells, an African American vocal group out of Houston led by Archie Bell. The collaboration which lasted less than a year propelled The Drells into the national limelight as recording artists for Atlantic Records, but The Sunliners who had taken them under their wing and helped develop their sound, were completely ignored.

According to Palacios, The Sunliners were connected with Archie Bell through a soul

station in Houston called KCOH. The Sunliners went to the radio station to speak with the station's president about featuring some of their recordings on the station. The president agreed under the condition that The Sunliners help his nephew's group get started. It was Archie Bell's vocal group, The Drells. Sunny met Skipper Lee Frazier the manager of the band and the radio deejay on KCOH to figure out how The Sunliners could help. Frazier suggested that they record with The Drells. In 1966 Sunny, Rudy, Chente, and a new Keyboardist – Henry Parilla sat down and composed the song “She’s My Woman, She’s My Girl” for The Drells, backing them on the recording. It became a regional hit, putting them on the map of the Houston music scene. With a regional hit under their belt, Sunny took The Drells on tour with him as his opening act. The following year, The Sunliners recorded a few other songs with the Drells including, “Dog Eat Dog” and “A Soldier’s Prayer” (Palacios 2010; Molina 2007: 33).⁷⁶

In Skipper Lee's biography, he acknowledges The Sunliners role in the success of Archie Bell & The Drells, “Sunny Ozuna, the bandleader, didn't charge me one cent for studio time, but he, like all the others who helped me get started in the recording business, deserves my deepest appreciation for his help back then” (Frazier 2001). He continues that those recordings allowed The Drells to travel all over Texas and Louisiana with The Sunliners backing them up. It is later that Frazier met the TSU Tornados who had an instrumental song that he recorded with the Drells and made into the “Tighten Up” and was later picked up by Atlantic Records. While explaining the process of arranging the song and adding the lyrics, “make it mellow,” he says, “We made it mellow with the horns which sounded like the bright, crisp horns you hear in many Mexican bands” (Frazier 2001). Here,

⁷⁶ Listen to “Dog Eat Dog at: <http://youtu.be/9o0iiii0mZo>.

Frazier points to the influence of The Sunliners on himself and The Drells, and a recognizable style of the Chicano bands in Texas.

“Tighten up” along with “Dog Eat Dog” were released on Frazier’s Ovide label in late 1967. Interestingly, Frazier thought the A-side, “Dog Eat Dog” with The Sunliners backing The Drells, would be the big hit and put all his energy into promoting the song. Instead the B-side became popular in Houston, and a few months later, Atlantic Records took note of “Tighten Up” and signed The Drells to the label sometime before April 1968, when the same single was re-released for national distribution. The song hit #1 on the pop charts in May, prompting Atlantic to bring The Drells to New York to record an album (Thompson 2001: 3). The influence of and connection to The Sunliners is apparent on the album recorded for Atlantic Records which had a 1967 recording, “A Soldier’s Prayer” backed by the Sunliners, and a cover of a Sunliners’ song “Give Me Time.”

The success by The Drells in such a short time and the failure by Atlantic Records to recognize or work with The Sunliners, is an example of the racial politics of the Black/White paradigm that exclude Chicanos. The few ex-Sunliner members interviewed were happy for The Drells, but felt cheated. Chente expressed, “When they [The Drells] got back from New York, man, they had gold rings and chains, and we were like, “What about us?” (Montes 2010). His feelings are understandable because The Sunliners had a national hit under their belts, and if Atlantic had investigated The Sunliners, they would have found that they were very popular and doing well touring in Southwest, California, Louisiana, and Florida –not to mention – helping The Drells develop their sound. Generally, Chicano bands were still not marketable to mainstream audiences, and would not be for another four years, when in 1972 Billboard Magazine announced the “Chicano explosion” and the viability in investing in the

“new” music (Billboard Magazine: July 27, 1972: 12; August 12, 1972: 4-11; November 25, 1972: L4-L7). On the other hand, The Drells and the TSU Tornados were marketable because European American industry leaders had long since provided a space for African American artists – although segregated and exploited – and marketed them to European American audiences. Furthermore, “Tighten Up” was similar to the sound of James Brown who had already hit the charts in the U.S and in Europe, so Atlantic Records executives saw an opportunity to capitalize on Brown’s success and sound by marketing artists with a similar likeness. In fact, Frazier was worried they were too similar to Brown. According to Frazier, Archie Bell kept instinctively singing James Brown phrases, and Archie had to repeatedly make him say “tighten up” because, “That’s James Brown’s thing. We can’t copy him. We have to be original. We have to say ‘tighten up’ on everything (Frazier 2001).

The limitations experienced by The Sunliners carry over into how writers today view and represent their role in the music industry. Because there is little detail on record about the relationship between The Drells and The Sunliners, writers assume this signifies the unimportance of The Sunliners. For example in Dave Thompson’s book *Funk*, the collaboration between Chicanao and African American musicians is presented in one sentence, “Although the group members were vocalists only, backed by an array of studio musicians.” He continues to mention Archie’s song writing skills after their regional success with “She’s My Woman,” never pointing out the song was written by The Sunliners (Thompson 2001: 3). Missing this detail suggests that the song was written by Archie Bell.

Also adding to their underrepresentation in popular and scholarly writings is what I have argued in chapter one; notions of blackness and whiteness in the music industry that inform our judgments on the value of artists’ recordings. To further argue this point, I turn

back to Sunny's 1963 hit "Talk to Me." Discourse concerning cover songs has centered on racial politics informed by absolute notions of blackness and whiteness encapsulated in musical categories "rhythm & blues" and "pop" (Waterman in Radano and Bohlman 2000: 167-168). The practice of cover versions during the 1950s has drawn much criticism of the music industry, primarily because European American artists and record producers capitalized on the success of African American artists' recordings (George 1988, Coyle 2002). Whether discourse defends or criticizes the appropriation of African American recordings, it produces and reifies the racial boundary in which European American artists have the privilege to cross and benefit from, and which marks African American musical authenticity. Since Sunny is neither European nor African American, he is excluded from the level of recognition enjoyed by European American artists who have the power to naturalize their appropriation (Holt in Stobart 2008). Any difference in Sunny's singing style or in the overall performance of "Talk to Me" is vulnerable to be written off as an inferior copy of an "authentic" African American recording because these differences often mark "an absence of an African American musicking body" rather than a Chicano musical synthesis (Wong 2004: 174).

Rather than step into the trap of perceiving Sunny's recording as an appropriation or a inferior copy, one needs to think back to the social, historical, and spatial context of Chicano music making in San Antonio. Sunny's performance of "Talk to Me" was a tribute to his love for "Black music" and produced a relational connection with African Americans. Chicanos and African Americans were both marginalized groups in which the love ballad had a special significance among young men of color. Historically, European American racism towards men of color emasculated them to make them inferior. Hyper-masculinity can

be seen as a mechanism to protect or struggle against that kind of oppression.⁷⁷ Writer Ruben Molina explains that to survive in rough and sometimes violent barrios, young Chicanos could not show too much emotion (Molina 2007). The sweet love ballad was one safe outlet to express emotion, and masculinity as long as the song and emotion were towards a woman. Furthermore, “Talk to Me” was part of an intergenerational Chicanao experience. Sunny was exposed to the song through the older Chicano bluesman, Randy Garibay, who sounded like “Johnny Mathis” (a mixed-race pop singer). Sunny recorded the song when he was nineteen, Manny Guerra was in his mid-twenties, and Emilio Caceres, the popular swing violinist who arranged the string parts, was in his seventies. With all this in consideration, the production of “Talk to Me” was a process of Chicanao identity formation, rather than merely copying African American musical style.

The following narrative of The Royal Jesters provides another example of Chicano mixture and musical innovation, identity formation, and challenges.

The Royal Jesters

The Royal Jesters never had any national hits in the likes of The Sunliners, but their popularity in Texas – particularly in San Antonio – according to some was much stronger. Sunny Ozuna once said in an interview, “They were the guys that we always had to worry about, but it was a fun competition” (My San Antonio, January 9, 2011). Nevertheless, The Sunglows supported The Jesters in their early years as a back-up band for The Jesters (Figure 30). Early on members of The Royal Jesters experienced the ugly side of the music industry, ultimately making them take matters into their own hands by creating their own

⁷⁷ There are many studies on the intersection of race, masculinity, and power. One I found interesting and relevant is Athena D. Mutua’s *Progressive Black Masculinities*. New York: Routledge, 2006.



Figure 30: The Royal Jesters Backed by The Sunliners Band at La Villita
Courtesy of the Garza Family

recording label, managing their own dance hall, and producing other bands. This endeavor kept them busy, too busy to tour outside of Texas, but it allowed them to stay deeply connected to local fans. One fan points out, “The Sunliners were very popular but they were on the road all the time. The Royal Jesters had their club, El Patio, and were always performing somewhere in town” (Mendoza 2010).

