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BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

Latin America, Musically

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This essay reviews the following works:

Flaco's Legacy: The Globalization of Conjunto. By Erin E. Bauer. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2023. Pp. viii + 290. $30.00 paperback. ISBN: 9780252087158.

Indigenous Audibilities: Music, Heritage, and Collections in the Americas. By Amanda Minks. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023. Pp. 256. $28.99 paperback. ISBN: 9780197532492.

Fernando Ortiz on Music: Selected Writing on Afro-Cuban Culture. By Robin D. Moore. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018. Pp. ix + 282. $69.50 hardcover. ISBN: 9781439911730.

Sounding Latin Music, Hearing the Americas. By Jairo Moreno. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023. Pp. x + 364. $35.00 paperback. ISBN: 9780226825687.

La conquista discográfica de América Latina. By Sergio Ospina Romero. Buenos Aires: Gourmet Musical, 2024. Pp. 314. Paperback. ISBN: 9789873823954.

A Respectable Spell: Transformations of Samba in Rio de Janeiro. By Carlos Sandroni. Translated by Michael Iyanaga. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2021. Pp. xxxix + 275. $28.00 paperback. ISBN: 9780252086083. Originally published as *Feitiço decente: Transformações do samba no Rio de Janeiro (1917–1933)*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar and Editora UFRJ, 2001.

Decolonial Metal Music in Latin America. By Nelson Varas Díaz. Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2021. Pp. 256. $34.95 paperback. ISBN: 9781789387568.

Inca Music Reimagined. By Vera Wolkowicz. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xvi + 272. $97.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780197548943.

The books reviewed here illuminate past and present musical practices in Latin America and the Caribbean, with attention to transnational links crisscrossing the region and beyond. They deal with questions relevant to (ethno)musicology, history, cultural sociology, and ethnic studies, and to scholars investigating and teaching Latin America who are also invested in a reflection on the region as such—what makes Latin America "Latin America." Several of these texts return to the encompassing idea of the Americas, not (only) as imperial rhetoric from Washington D.C. but as a socioeconomic and aesthetic history of hemispheric migrations, unequal and racialized exchanges, and an astonishingly

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creative and expressive vitality in which Latin American and Caribbean music evolved and continues to develop. One of these books contains musical essays by Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969), whose interest in music was part of a wider interrogation of Cuba's formation and whose work in turn allowed scholars from other countries to see their respective national traditions, and the entire region, as arenas of a vast transculturation process. Since the late fifteenth century, that process has connected the Americas to Europe, Africa, and Asia, and, in the twentieth century, to each other—especially through United States' influence.

Despite their distance from some of the ideological and methodological tenets of Ortiz's research a century ago, the books under review share with his agenda an understanding of music not as a sonic or poetic illustration of social relations, or simply a part of them, but as an engine of social relations, shaping cultural as much as economic, political, and ideological dimensions. We learn, for example, in *Indigenous Audibilities* about the aesthetic and existentialist zeal with which in the 1930s the Chilean artist and ethnographer Carlos Isamitt—an archetypically criollo modernist and we could say Narodnik intellectual from rural Chile trained in Santiago and Europe—circumvented Mapuche ritual rules for musical interaction and transcription by literally hiding in trees and bushes. He learned the Mapuche language and earned personal trust among the communities with whom he worked. He then produced vital musical resources that rescued from oblivion a musical "heritage" for generations of Mapuche even today. The texts vary in disciplinary and writing style and in sources and methods; each one illuminates something relevant to any Latin Americanist. They deal with twentieth- and, in some cases, twenty-first-century musical practices understood in varied ways: music composition in the written and popular traditions, scientific research, performance, commerce, industrial and institutional recording, and listening.

A century ago, South American composers attempted to create new music by reimagining a pre-European South American legacy: the music of the Inca empire. The music historian Vera Wolkowicz's *Inca Music Reimagined* studies the work and ideas of Ecuadorian, Peruvian, and Argentine composers—with glimpses of their Bolivian, Colombian, and Chilean peers—in the 1910s and 1920s, the height of musical "Incaism." At once nationalist and regionalist, the Incaist impulse emerged in the nineteenth century and continued well into the twentieth century, with artists who adopted Incaesque artistic personas like Yma Suma, a Peruvian who developed her career in Los Angeles (Zoila Augusta Emperatriz Chavarri del Castillo), and the Argentine folklorist Atahualpa Yupanqui (Héctor Roberto Chavero), or with the world-music folk rock of the New Yorkers Simon & Garfunkel, who in 1970 popularized the 1913 song "El cóndor pasa" by the Peruvian Daniel Alomía Robles. (The post-Brexit performance of "Rule, Britannia!" by the Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Flórez, dressed as an Inca king on the stage of the Royal Albert Hall, brought Incaism back as British imperial nostalgia [270].) In the early twentieth century, Alomía and others repurposed musical scales, harmonies, and instruments attributed to the Inca, not as folklore, but as modern Art music compositions, following the model of European musical nationalisms peripheral to the Franco-German-Anglo-Italian canon.