The Royal Jesters were founded by school friends Oscar Lawson and Henry Hernandez. They both grew up in the projects in the poor part of the west side, and were exposed to many kinds of music. Oscar loved to sing in the church choir and taught himself to play basic chords on the guitar. Henry learned music as a young boy from his multi-talented father who played piano, trumpet, other brass and winds, violin, and sang. Henry also loved to sing so he joined the church choir where he met Oscar and others. Their relationship continued at Lanier High School where they both were involved in various musical activities. In 1956, Oscar was involved in a trio romantico called The Dukes and Henry led a doo-wop group called The Five Angels. Outside of school Oscar and Henry would get together and sing in their neighborhood. They both really liked the trios and studied recordings to figure out how to make harmonies. Inspired by the doo-wop group and friends, The Lyrics, they decided to create their own group together.

In 1958, they formed The Young Ones that later changed to The Royal Jesters with the addition of Mike Pedraza, Bobby Cantu, and African American Charlie Walker (Figure 31). Oscar and Henry met Charlie through Mike Pedraza, a friend and student at San Antonio Tech High School. Charlie, who lived on the east side, took advantage of the city’s measures to integrate schools and chose to go to Tech High School in the west side because they had good programs for learning trades (Walker 2011). The five members occasionally practiced



Figure 31: The Original Royal Jesters Circa 1957
Courtesy of Jesse Garcia

at Charlie's house on the east side. They worked together with Mike Pedraza being the musical force behind the group, to develop their harmonies and singing style. While on the east side, they sang on the street corners to test out their sound. By singing on the corners, they were introduced to professional African American musicians who invited them to the clubs. Oscar recalls that when they went to the African American clubs on the east side the band members recognized them, and asked The Jesters to sing with them. "It was nerve-racking at first because I didn't know what to expect or how people would take a bunch of Chicano kids singing doo-wop. But they accepted us" (Lawson 2010). For Lawson singing at the clubs was a good way to develop and measure their skills as doo-wop singers, but it also grounded them with the African American community, which was "a different kind of connection to the music than most White kids had because most Whites just wouldn't go to that part of town" (Lawson 2010).

Back on the west side, The Royal Jester's work was proving to pay off. They performed at different events such as sock hops, record store promotions, and then high profile events hosted by the local radio stations. For instance, local papers report that The Jesters secured an engagement at the Texas Theater for a rock & roll show before the premier of the Movie "Let's Rock" (San Antonio Express, November 27, 1958). They also appeared on Scratch Phillips talent show on KCOR TV (Walker 2011). A year later, a Royal Jester fan club was founded and newspapers announced an upcoming recording of two songs, "My Angel of Love" and "Those Dreamy Eyes," both written by Oscar. About this time Charlie Walker, Mike Pedraza, and Bobby Cantu left the group and were replaced with three new members: Louie Escalante, Joe Dominguez, and Tony Garcia (San Antonio Express and News, October 18, 1959).

The Royal Jesters made their first recording in late 1959 through radio disc jockey Joe Anthony. They knew if they could get a plug from Joe Anthony, who was running many of the sock-hops, had his own record store and radio show; they would have a chance to break into the scene. Henry gave Anthony a demo and he liked it. That same day Joe Anthony played it on his radio show, according to Henry, about six times throughout the night. Oscar and Henry were thrilled to hear themselves on the radio for the first time. With great feedback, Joe Anthony approached them for a recording deal, but he wanted to record an original tune. Oscar, who had never written a song before, agreed to compose two songs for a single. He knew the basic chord progressions on the guitar, and in a few days hashed out the two songs: “My Angel of Love” and “Those Dreamy Eyes” (Lawson 2010). Sometime towards the end of 1959, Joe Anthony called Charlie Alvarado to help with the final arrangements and back them up on the recording. “My Angel of Love” became a local hit and reached #38 on the KONO charts (San Antonio Light, August 15, 1960; KONO *Fabulous 50*, February 27, 1960).

Oscar and Henry recall the song being on the local radio charts for weeks and figured that Joe Anthony must be selling a lot of records, but they never got any royalties from Joe Anthony. They complained to Charlie Alvarado to see if he could help them approach Joe Anthony and ask about getting some money. Charlie was known as a “tough guy” from his time in the service. When they told Charlie, he got upset and immediately told Oscar and Henry to follow him to the radio station “to set him straight.” However, Anthony was a smooth talker and when he realized why they were there, he announced their presence on the radio. All of the sudden Charlie, Oscar, and Henry were on the radio as “guests.” Struck with opportunity to talk on the radio to their fans, they forgot about the reason they had went to

the station (Alvarado 2010).

The following years, the popularity of The Royal Jesters continued to climb. Oscar remembers playing at many teen performances in those years. Some of the venues they performed in include the popular King of Clubs in downtown that was open to teenagers and started by Joe Anthony. The Tourist Club was another big teen club run by Mel Sharp that attracted some 800 fans on Sunday nights (Wired for Sound, September 25, 2011). The Jesters entered various “Battle of the Bands” contests held at places such as the Texas Theater, the Civic Auditorium, and other venues. They also played at some “21 and over” venues like the Satin Club. The local newspapers kept watch on the group and published many stories such as their performance for the State Senator Henry B. Gonzales, who in 1961 became the first Chicano U.S. House Representative from Texas (San Antonio Light, May 3, 1960). Gonzalez was an important figure in San Antonio who in the 1950s held a filibuster that killed eight out of ten legislative bills trying to overturn the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown vs. The Board of Education*.⁷⁸ The Jesters also took 200 youth to a baseball game, and performed for a Near Years event hosted by the San Antonio Social Civic Organization for 600 guests (San Antonio Light, August 15, 1960; and December 29, 1963).

In 1961, Joe Anthony’s Harlem label was having problems, so he passed on The Royal Jesters over to Abe Epstein. For the next couple of years, Epstein released a handful of recordings by The Jesters on his Cobra label. They did well locally and some made it into reviews on Billboard Magazine. Receiving three stars, their recording “Is that Good Enough for You” made it in the magazine’s “Review of new Singles” (Billboard Magazine, December 11, 1961). In 1962, Dimas Garza of the Lyrics joined the group because Henry left

⁷⁸ For more on Gonzales, see Brenda Haugen. 2006. *Henry B. Gonzalez: Congressman of the People*. Minneapolis: Compass Point Books.

for six months on military duty (Figure 32). By then Dimas was well known in San Antonio as an excellent songwriter and singer for groups such as The Lyrics and The Kool Dips. Oscar took advantage of his skills and Dimas wrote and recorded a song that became a local hit called, “Love Me.” On the flip side was “Let’s Kiss and Make Up” (Figure 33). The band that backed them up on the recording was an African American band called The Memphis Three. Both songs made it into the Billboard under three stars. Again in 1963 with “I Want to Be Loved” another song by Dimas, and “I Never Will Forget” The Jesters made Billboard under “limited sales” (Billboard Magazine, September 15, 1962; May 25, 1963).

By the early 1960s, The Royal Jesters had established a sound different from The Sunliners even though they were drawing from similar musical influences. The Royal Jesters, just as The Sunliners, were influenced by the rhythm & blues and rock & roll featured on the radio. After developing their skills in harmonies from their training on the east side and from studying the trio romantics, they modeled themselves after African American doo-wop groups. Their early recordings, many of which were written by members of the group, sound close to Top 40s doo wop that was marketed under the rock & roll genre, for example the song “I Want to be Loved.”⁷⁹ In comparison, The Sunliners’ sound was closer to that coming out of the south, particularly from New Orleans, which speaks to the long connection between Texas and Louisiana, and to the influence of the “Crazy Cajun” Huey Meaux. This connection is made apparent in the many cover songs they recorded of Louisiana artists such as Jimmy Donley’s “Think It Over,” Roland Stone’s “Just A Moment, and Joe Barry’s “I’m A Fool to Care.”⁸⁰ The latter is a song originally written in 1940 by Louisiana native, Ted Daffan of The Texans, who had relocated to Houston in the 1930s.

⁷⁹ “I Want to be Loved,” written by Dimas Garza, can be heard at: <http://youtu.be/-cA15NnI5B4>.

⁸⁰ These songs can be heard at: “Think It Over” - <http://youtu.be/nKwBT7088tE>, “I’m a Fool to Care” - <http://youtu.be/FiYdbHHRo90>.