Wolkowicz discovers in these works, often unpublished or performed much later, and in their composers' personal and working papers, the invocation of pre-Hispanic grandeur and legitimacy at the service of pan–South American, national, and subnational regionalist musical ideologies. The latter two prevailed in the end over transnational organization. In Peru, the musical field under construction connected Lima, Cuzco, Puno, and Arequipa. In Ecuador, it connected Quito and Guayaquil. And in Argentina, musical exchanges crossed between the northwestern provinces and Buenos Aires. The *incaístas* connected these arenas with one another and with others in the Andes, Western Europe, and the United States, invoking archaeological, musicological, biological, and historical grounds for their compositions. They converged sometimes with *indigenismo*, and others with the older,

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nineteenth-century *indianista* use of the native as a motif. In Peru, they entered debates on the country's Indigenous, mestizo, and criollo identities. In Ecuador, Pedro Pablo Traversari, Segundo Luis Moreno, and Sixto María Durán reinterpreted European, pre-Hispanic, and contemporary folkloric music to search at once for an Ecuadorian music and an American one. In Argentina, Incaists included Italian-language librettos, as in the 1926 opera *Ollantai*. In the amazing final chapter, Wolkowicz analyzes Inca-themed nationalist operas in the three countries, through the sonic, visual, linguistic, and ideological choices by composers and performers and their reception by urban audiences. Contradictions within each of these nations that claim Incan legitimacy, and subtle cultural differences among them—for example, "performances of 'Inca' music were more successful in Argentina than in Peru" because "Inca culture was for Argentines something like what African art was for the French" (217)—forced the decline of Incaism by the 1930s. While this is thus "the history of a failure" (215), "Inca music" remains nonetheless a sediment of pan-Andean regionalist nationalism in the music of South America.

Meanwhile, the anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969) looked to both past and present, investigating the African identity of Cuba's music and society. He penned countless texts that marked generations of scholars and intellectuals in Cuba, Latin America, and beyond. *Fernando Ortiz on Music: Selected Writings on Afro-Cuban Culture* offers ten of those texts, selected, translated, and annotated by the ethnomusicologist Robin Moore in collaboration with David F. García, Sarah Lahasky, Cary Peñate, Susan Thomas, and others. Moore's introductory essay belongs in any course on Latin American intellectual history for understanding the Creole intelligentsia's approach to Afro-Latin American culture. It is based on the entirety of Ortiz's writing on music, secondary bibliography, archival documents in Cuban institutions, and consultations with Ortiz's daughter María Fernanda.

Ortiz's trajectory began with a criminological focus on Afro-Cuban "witchcraft" (*brujería*) in the 1900s and 1910s, and by the mid-1950s, it encompassed "law, political science, history, ethnography, linguistics, sociology, folklore, geography, and musicology" (1). The widespread acceptance of the Afro-diasporic nature of Cuba's national culture owes a great deal to Ortiz's work. He was the son of a Cuban mother and a Spanish father, attended university in Barcelona and Madrid, and returned to be a young public prosecutor and law professor in Havana, where he worked in close relationship first with judiciary and police officers, and then with political figures, musicians and composers, Santería priests, and Afro-Cuban cultural activists, as well as anthropologists and musicologists from Cuba, Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Ortiz's fieldwork protocols were different from ours today, and racist and evolutionist tenets appear in his texts, even in the 1930s, when he aligned with the critique of established ideas of race by Boasian cultural relativism, and in the 1940s and 1950s, when he animated an anti-racist political consciousness in Cuba and the Americas. It is as if an unshakable Europeanism, at times downright evolutionist (e.g., reifying the sexualized "primitivism" of an essentialized "African" music), permeated even his most refined, ardent, and empirically nuanced defenses of the value of Cuba's Black culture and music.

The ten texts, available in English for the first time, and dealing with ritual, instruments, performance, the Yoruba-to-Lucumí ethnogenesis, satirical and commercial music, and other aspects of the Afro-Cuban musical tradition, allow scholars not specialized in music to understand, through the prism of music, the ideological contradictions and the evolving views on race in the first half of the twentieth century, through which Afro-Latin American culture was integrated into national identities. Ortiz's fifty years of political and intellectual activism happened during the Republican years, when he was a member of Congress, then as an exile in the United States from the Machado regime in 1930–1933, and then in the changing context of a resurgent anti-imperialism, the world war, the sociopolitical conflicts of postwar Cuba, and the

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revolutionary movement of the 1950s. In that half century, his study of Afro-Cuban music fed the emergence of a public sphere through journals and cultural associations, some of which Ortiz founded. He saw Cuba as a "mulatto" nation, and in its cultural production, "the inextricable embrace of Africa and Castile" (17). His first book, *Los negros brujos* (1906), disseminated for the first time the term *Afro-Cuban* among academics. His most famous book, *Cuban Counterpoint* (*Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar*, 1940), proposed with a musical metaphor the idea of culture and socioeconomic systems as a dynamic conflict made of multiple sources and determinations. His concept of *transculturación* anticipated (here, Moore draws on Stephan Palmié's work) our current views of culture in the Americas and beyond.[1] In the end, "the eventual recognition of Cuba as an 'Afro-Latin' country ... owes much to this legacy" (3).

While the allure of Afro-Cuban music and *incaísmo* rose in Latin America, a host of Rio de Janeiro's musicians selected, from a vast array of Afro-Brazilian styles related in turn to a wider Afro-Atlantic music and dance repertoire, the style known since as modern samba. This operation is the object of the Brazilian ethnomusicologist Carlos Sandroni's book *A Respectable Spell*: *Transformations of Samba in Rio de Janeiro*. The Portuguese title, *Feitiço decente*, alludes to a *feitiço*, a spell or fetish that circulated publicly in Brazil after the abolition of slavery in 1888. The text was finely translated from the original Portuguese published in 2001 by another Brazilian ethnomusicologist, Michael Iyanaga (in dialogue with Sandroni), who also wrote a foreword introducing the author and contextualizing the book. Modern samba, born and raised in 1917–1933 among urban and mostly Afro-Brazilian musicians in a context increasingly mediatized by the recording industry, appears here as a shift in a longer history stemming from the late eighteenth century, in colonial times. The book transcends simple narratives of "whitening" behind samba's enshrinement as the national music of Brazil by focusing on the musicians' aesthetic sensitivity and professional strategies. It was written both from within and from afar, as Sandroni's intellectual trajectory developed between Brazil and France, and the book contains an equal-footed treatment of scholarship in Portuguese, French, English, and Spanish, from Brazil, France, and the US (and to a lesser extent Africa, Río de la Plata, and Cuba). One may wonder whether what Iyanaga celebrates as a "decolonial" or "Global South" intervention (terms absent in the original) is not, in fact, the venerable Latin American tradition of trying to make sense of the non-European roots of a national peripheral modernity.

In a brief introduction written for this English edition, Sandroni discusses the contrasting uses of the terms *popular* and *popular music* in Brazil, the United States, and France, as well as the need to study commercially recorded music for understanding culture. He focuses on rhythm, notation, and, above all, syncopation in the "Africanness" of Brazilian popular music since the nineteenth century. Chief among his countless insights is the 3-3-2 rhythmic pattern, or syncopation paradigm, in nineteenth-century music that connected multiple styles across the Atlantic world. The panoply of interchangeable terms like "*lundu, polka-lundu, cateretê, fado, chula, tango, habanera, maxixe* and various other combinations of these names" (13) on the covers of Brazilian sheet music at the turn of the twentieth century indicates the dissemination of a commercial culture around the convergence, on the same semantic field, of markers of musical (syncopation), ethnic (musical miscegenation or *mestiço* hip shakes), and national ("typical" Brazilian music) nature. By the early 1930s, the new Estácio paradigm, named after the Rio de Janeiro neighborhood, consolidated that variety of styles into a "new," recognizable, modern, and national style of Afro-Brazilian syncopation: samba.

The book is immensely rich in subarguments, intercultural comparisons, and musical examples useful to readers interested in Atlantic history, race, and modern popular culture in Latin America. We learn about *malandros* (hustlers) becoming composers and the

[1] Stephan Palmié, *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion* (University of Chicago Press, 2013).