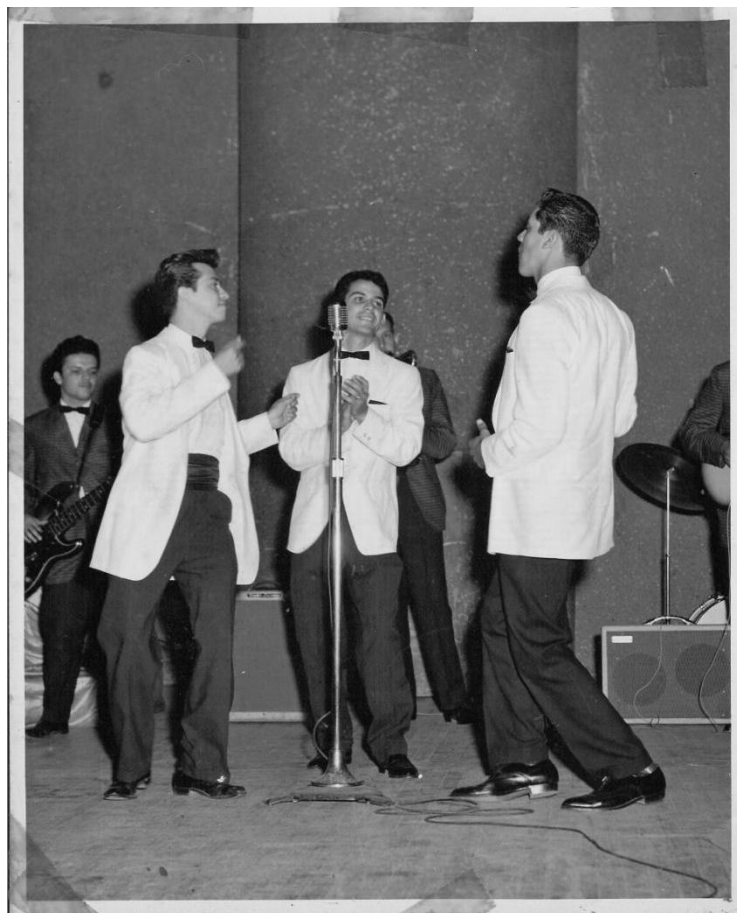


Figure 32: Dimas Garza with The Royal Jesters
 Dimas Garza in center
 Courtesy of the Garza Family

BILLBOARD MUSIC WEEK 27

(R-T, | **THE ROYAL JESTERS AND**
THE MEMPHIS III
 ★★★ Lets Kiss and Make Up (Epps,
 BMI) (2:30) — ★★★ Love Me (Epps,
 BMI) (2:30), COBRA 2222

ow— | **RALPH MARGERIE**
 y hit | ★★★ Moonlight in Vermont (Goldsea,
 mony |
 The |
 ngest |
 ance. |

(Continued on page 29)

Figure 33: Royal Jester Review in Billboard Magazine
 Billboard Magazine, September 15, 1962

Although The Royal Jesters' recordings were hitting the regional charts, Oscar and Henry were not getting any kind of royalties from Anthony or Epstein. This is when they realized their frustration with empty promises and that they needed to take things into their own hands. After leaving Epstein, Oscar and Henry became their own managers. They began getting gigs all over Texas, in Houston, Corpus Christi, and other places, but they still had the problem of having to rely on other bands to back them up. About 1963 they formed their own band and started to organize their own dances, figuring that they could make money on entrance fees. One of their first dances they held at the Municipal Auditorium with themselves plus the Dell Kings and Sonny Ace & The Twisters on the bill. Oscar remembers they did not break even and did not have the money to pay themselves or the bands. Luckily, they got help from Henry's uncle who put up his car to get a loan to pay the other two bands. Then in their early twenties, they learned a lot from that experience about the business part involved in music.

Eventually Oscar and Henry figured they needed their own space if their plan was going to work. Being risk takers, and stumbling upon an opportunity, they leased a dance hall called El Patio Andaluz. El Patio was a small two story building on the west side with an indoor dancehall upstairs and an open patio downstairs. Henry remembers the place was popular in the summers for outdoor dances. It was mostly for adults but eventually began to have teen dances there with Sunny & The Sunliners. At one of those dances, Oscar and Henry got to meet the owner and scheduled their band to play there. One day the husband died and the wife did not want to run the place by herself, so Oscar offered to take it over if she was not interested in running it anymore. She took the offer and leased it to Oscar and Henry. Henry recalls it was good for them for several reasons. They could practice there

during the day which solved the constant problem of finding a place to practice. On the weekday evenings and weekends, they rented it out for parties and dances and organized their own shows. When they heard that the neighborhood schools were having a holiday, they would organize a show and pack the place full of high school fans (Lawson 2010).

1964 was a good time for the Jesters to have their own space. Henry recalls that there were so many bands and clubs, in San Antonio, “almost every kid wanted to be in a band, and eventually it happened!” (Henry 2010). They were always looking for work in the clubs, parties, and weddings, so Oscar and Henry never had a problem finding bands for their dances. He also recalls that there were many car clubs then such as the CYOs and the Drifters. Henry explains,

It was good thing because the car clubs kept the kids off the streets and kept them busy. They were more social organizations than gangs and they supported the local bands a lot. They fixed up cars to cruise around town and they didn’t get into trouble because they didn’t want to ruin the name of the group, which was a bad thing if they had problems with police. The [car] clubs rented El Patio a lot for dances, and at least once a week hired us for their social events (Hernandez 2010).

This relationship points to the reason that some think The Royal Jesters were more popular and had a stronger presence in San Antonio than The Sunliners. The Jesters had a direct connection to local youth through the car clubs and El Patio, which functioned like a neighborhood community center.

With a “Jester headquarters” Oscar and Henry started their own record label called Jester Records.⁸¹ One of their first recordings on the Jester label was a cover of “Wisdom of a Fool” (1964) first recorded by the African American vocal groups, The Five Keys. The song was originally written by Tin Pan Alley Composer Abner Silver and lyricist Roy Alfred. The

⁸¹ In 1966 the name changed to Clown Records and again in 1968 to Optimum.

Keys recorded it in 1956, and the song hit the pop charts, peaking at #35 (Billboard Magazine, January 15, 1957). It was also covered by other pop stars such as Norman Wisdom in 1957 and by Bobby Vee in 1961. The Jesters version never made it into the charts, but both Henry and Oscar say it was a hit locally and in Pittsburgh.⁸² The Five Keys version sounds very typical for a song meant for the pop market. The clean vocals are in the style of pop singing at the time. Brushed drums, piano and bass hold a steady foundation while muted trumpets fill the space in between lyrics. Norman Wisdom's version is backed by an entire orchestra, and Bobby Vee's version has a backing chorus and orchestral strings. In comparison, The Jesters' version has beautiful yet somewhat haunting harmonies that invoke The Five Keys and intertwine with the combination of organ and horns, giving it the west side flavor of San Antonio.⁸³

Like many of the popular bands, The Royal Jesters group was a revolving door for musicians and singers. Some notable musicians were drummer Manuel "Bones" Aragon and keyboardist Luvine Elias Jr. who was 15 years old when he joined the Jesters. Luvine who was studying piano at school remembers when he got the job in 1964 with The Jesters, "I could read music, but when I went to rehearse with the band, I asked 'Where's the music?' They laughed at me and said 'We don't use it, we play by ear'" (Elias 2010). Singers include Dimas Garza who wrote many of their early hits in 1962-63, Joe "Jama" Perales, and others. Joe "Jama" Perales joined The Jesters in the later part of their career, in 1967, just before they transitioned into the music of la Onda Chicana. Joe remembers when he was about 14

⁸² In an interview Henry told me he remembered it was a hit there, but they never traveled to Pittsburgh. After some searching around there is a compilation CD called "Pittsburgh's Greatest Hits" released by Itzy Records in 1995. The CD contains the Jesters recording of "Wisdom of a Fool."

⁸³ The Five Keys version can be heard at: <http://youtu.be/m1JYzegOdxg>, Norman Wisdoms version: <http://youtu.be/Kvuf6ckyTA>, Booby Vee: http://youtu.be/Jgalevx-_MI, and The Jesters: <http://youtu.be/VpzM4A-Lnhk>.

years old and attending shows at El Patio Andaluz and the impact the venue had on Chicanao teens,

It was located on the corner of Commerce and Colorado, man, right there on the, just going into the west side of San Antonio where all the bands used to play at. I remember it was a real hip place; everybody would show up at El Patio, man, for the dances every Friday and Saturday (Perales 2007).

At that time, Joe was a member of the band, The Revells. His path into rhythm & blues was different from most. Joe started singing songs from Fats Domino and B.B. King he heard on the radio when he was about nine years old. One day he heard Elvis and instantly became a fan. For Christmas he received an Elvis collection he had requested. Joe recalls, I sat down with the records for hours and learned every single song, guitar licks, and lyrics” (Perales 2007). Joe explains that is when he realized he loved singing, and continued to develop his voice on his own.

Another inspiration came in 1964 when he heard the Beatles’ song “I Want to Hold Your Hand.” He remembers that the song “blew him away.” He called a friend, Fred Lozano, who was a guitar player and said, “This is what I want to do!” John Gutierrez on guitar and Henry Medrano on drums joined them to form a Beatles-style band, The Revells. The band became popular on the north side of town where more affluent Anglo Americans lived. Considering the racism of Anglos towards Chicanaos, it was a feat in itself for a Chicanao band to play in that kind of neighborhood, at places such as the Teen Canteen, a hub for rock & roll bands of the time. Joe was surprised to find himself in an unfamiliar and often times unfriendly place. The band recorded a single with “I want you to know/ You Turn Your Back On Me,” two songs in Beatles-style rock & roll.⁸⁴ Joe proclaims, “Even the White radio

⁸⁴ One side can be heard at: <http://youtu.be/FcIKMSeY9gw>.

stations like KTSA and KONO that didn't play Chicano bands, played my recording!" (Perales 2010).

Then about 1966, Joe transitioned back into the rhythm & blues and soul music popular in the west side at the time. He joined a band called The Eptones with members David Marez, Oscar Cerenil, Robert Gomez, Gilbert Viera, Louie Ornelas, and David Tabitas. The Eptones recorded a handful of songs on Abe Epstein's Cobra and Jox labels circa 1966-67.⁸⁵

In 1967, Joe Perales got a call from Oscar Lawson who heard about him from a good friend, Charlie De Leon, a well-respected sax player who later worked with the powerhouse band The Latin Breed. Henry and Oscar were looking for a bass player because Jack Barber, an ex-member of the Sir Douglas Quintet, had just left the Jesters. Joe, who was sixteen at the time, was excited but also intimidated because he was the youngest of the group. The following day Joe came to rehearsal and Oscar announced that he was not singing with the group anymore and that he was going to focus on taking care of the business end of things. Later that week Henry and Louie Escalante, the singers had a falling out, and Louie left the group. Joe's previous recordings demonstrated his singing talent, so Oscar and Henry made Joe a singer and brought in Davis Marez of The Eptones to fill in as the third singer. Before transitioning into La Onda Chicana music, Joe recorded some of his own soul-influenced songs with The Jesters including, "Girl I Can't Forget," "My Life," and "Sleep Late my Lady Friend" which made him well-known in San Antonio.

For most of the 1960s, the Royal Jesters had built a strong following of Chicano teens all across Texas and made many regional hits, but they were never able to break out of

⁸⁵ Listen to The Eptones recording "No One Else But You" at: <http://youtu.be/AQZDKBqHyKI>.

Texas. According to Oscar, it was a disadvantage to be Chicanaos playing rhythm & blues because it limited their reach to mainstream audiences. Some of the disk jockeys, like Joe Anthony, would sometimes take them to play for European American audiences in San Antonio, but as Oscar explains “those crowds were more into the sounds of the Beach Boys, or the Beatles which we weren’t into” (Lawson 2010). They were limited primarily to the Chicanao part of town playing the high schools, weddings, house parties, and public dances; and in their earlier days they often played on the east side with the African American bands. After they left Anthony and Epstein, the Top 40 stations that catered to Anglos rarely played their recordings. Nevertheless, Oscar says they did not feel it as much because they had a large following and support from their Chicanao community. “I never wanted to ‘crossover’ to the White mainstream anyway. There was plenty of picking in my own barrio. You had to be Black or Anglo to hit the Top 40. We weren’t offended by it, but we knew it was just a fact” (Lawson 2010). Oscar’s comment that “it was just a fact” points to the liminal space Chicanaos occupied in popular music. Rather than fight it, people like Oscar created their own alternative and self-sustaining spaces.

Having their own space also meant a certain freedom to experiment with their diverse musical tastes to create a synthesis of various influences. For example, the song “You’ve Succeeded” (1965) written and sung by Dimas Garza and backed by The Royal Jesters contains a blend of doo-wop and soul with hint of orquesta.⁸⁶ Musically all the rhythm & blues ingredients are there: drums laying on the backbeat, chord comps by the organ in the background, and steady bass lines. Dimas’ vocals are sweet, soulful, and heart felt. The tones of the horns, saxes and trumpets, invoke the sound of mariachi and orquesta, particularly the

⁸⁶ Listen to “You’ve Succeeded” at: http://youtu.be/_1tYvltWhPU.

punchy intro made by the trumpets, and the downhearted Andalusian cadence (E min-D maj-C maj-B7) at the end of the lyrical phrases. This horn sound is emblematic of what Skipper Lee Frazier referred to as the “mellow” Mexican band sound.

The Jesters achieved the mariachi/orquesta sound – without explicitly wanting to – from the makeup of their horn section. When they formed their own band in 1964 they had two trumpets and a sax when most groups had two saxes and one trumpet. The two trumpets gave them the particular tone and brighter sound. Oscar recalls that one day while practicing at El Patio, Henry invited his distant cousin, Victor Alvarado, who was a trumpet player, to sit in with them. Henry asked Oscar to go back and just listen to the band play an instrumental piece. When Oscar was surprised and liked it, but asked why they had to hide it from him. Henry was afraid that Oscar might not want to hear it if he told him what was happening, he wanted him hear it first before making a judgment (Hernandez 2010).

The Coming of La Onda Chicana

Influenced by the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, a new musical movement, referred to as la Onda Chicana (the Chicano Wave), emerged in Texas in the 1970s. Many of the artists of the 1950s and '60s that once played rhythm & blues, rock & roll, doo-wop, and soul started playing more *polcas*, *rancheras*, *corridos* and other Spanish popular songs to appeal the new audiences created by the Chicano Civil Rights Movement. In this section, I discuss the transition into la Onda Chicana for members of The Sunliners and The Royal Jesters, as well as other artists presented in chapter five.

In the mid-1960s, the Chicano Movement was gaining momentum throughout the Southwest. Numerous groups were organizing to fight against the racial marginalization and

violence towards Chicano and Mexican immigrant communities.⁸⁷ In general it was a movement that differed from previous strategies during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s that sought inclusion into U.S. society as European Americans. Members of the Chicano Movement of the 1960s saw this as assimilationist, and as did the Black Civil Rights Movement, looked inward for distinctly Chicano qualities as a source for empowerment and pride. It was what Peña calls a process of “deassimilation” (Peña 1999: 161) In Texas, the vanguard of the movement was the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO), which was a university student group started in mid-1960s, but officially was founded in 1967. MAYO eventually became the Raza Unida Party in 1972.⁸⁸

Part of this “awakening,” as many refer to it, was a going back to cultural roots, those associated with Chicano barrios and with Indigenous Mexico. In San Antonio, Mexican Americans who had previously referred to themselves as “Hispanic,” “Mexican,” and even “American” began referring to themselves as “Chicanos.” The movement created a new space where Chicano artists did not have to hide their Spanish names and where they could fashion music that represented an explicit Chicano identity. Established Chicano soul musicians had to respond to the changing tastes of their audiences and the growing request for the popular *polcas* if they were to continue to support themselves as professional musicians. As Manny Guerra asserted, “you are a servant to the people...if a new generation wants something new, you give it to them” (Peña 1999: 272). Some artists were prepared for the change as Sonny Ace explains,

My heart was always into rhythm & blues, and rock & roll, but being a musician in San Antonio meant you also had to know the popular Spanish stuff for people who

⁸⁷ For an overview of this movement see: Muñoz (1989), and Rosales (1997).

⁸⁸ For more on MAYO see: Navarro (1995).

would request it. I began to sing popular standards, I wrote my own songs too like “Tu Regresarás” and “No Te Conoci” (Solis 2010).

Other artists tried to resist such as Sauce Gonzalez who was playing for a band called the Mexican Revolution led by Ruben Ramos. Sauce recalls,

We were trying to cross over and play all the blues and R&B. We wanted to record but we had to record half Spanish songs. One went big, to number one. Before we knew it, we were back into la Onda without even wanting to (Gonzalez 2010).

In search for an exclusively rhythm & blues band, Sauce left the Mexican Revolution in 1972 and started a band called Mother Truck with Joe “Jama” Perales, Charlie McBurney, and Louie Bustos.

The transition for Sunny & The Sunliners was easy because they (including Sunny & The Sunglows) were one of the bands that pioneered the fusion of rhythm & blues and orquesta in the early 1960s and by 1970 Sonny Ozuna had already recorded Spanish language albums on his Key Lock Records label. For Sunny Ozuna, the transition was less a political move but a business one as he stated, it “brought him more customers” (Peña 1999: 262). Yet, Sunny’s move into Spanish language music was also a political choice because as a Chicano, which meant occupying an ambiguous subjectivity that was “nonwhite” and “nonblack,” he was limited in the level of and longevity of success he could obtain with mainstream European American audiences. Sunny made the choice to stay within a regional Chicano market where he had a more direct and organic connection to his audience.

The Royal Jesters explicitly change their sound to “stay current with the times, which we had always done throughout our career,” explains Oscar (Lawson 2010). The Jesters had learned to sing harmonies from the trio romantics and recorded a handful of Spanish songs in the early 1960s with Abe Epstein, but it was not until 1971 that The Jesters recorded their



Figure 34: Royal Jesters “Yo Soy Chicano” Album 1971

first album, appropriately called “Yo Soy Chicano,” marketed to the audiences of the new movement (Figure 34). The album contained a mix of songs laced with *polcas*, Latin-Caribbean rhythms, *canCIÓN rancheras*, and trio harmonies. Before producing this album, The Jesters spent the later part of the 1960s working on their skills in musical styles they were not accustomed to. Joe Perales remembers the change in musical direction by Henry and Oscar:

The Royal Jesters who have played nothing but oldies but rhythm & blues, and all the top pop songs back then which were basically from Black artists. Then you’re asking them to go and play a style of music that we have no idea of how to play it because we had never played it before (Perales 2007).

Joe had always played rhythm & blues and rock & roll, but he was excited to learn something new. He recalls that they learned by covering songs by Little Joe and Sunny & The Sunliners because they had been playing Spanish language music for years. “It was rough because we really didn’t have the type of groove that you needed for tejano music back then,” said Joe. The Latin Breed was started in 1969 by Rudy Guerra, ex-member and co-founder of The Sunglows. Around 1970, the Latin Breed fronted by Jimmy Edwards Treviño, was the top band in the emerging tejano sound according to many musicians. Henry and Oscar worked out a deal with Rudy to take them on the road as an opening act for Latin Breed so they could get first-hand experience. Joe recalls,

They [Latin Breed] took us on the road with them, ‘cause they were, they were working every week, every Friday, Saturday, Sunday they were out of town, working, working dances... We’d play the first hour, then they’d come on for, then they’d come on for an hour, then we’d play the third hour and they’d, they’d finish out the night. And that was fun...we learned the groove, the tejano groove, from them, and I learned how to sing from Jimmy [Edwards]. You know, the tejano music -- I was good at singing soul music, you know, and all that stuff, but I wasn’t hip to singing tejano music...but for at least five, six months, every night, Friday, Saturday, and

Sunday we would get our butts kicked from Latin Breed! Every night they'd kick our butts big time, man, because they were hot!...they knew their Tejano music, man, the arrangements -- I mean, I used to call them the Tejano Tower of Power. They had four horns. I mean, kicking!...that's how tight they were and how heavy they sounded. And after five, six months of getting our butts kicked every night, every weekend, finally one night we were playing...It was in McAllen, Texas. We came on. It rubbed, it started rubbing off on us, and we came on strong, man! I thought, boy, we kicked tonight, you know! (Perales 2007).