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recording industry reorganizing the labor of music and the musical categories themselves. The 1917–1933 transition to modern samba was famously described by the great Ismael Silva (1905–1978) in emic terms: "Samba was like this: *tan tantan tan tantan*. I didn't work . . . So, we started playing samba like this: *bum bum paticumbumprugurundum*" (197). The new style was more "contrametric," that is, more "African" (polyrhythms hard to capture in European musical notation) than the older ones. Like Minerva's owl, the book began as a doctoral dissertation in the 1990s, when samba's hegemony in Brazil was declining, challenged by other local styles like *funk* and *sertanejo*. Sandroni later wrote about the decline of samba and MPB (Brazilian popular music) among twenty-first-century audiences. A quarter century after its original publication, *A Respectable Spell* tells us the history of the stabilization of a genre now considered traditional and opens a window onto the wider, inexhaustible multiplicity of genres always available to popular artists in Latin America.

In effect, the panoply of music genres in Latin America attracted the recording industry already in its emergence in the 1890s in the US, Britain, France, and Germany. *La conquista discográfica de América Latina*, published by Gourmet Musical in Buenos Aires, examines this regional chapter of that global history through Victor Talking Machine Company's more than twenty recording expeditions to Latin America between 1903 and 1926, which produced over seven thousand titles. The musicologist and pianist Sergio Ospina Romero calls these trips a "discographic conquest" and describes an imperial project full of improvisation and ambivalent meanings. The study focuses on the global corporate strategy of commodifying sounds by turning local "talent" into sales. It discusses the literature on sound and early acoustic recording techniques, and it analyzes cases of scouting in Latin American cities, interactions with local intermediaries and artists, and examples of the content of the recordings. Its main sources are Victor's publications and the logbooks and memoirs of the scouts (their detailed biographies appear at the end of the book), who traveled with bulky but portable equipment to capitals and small towns throughout Latin America to record famous and unknown artists' songs, monologues, and folkloric and comic sketches, often in hotel rooms or makeshift studios, and then sent the material to be industrialized in New Jersey for US and foreign markets, including Latin America. The detailed reconstruction of some of these recording experiences constitutes the greatest contribution of the book.

The conceptual approach raises two interesting questions. The trips to, say, Havana or Lima seem to have happened exactly as they did in East Asia or the Middle East, where the Victor scouts sailed to after visiting Latin America: They were ethnocentrically indifferent to local cultures everywhere they went (as in the current term "global South"). But what makes then Latin America a distinct space within Victor's global strategy? The other question is related to the exact kind of colonialism of these recording trips. Ospina calls them enclaves. But contrary to the extractive and violent enclaves by which the United Fruit Company and other US corporations reorganized the population, labor, and law of entire territories in Latin America, Victor's brief hotel-room recording "enclaves" were consensual and peaceful and fostered local consumption, artistic careers, and "transcultural" experiences—in fact, the author also calls them "adventures." Different, then, both from the murderous exploitation of people and nature of the agricultural or mineral enclaves and from what Ricardo Salvatore benignly called the "disciplinary conquest" of South America by US scholars in those same years, Ospina illuminates a different series of phenomena, at once musical, cultural, and economic: the identification of "talent" via informal networks by local and foreign actors as a mechanism of commodification; the presence of Latin American artists in global markets in the era of acoustic recording; and the ample potpourri of genres of Latin American music (albeit not yet seen as such) at the beginning of the twentieth century that fed modern market standardization.

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At the other end of that process, around the turn of the twenty-first century, the music theorist and musician Jairo Moreno poses a different question: How is contemporary music "sounded" and perceived as *Latin*? In *Sounding Latin Music, Hearing the Americas,* he listens to the migration, commerce, musical influence, and political stances of four migrant musicians from the past fifty years *indexically* (i.e., discrete acoustic phenomena attributed to specific places or cultures) and in the broader terms of their "resonance" or "fathoming" of five Americas. The first two sounded by the Panamanian singer and songwriter Ruben Blades: the "*Latino* [US-based] Latin Americanism" of his early New York–based salsa, and the "*Latin American* Latin Americanism" of his later, pan-Latin work in Costa Rica. The first analysis focuses on Blades's 1978 hit "Pedro Navaja," in which the sociopolitical and aesthetic density of the cultural entanglements and the demography of the Americas converge in a music and poetry that express class distinctions and connect "lumpen" experiences of migration to Latin Americanist "lettered" traditions. Later, in Blades's Costa Rican albums (*Tiempos*, 1999, and *Mundo*, 2002), the intrinsic heterogeneity and hybridity of Latin American musical discourses appear, crossing genres and borders within and beyond the Americas—but this ambiguous geography betrays a politically hollow representation of the region.