After that show Pete Garza, the bass player, told Joe, "Tonight you kicked our butts." Joe recalls, "That's when I knew we had arrived, The Royal Jesters had arrived into the tejano market" (Perales 2007).

Throughout the 1970s into the 1980s, groups that emerged during la Onda Chicana were playing mostly Spanish language music, but continued to add rhythm & blues, soul, and funk songs to their repertoire. This diverse mixture of musical style and the growing number of Chicano record producers that emerged to capture this sound on record gave rise to what we now call tejano music. With that said, the Chicano rhythm & blues and rock & roll combos that emerged in the 1950s and flourished all over Texas in the 1960s helped to fashion the new tejano sound of the 1980s.

Conclusion

Some forty years later, the Chicano soul scene of the mid-1960s led by Sunny & The Sunliners and The Royal Jesters has had a lasting impact on Chicanos who grew up during those times. Dimas Garza recalled a recent experience that speaks to this,

Like also in a dance we played in San Antonio. We had, when I finished singing, I see people that, some people were crying. What's going on, you know?...I saw people crying. "What's up? Que pasa?" you know. "Well, Dimas, you brought back a lot of the old songs, original stuff...that brought back a lot of memories." Like I was telling a friend of mine a while ago that when I was in Las Vegas, there was this couple that

fell in love with “As Long As You Love Me,” and they got married, and they named their son Dimas! Dimas, imagine! Stuff like that makes me feel good because, I mean, when people are actually singing your song...you know you're doing something right (Dimas 2007).

What Dimas describes is testimony to the claim Sunny made to Manuel Peña that “Chicanos hold on more to their stars.” This claim is very true from what I have encountered in San Antonio during my research there. The songs from that period are still in demand in the city, making it possible for many artists to still perform and record newer renditions of the songs from the 1960s. When I attended The Royal Jesters reunion show in 2010, I was amazed at the crowd of a few thousand in attendance, the generations of families present, and experiencing the intense emotion and love for the group.

The songs by these artist are also being passed down to future generations. Countless compilations of “Chicano Soul,” “Lowrider Oldies,” and others are sold on Ebay. Online social networks centered on “Chicano Oldies” are plenty. The lowrider culture of the Chicanao barrios still thrives with “Chicano Soul” as its musical background. A new generation of singers are giving new life and carrying on the legacy of Chicanao rhythm & blues. One such singer is Rico Del Barrio who has been deeply influenced by the music of the Royal Jesters. Rico was taken by their harmonies and sound of their early recordings that prompted him to seek them out. He was “taken under the wing” by Oscar, Henry and in particular Dimas Garza whom Rico spent much time with before he passed in 2008 (Del Barrio 2010). Now he performs at “oldies” concerts in San Antonio and Los Angeles, and is currently recording an album with his own compositions and many covers dedicated to the artists of the 1950s and ‘60s.

Conclusion

My narrative of Chicano soul is an example of the rich Chicanao musical history that ethnomusicology does not recognize, that most popular music scholars and writers ignore, and which consumers of popular music do not realize. The lack of recognition for this, and other, musical histories is the result of our framework for thinking about identity, which is heavily informed by notions of race and more so informed by the Black/White paradigm. This paradigm is a mechanism of European American power, a racial project rooted in a colonial past that assigned racialized identities to those upon which European Americans imposed their will. I have charted the paradigm's production and illustrated its continued operation in scholarship, social policy, and media; and its reproduction in the popular music industry. Within the music industry "Black" and "White" identities continue to be sonically enacted and represented as the only valid forms of "American" musical expression, even as the demographics of the industry and musical style diversify.

As I listened to the stories told by the artists and recovered the history of Chicano soul, I realized there was more underneath this history than youth getting involved in what was "hip" at the time. I think back to the production of rhythm & blues as a category that marked and contained the supposed difference and inferiority of African Americans, and the tripartite system of segregation that existed in Texas. Chicanaos' participation in and transformation of a space that was deemed "Black" by European American racists and capitalists challenged the system of segregation and the notions of race that informed it. This is even more apparent in earlier histories of Chicanao participation such as jazz music. This long musical dialogue between Chicanaos and African Americans drew me to theories such as Bhabha's hybridity, Soja's thirdspace, Anzaldúa's borderlands, Torres' critical mestizaje,

and others. They provided the theoretical lens to frame Chicano soul as a space where Chicanos, African Americans, and their allies performed inclusion and mixture to combat a system of oppression built on racialized difference. It is this theoretical lens that breaks down the boundaries that mark racialized difference and break apart the Black/White paradigm that has excluded Chicanos from agency in “American” culture.

Recovering the history of Chicano soul, and through it, challenging dominant perceptions race and representations of their cultural products, intervenes in and enhances the scholarship in the following areas: Chicano studies, African American studies, and ethnomusicology. My research in Chicano soul of San Antonio adds to Chicano studies scholars’ effort to critique and transform mechanisms of power that deprive Chicanos and other marginalized groups of equal rights and social well-being. Chicano soul, a music not traditionally associated with Chicano culture, provides a rich space through which to examine the patterns, contradictions, and transformations in Chicano cultural politics. I have only discussed male performativity and its intersection of race that inform cultural politics, which calls for more research on audiences and Chicana participation in these spaces.

This study also intervenes in African American music scholarship that often times can be a very “slippery” ground to position oneself. African American scholars and musicians have invested a tremendous amount of work in fighting mechanisms of power that have undermined and taken advantage of African American artistic expression. Sometimes intervening in that work risks marginalizing them further “when one considers persistent scholarly and popular attempts to downplay the significance of Black people from Black art forms” (Johnson 2008: 229). In the case of jazz and African American identity, Gaye Johnson asserts that “the presence of Mexican musicians in early jazz both complicates *and*

underscores African American histories and sensibilities fundamental in its creation” (Johnson 2008: 229). Taking my que from Johnson, my claim to space within “Black music” for Chicanaos does not intend to take away space from African American artists or downplay their musical innovations. Rather, I wish to foreground and understand the ways in which Chicanaos and African Americans have collaborated in musical spaces, the ways they are connected to each other, and the stakes they have in each other’s cultural work. To do so, I have to speak to the mysticism of natural talent and rhythm, supernatural power and soul that has given African Americans a special place in popular music representation. To take these as “truths,” only reifies the racist notions that created them. With Chicano soul, I join the conversation for alternative methods of African American cultural politics that recognize “the multi-national and inter-racial history of a Black art form” (Johnson 2008: 226)

Accordingly, framing Chicanao music making as a process of mixture – synthesizing and hybridizing various musical styles in order to express a unique cultural identity – does not imply that African American or European American music is not mixed. To recognize mixture or *critical mestizaje* in Chicano music making and its connections to other groups brings forth the mixture that has produced the music we associate with African Americans and European Americans. Foregrounding mixture is a strategy for rethinking the constructions of “Black” and “White” music in a way that opens them up to include multiple and competing experiences. Furthermore, foregrounding mixture may prove helpful to bring in Puerto Rican, Cuban, Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese Americans; women instrumentalists, and others into U.S. popular music discourse.

Lastly, I intervene in ethnomusicology by filling an academic void caused by the discipline’s failure to recognize Chicanao music making as a site worthy of study and

representation. Echoing the concerns of many scholars cited in this study, I call for increased critical self-reflection and assessment of ethnomusicology's methods, its funding sources and distribution of resources, and its engagement with disciplines that have long grappled with identity and difference, and which have developed decolonizing theory and practices. This is particularly crucial when the discipline remains predominantly European American and continues to focus its study on racialized and marginalized groups outside of the United States.⁸⁹ Ethnomusicology should make part of its curriculum the emerging body of literature called "Critical White" or "Critical Whiteness" studies to help deal with difference and mechanisms of power that make its ethnographic encounter possible. Some of these publications include *Critical White Studies* by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (1997), *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* by George Lipsitz (2006), and *Whiteness, Pedagogy, Performance* by Leda Cooks and Jennifer Simpson (2007).

In conclusion, I refer back to the *chololoche*, the mobile space and the Chicanaos within it who are rediscovering the music in this study and who are continuing to pass it on to future generations. Chicano soul *is* part of Chicanao culture, and it *is* part of "American" culture, "American" in its narrowest and broadest sense and everything in between. I wish to bring the artists in this study – many of whom have repeatedly told me, "Thanks for taking interest in this old man" – a newfound dignity in the music they created and an assurance that they will not be forgotten.

⁸⁹ According to a survey taken in 2002, only 10 percent of the Society for Ethnomusicology's membership was people of color (Rice 2004).

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Appendix: List of Bands

The following is an incomplete list of Chicano soul bands that were active in San Antonio between the years 1954-1972. Because there is little record of the scene and the “foggy” memories about specific dates, people, and places, this list is only a starting point for further research of this vibrant history. Names of groups and individual musicians continue to surface.

The list contains about 125 bands, and over 300 musicians. If the information is known, an approximate starting date for each band is included, along with names of musicians that have played in the band. African and European American musicians are indicated by “AA” or “EA” respectively.

Al & The Exclusives (1963) – This band was founded after Mike Villa left The Bellaires and Al Pinckey took over as lead vocalist and renamed the band to The Exclusives.

Members: Al Pinckey (vocals), Narly Moore (vocals), James Edward Bennett (drums), Nando Aguilar (bass), Andy Ortiz (keys), others unknown.

Al Castaña & The Precisions (1969) – Not much is known about this band. Castaña recorded a single with “Eat ‘Em Up in ‘69” and “I need and Love You” on the Garu label. The backing vocals is a women’s group called The Primettes and the band is called The Precisions.

Al Epp & The Pharoahs (1959) – This is Abe Epstein’s group before he got into the record business as a producer. Apparently there were Chicano musicians in the band but no one has confirmed this.

Al Reed & The Blue Notes (1956)

Members: Albert Gonzales (vocals), Big Ralph Sanchez (Tenor sax), Felix Velasquez (bass), Joe "Moco" Sanchez (guitar), Raul Garcia (drums).

Arthur Dee & The Beboppers (1956) – This band was short-lived and in 1957 some of the members formed another group (name unknown) in which Charlie joined and became leader and renamed it The Jives.

Members: Arturo De los Santos (sax), Clarence Deen (vocals), Ernest De los Santos (drum), Arnold de la Garza (guitar), Frank Gallardo (trombone/ bass).

Big Ralph & The Gigolos (1958) – This was led by the popular saxophonist Big Ralph Sanchez who played in various other bands.

Members: Ralph Sanchez (sax, vocals), Nando Aguliar (bass), Raul Garcia (drums), Benny Torres (guitar), Patricio Elizondo (sax), Albert Flores (vocal, keys), John Torres (guitar).

Bits of Soul (1972)

Members: Sauce Gonzalez (keys), Charlie Macberny (trumpet), Louie Bustos (sax), Ricky Solis, others unknown.

Blues Bag Ltd (1970s)**Bohemeth** (1970s)**Butch & The Twilights** (1962?)**Casino Royale** (1967)

Members: Robert Gomez (guitar), Tommy Zumundia (vocals), Fernando Arragua (vocal), Henry Medrano (drums), Ruben Olivares (keys), Louie Ornelas (sax), Henry Salinas (trumpet), David Sanchez (trumpet), Richard Navarro (trumpet), Joe Jama (vocal).

The Chancellors (1959)

Members: Bill Aguilera (sax), Louis Cantu (sax), Marcos Palomo (drums), Raymond Vasquez (bass), Willie Mendoza (guitar).

Changes (Date Unknown)**Charlie & The Jives** (1958)

Original Members: Charlie Alvarado (tenor sax), Arnold de la Garza (guitar), Ernie De los Santos (drums), Jesse Garza (bass, vocals), Little Henry (vocals); Others: Jitterbug Webb (AA – guitar, vocals), Randy Garibay (guitar, vocals), Ernie Durawa (drums), Benny Easley (AA – vocals), Bobby Taylor (AA – vocals), Joe “Bones” Stevens (AA – drums), Jimmy Casas (bass), Louie Gerrozas (bass), Ruben Portillo (drums), Rudy Flores (keys), Richard Garza, Joe Elizondo, James Kelly (EA – bass), Eddie Marconi (Haw/Mex - Drums), Bud Harper (AA – vocals).

The Cheaters (Date Unknown)**Chico Band** (1971)

Members: Rick Vasquez (drums), Amos pacheco (sax, keys), John Hinojosa (bass), Martin Bueno (guitar), Rodrigo Davila (vocals), Ralph Paredes (trumpet), Al Balderama (trumpet, trombone).

Cold Four (Date Unknown)

The Commands (1965) – This was a vocal group that formed out of servicemen stationed in the nearby military forts in San Antonio. They made many recordings backed by various Chicano soul bands.

Members: Sam Peebles (AA), Jack Martinez, Emmanuel Gross (AA), Dan Henderson (AA) (All vocals), Victor Montes (guitar), Roy Cantú (bass), Armando Alba (drums), Rudy Palacios (guitar), Henry PArilla (organ), Sugar Bear (tenor sax).

The Crusaders (Date Unknown)**The Czars** (1965)**Danny & The Dreamers** (1963)

Members: Danny Escobedo (guitar), Pete Garza (bass), Richard Villareal (sax), Tony Rivas (trumpet), Jimmy Edwards Trevino (vocal), Fidel Perez (sax), Ricky Hernandez (keys), Ernest Gutierrez (drums), Gilbert Sanchez (vocal), Jimmy Edwards Treviño (vocal), Bobby Galvan (keys), Rudy Hetler (drums), Mando Peña (guitar), Gene Chavez (trumpet).

Danny & The Tejanos (1965)

Members: Danny Ifran Martinez (vocal), George Cantu (trumpet), David Garcia (sax), Jessie Garcia (sax), Ray Martinez, Tony Garcia (drums), Richard Donias (trumpet), ? Silva (keys), David Villanueva (guitar), Arturo Alderete (bass).

David & The Wanderers (Date Unknown)**The Dell-Kings** (1959)

Original Members: Henry Carrera (bass), Andy Rocha (guitar), Frank Rodarte (tenor sax), Leonard Springs (AA - vocal), Isidro Cortez (drums); Others: Change: Carl Henderson (AA – vocal), Randy Garibay (guitar, vocal), Cleto Escobedo (tenor sax), Richard Garza (drums), Ernie Durawa (drums), Danny Acenas (trumpet), Jose Cueller (tenor sax), Wayne Reed (bass).

Dino & The Del-Tones (1960)

Members: Jose Jesus Martinez (vocal, guitar), Jerry Aguirre (trumpet), Raymond Silva (sax), Rene Guerra (bass), Dimas Garza (vocal), Roger Ruiz (drums), Victor Montes (guitar), Johnny Zaragoza (keys), Johnny Silva, Roger Pete (bass).

Doc & Sal (1968)

Members: Doc - Ricky Davila (vocal), Sal Martinez – (Puerto Rican – vocal).

The Dreamliners (1960s) – This was a short-lived women’s vocal group that backed up various male groups.

The Dynamics (1965)

Members: Marcos Martinez (guitar), Richard Rivas (trombone), Tony Rivas (trombone), Joey Perez (sax), Robert ? (sax), Albert ? (drums), others unknown.

The Elk Hearts (1958)

Members: Reggie Lymon (sax), Little Henry Hernandez (vocal), Ernie Durawa (drums), Mucio Morales (bass/bajo sexto), Felix Villareal (guitar).

The Entertainers (1960s)

Danny Escobedo (guitar), Fernando Hernandez, Bobby Solis, Pete Garza (bass).

The Eptones (1966)

Members: David Marez (vocals), Oscar Cerenil (bass), Robert Gomez (guitar), Gilbert Viera (trumpet), Louie Ornelas (sax), David Tabitas (sax), ? (keys), Joe Jama (vocal).

The Escorts (1962)

Members: Joe Martinez (guitar), Emilio Moran (sax), Roger Sanchez (sax), Madison Mitchell (AA – vocals, keys), Jessie Earl "Spider" Gavin (vocal), Pat Elisondo (alto sax), Henry Garcia (drums), Joe Flores (bass), others unknown.

The Esquires (1960s)**The Fabulous Moonlighters** (Date Unknown)**Face of Blue** (Date Unknown)**Fat Emma** (Date Unknown)**The Five Velvets** (Date Unknown)**The Flat-Toppers** (1954)

Members: Philip Bustos (sax), Mike Villa (guitar), Adam Hernandez (drums), Juvinto "Joe" Elisondo (sax), Jimmy Casas (bass).

The Flippers (1962)

Members: Joe Lopez (bass), Tom Zuliaica (sax), Floyd Coleman (AA – vocal), Tudy Taddy (guitar), Raul Garcia (drums).

George Jay & The Rockin' Ravens (1960s)**George Rivas Band** (Date Unknown)**Gilbert & The Blue Notes** (1965)

Members: Gilbert Rodriguez (vocal), Ernie Saldana (keys), George Cantu (trumpet), David Garcia (sax), Ricky Salis (drums), Bobby Salis, Gilbert Viera (trumpet), Ramiro Rodriguez, George Gonzalez (guitar), others unknown.

Grand Central Station (Date unknown)**Henry Pena & The Kasuals** (1964)

Members: Henry Pena (vocal), Johnny Wing (Chicano/Chinese – guitar), Adam Gatica (bass), Roland Lopez (drums), George Rivas (keys), Gordy Saldivar, Frank Lujan.

The Imperials (1964)

Members: Ricky Villareal (sax), Tony Rivas (trumpet), Willie ? (vocal), Abriam ? (bass), Ignacio ? (guitar), Robert Lujan (drums).

Jay Garcia & The Crusaders Band (1970)

Members: Mike Conde (drums), Jessie Pedraza (bass), Tito Gambardo (guitar), Eddy Gonzalez (keys), Joe Tee (alto sax), Jay Garcia (tenor sax), Danny Perez (tenor sax), Pete Hernandez (trumpet), George Espinosa (trumpet), Nando Aguilar (bass).

Jesse & The Crystals (Date Unknown)**Joe Campos & The Del-Blues (Date Unknown)****Jay Vee & The Veltones (Date Unknown)****The Kings Combo (Date Unknown)****The Kool Dips (1959)**

Members: Raul Velasquez (keys), Dimas Garza (voc), Carly Henderson (AA – vocal), Raul Garcia (drums), Roger Sanchez (sax), ? (guitar).

The Knights (1957) This was Doug Sahm's first band that recorded with the Harlem label. Their first major performance was opening up for Ricky & The Keys at the Texas Theatre in 1957. The band later (about 1959) changed to The Twisters when Randy Garibay was added, and was short-lived.

Members: Doug Sahm (EA - vocal), Bobby Jett (EA – sax), Bobby Lynn, others unknown;
As The Twisters: Doug Sahm (EA - vocal), Bobby Jett (EA – sax), Randy Garibay (guitar), Jesse Garza (bass), Eddie Valdez (drums).

The Lavells (1967)**Latin Breed (1969)**

Members: Jimmy Edwards Treviño (vocal), Rudy Guerra, Gibby Escobedo, Donald Garza, Frank Perez, Pete Garza (bass).

Latin Souls (Date Unknown)**Liserio & The Blues Aspect (Date Unknown)****Little Arthur & The Cosacks (1962)**

Members: Arthur Lopez (vocals), George Cantu (trumpet), Gerald ? (sax), El Toro? (drums), others unknown.

Little Henry & The Laveers (1962)

Members: Henry Parilla (vocal, keys), Victor Montes (guitar), Jessie Reyes (sax), Dan Sosa (drums), Dan Garcia (sax), Jimmy Jimenez (bass), Jose Jesus Martinez (vocal, guitar).

Little Joe & The Harlems (1962)

Members: Joe Bravo (vocal), Manuel “Bones” Aragon (drums), Ruben Arispe (sax), David Tabitas (sax), Adam Cavazos (alto and tenor sax), Eziqel Escobedo (guitar), Frank Ortega (guitar), Louie Gonzalez (drums).

Little Joe & The Sun Kings (Date Unknown)**Little Joe & The VIPs** (Date Unknown)**Little John & The Kings** (Date Unknown)**Little Jr. Jesse & The Teardrops** (1965)

Members: Jesse Vallardo (vocal), Bobby Bustos (keys), Jessie Jimenez (drums), Jessie De la Garza (bass), Larry Filippone (sax), Isidro Arias (sax), Richard Tellez (trumpet), Armando Tellez (trombone), Paul Aleman (guitar).

The Lovells (1963)

Members: Ernest Camarillo (vocals), Aaron Torres (guitar), Roy Cantu (bass), Albert Cisneros (sax), John Rodriguez (trumpet), Danny Garcia (keys), Danny Salinas (bass), Tony Jimenez (guitar), Roger Martinez (drums), Robert Haggis (sax), Lupe Sanchez (bass), Charlie Crystal (keys), Jimmy Montes (drums), Raymond Gutierrez (trumpet), Norbert Hernandez (trumpet), David Mireles (sax), Richard Carillo (sax), Jimmy Edwards Treviño (vocal), Vic Love (vocal).

The Lyrics (1958)

Members: Abel Martinez (vocal), Dimas Garza (vocal), Alex Pato (voc), Carl Henderson (vocal), Raul Velasquez (keys), Joe Dominguez (guitar), Raul Garcia (drums), Leondis Baetty (AA – sax), Joe Dominguez (bass), Pache De la Vega (guitar).

Mando & The Chili Peppers (1954) The Chili Peppers started as a conjunto group and recorded some boogie and swing tunes in the early 1950s. Band members and the name went through various changes (Conjunto San Antonio Alegre, Conjunto Mexico, The Latineers, Chili Peppers).

Conjunto San Antonio Alegre members: As: Mando Almendarez (Cavallero) (accordion, vocal), Chucho Perales (bajo sexto), Alex Garcia (drums), Raul Zapata Ferrer (guitar, vocal).

Conjunto Mexico members: Mando, Chucho, Henry Ojeda (bass), Euvicio Martinez (drums).

Latineers/Chili Peppers members: Mando (bass, vocal), Chucho (guitar), Rudy Martinez (keys), Juvey (Joe) Elizondo (tenor sax), Abel “Jessie” Garcia (drums), Aaron Lassiter (EA – bass).

Manny & The Moonglows (1962)

Members: Fernando ?, Rudy Palacios (guitar), George Ortiz, Manuel ?, Manuel Flores, Manuel Ortiz.

The Mar-Kays (1960) – This band backed up Doug Sahm on some of his early recordings for the Harlem label.

Members: Rocky Morales (sax), Doug Sahm (EA - vocal), Unberto Reyes (guitar), Clifford Steen (keys), James Kelly (bass), Eddie Valdez (drums), Bobby Jett (Bari sax); Others may have come later: Jack Barber (EA – bass), George Strickland (drums).

The Mar-Vells (1959)

Mel Sharp Band (1966)

Members: Tony Soto (sax), Amos Pacheco (sax), George ? (vocal), Tony Rivas (trumpet), Others unknown.

Mike & The Bellaires (1957) – This band grew out of The Flat-Toppers and then changed its name in 1962 to The Exclusives after Mike Villa left and Al Pickney became lead vocalist.

Original Members: Mike Villa (guitar), Ernest Cortez (sax)?, Jimmy Casas (bass), Eloy Martinez (drums), Bud Harper (AA – vocal); Others: Charlie Alvarado (tenor sax), Al Pickney (vocal), Armando Lucio, Ernie Duwara (drums), Ruben Portillo (drums), Benny Easley (AA – vocal, Charles Vigil (AA – keys), Narly Moore (AA – vocal).

Mike & The Del-Rays (1962)

Members: Mike Gonzalez, others unknown.

Mike & The Hi-Fi's (late 1950s - 1960s ?) – This group was led by Swingin' Mike "Keys" Martinez who recorded "Sugar Baby" which was popular in San Antonio among the car clubs. He led the Hi-Fi's a little later after this recording.

Members: Mike "Keys" Martinez, Roy Cantú (bass), Luis Cantú (guitar), Henry Hernandez (drums), Abel Hernandez, Joe Gonzalez (sax), Robert Gonzalez (sax), Bobby Villa (guitar).

Mickey & the Soul Generation (1969)

Members: Mickey Foster (AA – sax, keys), Andrew Gordon (drums), Harvey Edmerson (drums), Johnny Hooks (alto sax), Emil Carter (AA – tenor sax), George Salas (guitar), Gilbert Rivera (bass), Charles Johnson AA – vocal).

The Monarchs (Date Unknown)

The Moonlighters (Date Unknown)

Nando & The Rhythm Aces (1957)

Members: Nando Aguilar (vocal), Carly Luke (AA – sax), Felipe Quiroga (sax), Joe Dominquez (guitar), Joe Alvarez (drums), Armando Arriega (bass).

Nat & The Music Makers (Date Unknown)

Otis & The Casuals (1963)

Members: Tony Villareal (guitar), Roger Ruiz (drums), Lupe Sanchez (bass), Martin Lineal.

The Pharoahs (1957) – This vocal group was one of Randy Garibays first bands. They recorded backing vocals with Doug Sahm in 1958 on “Crazy Daisy” and “If You Ever Need Me.”

Members: Duke Anthony, Joe Perez, Oscar Cavazos, Randy Garibay, Richard Garza (all vocal).

The Playboys (1964)

Members: Ernie Saldana (keys), Robert Reyes (bass), Robert Suarez (sax), Benny Rodriguez (trumpet), Floyd Coleman (AA – vocal), Victor Alvarado (trumpet), Mario Juarez, Hector Molina (sax), Carlos Pierro, Alex Martinez (trumpet), Augustine Paredes, Wally Gonzalez, Nat Montellano, Robert Perez, Jessie Peña, Henry Garcia (drums), Roger Sanchez (trumpet).

The Premiers [1] (1957) – This is Frank Rodarte’s first group before he joined the Dell-Kings.

Members: Jessie Garza (bass), Frank Rodarte (sax), Albert Escalera (drums), Raymond Treviño (keys), others unknown.

The Premiers [2] (Date Unknown)**The Primes** (Date Unknown)**Publio & The Valients** (1962)

Members: Publio Casillas (guitar), Ruben Ramirez (drums), Nando Aguilar (bass), Joe Garza (guitar), Morgan Leeth (bass), Jerry Savoy (sax, keys), Augie Meyers (keys), Linda Casillas (vocal).

The Radiants (1962)

Members: Joe Jama (vocal, bass), Fred Lozano (guitar), Henry Medrano, John Gutierrez

Ray Liberto (1950s) – Ray is European American but people say he Chicanos in his band. This is not confirmed.

The Revells (1964)

Members: Joe Jama (vocal, bass), Fred Lozano (guitar), John Gutierrez (guitar), Henry Medrano (drums).

Richard & The Markels (1964)**Rick Mann & The Sonics** (Date Unknown)

Ricky & The Del-Harts (1960s)**Ricky & The Four Keys** (1957)

Members: Enrique Aguirre “Ricky Aguary” (vocal, bari sax), Jim Fogal (bass), Roy McMeans (drums), Frank Wood (tenor sax), Lucky Karajohn (keys).

The Rocking T-Birds (1962)

Members: Bobby Shannon (AA – vocal), Chente Montes (bass), others unknown.

Roger A & The Ethics (1962)

Members: Tony Jimenez (guitar), Robert Cisneros (sax), Sonny Vasquez (bass), Roger Alvarez (vocal), Roger Martinez (drums), Stevie Espinosa (sax), Joe Villareal (guitar).

The Royal Five (Date Unknown)**The Royal Jesters** (1958)

Original Members: Oscar Lawson, Henry Hernandez, Mike Pedraza, Charlie Walker (AA), Bobby Cantu (all vocal); Others: Tony Arce (vocal), Louie Escalante (vocal), Dimas Garza (vocal), Joe Jama (vocal, bass), David Mares (vocal), Jack Martinez (vocal), Ralph Cortez (vocal), Manuel “Bones” Aragon (drums), Lavino Reyes (keys), Bobby Fraga (keys), Luvine Elias (keys), Danny Escobedo (bass), Ignacio De la Vega (guitar), Gilbert Velasquez (guitar), Alex Martinez (trombone), Paul Rivera (trombone), Vic Alvarado (trumpet), Anthony Martinez (trumpet), Joe Posada (sax), Danny Perez (sax), Alex Hernandez (sax).

The Royal Knights (1964)

Members: John Esparza (guitar), Gilbert Sanchez (vocal), Albert Arguello (vocal), Gilbert Rodriguez (bass), Alex Uribe (trumpet), Noé Lozano (drums), Jerry Cortez (drums), Hector Cuellar, Alfonso Hernandez (trumpet/cornet), Joe Lopez, Alex Viera (keys), Martin Hinojosa (trumpet), Martin Lechuga (drums), Daniel Medina (trumpet).

The Royal-Bops (1959)

Members: Ambroce Alcoser (drums), Humberto Gonzalez (guitar), Martin Bueno (guitar), Alex San Miguel (bass), Manuel Macias (vocal).

The Royal Tokens (1967)

Members: Mickey Foster (AA – sax, organ), Emil Carter (AA – tenor sax), others unknown.

Rudy Tee & The Reno Bops (1955) Rudy and his brother, Red, had a conjunto group called Conjunto Los Panchitos around 1953. This group evolved into the Reno Bops and started playing professionally about 1957.

Members: Rudy T Gonzalez (vocal), Manuel “Red” Gonzalez (drums), Albert Flores, Lawrence Butch Walters (guitar), Arturo De Los Santos (sax), Sonny Walters, Ralph Candelario, Carnelio Celeya, Mario Trevino, Arnold Quintana, Johnny Wing (Chicano/Chinese – guitar), Ray Martinez (bass), Bill A. Aguilera (sax), Felipe G. Quiroz (sax), Nando Aguilar (bass).

Sammy Jay & The Tiffaniers (1956)

Members: Sammy "Jay" Jaramillo (vocal), Andy Ortiz (keys), Dave Sullivan (guitar), Victor Lopez (guitar), Spec Richardson (sax), Alex Garcia (drums), Doug Sahn (EA - guitar, vocal).

The Satin Kings (1962)

Members: Julio Reyes (guitar), Otis Santivanias (vocal), Raymond Silva (sax), Eugene Noriega (drums), Eddie Trevino (vocal), Robert Garcia (bass), Alex Hernandez (tenor sax),

The Satin Souls (1963)

Members: Joe Martinez (guitar), Madison Mitchell (AA – vocal), Joe Flores (bass), Roger Sanchez (sax), Emilio Moran (sax), Henry Gracia (drums), Manuel Escobedo (bass), Ray Gonzalez (drums), Joe Rodela (trumpet), Chris Hernandez (trumpet), Lowell Thompson (sax).

The Sequence (1959)

Members: Robert Kuwamura, Vic Love, Rudy Cardenas, Martin Mauricio, Victor Gutierrez, Reynaldo Sanchez, Daniel Muraida, (All vocal).

Danny Segovia & The Sessions (1965?)**The Seven Keys** (1961)

Members: Jessie Delgado, Arthur ?, Arturo Moran (sax), Richard Cortez, Tom Suaica (sax), Bobby Stevenson (AA).

Showman Express (1968)

Members: Rick Vasquez (drums), Rodrigo Davila (vocal), Martin Bueno (guitar), Juan Hinojosa (bass), Nat Montellano (trumpet), Tom Rangel (trumpet).

The Silvertones (Date Unknown)**Sonny Ace & The Twisters** (1958)

Members: Sonny Ace (vocal), Tommy Luna (sax), Victor Montez (guitar), Mucio Morales (bass), Isidro Cortez (drums), Big Ralph (sax), Martin Linan (tenor sax), Mike Rodriguez (sax), David Spiller (sax), Eugene Noriega (drums), Tony Villareal (guitar), Ralph Mendez (bass).

Soul Struck Movement (1969) – They later became Zombra in the 1970s.

Members: Mike Baez (vocal), David Alvarado (drums), Roy Hernandez (alto sax), Alfred Talamantes (trumpet), Hector Lozano (trumpet), Manuel Ramos (vocal, guitar), Cesar Moreno (trumpet, trombone), Rudy Tamez (bass), Joe Casas (vocal), Richard Tellez (conga).

The Sounds (1965)

Members: Ruben Ramirez (drum), Manuel Ortiz (vocal), George Ortiz (guitar), Richard Hall (keys), Frank Valdez (keys), Mario Moran (guitar).

Spider & The Playboys (1960s)

Members: Spider (vocals), Robert Reyes (bass), Henry Garcia (drums).

Spot Barnett Band (1956)

Members: Spot Barnett (tenor sax), Armando Lucio (guitar), James Smith (trumpet), Herman Adams (sax), Frank Letford (drums), Willie "Jitterbug" Webb (guitar).

The Stardusters (1964)

Members: Joe Bravo (vocal), Ricky "Vee" Villanueva (vocal), others unknown.

Stone Death Village (Date Unknown)**The Sunglows** (1958)

Original Members: Sunny Ozuna (vocal), Fred Briseno (sax), Rudy Guerra (sax), Manny Guerra (drums), Greg Ramirez (bass), Saul Hernandez (keys); Others: Arturo "Sauce" Gonzalez (keys), Tommy Luna (tenor sax), Andy Ortiz (keys), Bobby Mack (Robert Flores), Greg Ramirez (bass), Henry Nuñez (guitar), Richard Cordova (bari sax), Martin Linan Jr. (alto sax), Joe Bravo (vocal), Jaime Martinez (trumpet), Freddy Salas (vocal), Maria Elena (vocal).

Sunny & The Sunliners (1963)

Houston Members in 1963: Sunny Ozuna (vocal), Jesse Villnueva, Oscar Villanueva, Ray Villanueva, Tony Tostado, Gilbert Fernandez, Alfred Luna; San Antonio Members after 1963: Sunny Ozuna (vocal), Arturo "Sauce" Gonzalez (keys), Rudy Palacios (guitar), Chente Montes (bass, vocal), Armando Alba (drums), Rudy Guerra (sax), Johnny Garcia (tenor sax), Charlie McBurney (trumpet), George Morin (trumpet), Jay Johnson (trombone), others unknown.

Teen Choice Revue (Date Unknown)**The Three Dudes** (1960s)**Tito & The Silhouettes** (1958)

Members: Henry Tito Nieves (vocal), Chente Montes (bass), Johnny Garcia (tenor sax), Victor Montes (guitar), Isidro ? (drums), Tommy Luna (sax), Rocky Gonzalez (sax), others unknown.

The Valentines (1960s)**The Volumes** (Date Unknown)**Willie & The Dots** (Date Unknown)

Members: Guillermo Flores, others unknown.

Zeke & The Zions (1967)

Zeke Alva (vocal), Cleto Aguilar (bass), Joe Trevino (sax), Fred Casteneda (maracas), John Oranday (guitar), Little John Gutierrez (tenor sax), Marino Vargas (drums).

Vita

Francisco Orozco was born in Hayward, California and lived most of his life in Oakland, California. He always had a deep interest in music, playing saxophone in elementary and junior high school, and then guitar in high school. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in La Raza Studies at San Francisco State University in 1997. He then traveled to different parts of Latin America to learn various music traditions, including *joropo* from Venezuela, and *son huasteco* and *son jarocho* from Mexico. He also began the study of *capoeira*, an Afro-Brazilian martial arts, which he continues to study. After working in education reform for four years at Coalition for Essential Schools (CES), he moved to Seattle in 2003 to study Ethnomusicology at the University of Washington, where he earned a Masters of Arts in 2007 and a Doctor of Philosophy in 2012. During his study, he worked as Associate Curator for *American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music*, a ground breaking exhibit that traveled nationally and ended its tour at the Smithsonian Intitute in Washington D.C. in 2011.