The third case is Shakira's corporate "*cosmopolitan* Latin Americanism" (12). An exhaustive account of the Barranquillera's commercial success and audience reception, especially regarding the US music industry (and her manager, the Miami Cuban musician and producer Emilio Estefan), reveals contradictory meanings produced by her commodified stardom—stemming from linguistic choices and branding; her Barranquilla roots, proud Colombianness, and ambivalent relations with Colombian musicians; and her Lebanese origins, corporate sponsorships, Miami-modeled "Latin" status, and global figure for FIFA and UNICEF. In contrast to the previous chapters on Blades, this one zeroes in on the commercial phenomenon of "Shakira" rather than on her music and poetry.

The fourth case is a thread of reinterpretations of "Latin" music as jazz: the work of the New York pianist and composer Arturo O'Farrill (born in Mexico to a Mexican mother and a Cuban father, the big-band jazz artist Chico O'Farrill, who migrated to New York in 1948). In 2010, with his Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, Arturo reelaborated his father's 1950 "Afro-Cuban Jazz Suite" in a way that challenged the "North American Latin Americanism" of Wynton Marsalis's Lincoln Center jazz program by distinguishing African American from Afro-Latin forms of jazz. The terminological evolution and coexistence of *Afro-Cuban*, *Afro-Caribbean*, and *Afro-Latin*, and *Latin jazz* naming the same repertory, even between father and son, indicates the metamorphoses of "sounding Latin" in the United States. This "Latin" jazz cannot be understood without its close imbrication in the United States' "Black modernity" and the "African American" claim about jazz history. Arturo O'Farrill and Marsalis appear haunted by the dead—their American and Cuban ancestors—and as cultivating an "open tradition."

In the book's final case, the Puerto Rican saxophonist and band leader Miguel Zenón (b. 1976) embodies that openness by bringing folk and country *música jíbara* from Puerto Rico into US jazz (he was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2008 for that reason) and then performing New York jazz for the island's popular rural audiences with his Caravana Cultural in 2010 and 2011. Zenón's career incarnates the modernities and hierarchies involved in the relationship between the US and Puerto Rico.

Although the five cases compose a picture not of the Americas in their full extension, but rather of one centered on the Greater Caribbean and US East Coast, readers can imagine how other traditions—Mexican, South American, or US Midwest or Southwest—would complete and complicate the idea of "Latin" sounding. And while its theoretical ruminations sometimes overpower the discussion of actual sounding and listening, the book's countless insights, attention to meaning and context, and permanent interrogation

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of "the Americas" invite readers to (re)discover these artists anew and to listen differently to other artists.

We could paraphrase Moreno and add to those five experiences of musical migration that of the author's own migrant academic Latin/o Americanism. Migration appears as inherent to the Americas' musical life: from the texts and scores among the dispersed and often mobile Incaista composers, to Fernando Ortiz's trajectory, to the rerooting within and beyond Brazil of musicians and scholars, to the commodification of music in Victor's recordings, and to musical scholarship itself.

The migration of music is also the focus of the musicologist Erin Bauer (also a migrant scholar in the United States) in *Flaco's Legacy: The Globalization of Conjunto*. Conjunto music is a "folkloric combination of button accordion with *bajo sexto* (a twelve-string Spanish/Mexican bass guitar)" attached to working-class identity among a population the author refers to as Texas Mexicans in the San Antonio and Rio Grande Valley areas (12). Starting in the 1970s, the genre went global through the careers of the accordion player Flaco Jiménez (b. 1939 in San Antonio, son and grandson of Mexican musicians, and deceased while writing this review essay) and others. The book shares with the Grammy and other awards recognizing Flaco's music a view of conjunto not as "Latin," but as a US regional style, whose distinctiveness is a bilingual repertory (songs in Spanish, English, and a combination of both) produced by a "bicultural" population of "Texas Mexicans" in the Mexico-US borderland. We are thus physically and conceptually, linguistically and sociologically, in the borders of Latin America. The book doesn't engage with Mexico or with conjunto's Mexican "twin sister," *norteño* music, and it focuses instead on the genre's travels to other parts of Texas, other regions in the United States, and internationally, leaving Mexico as an "often invisible" (6) musical source for conjunto. Texas Mexican ethno-nationalism is a powerful force shaping conjunto, leading Bauer to use *globalization* to refer not just to its adoption in the Netherlands or Japan but also to its *domestic* expansion to California and Ohio. (This debatable use of *globalization* reminds readers of the fact that the creation of a US national market and cultural industry since the late nineteenth century was the preface to the less neatly standardized and much more fragmented but truly *global* transnational music markets of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries). The borders within and without Mexican South Texas, their inclusions and exclusions, are indeed a complex thing.

The book's main argument is that the musical mobility from San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley to the outside world occurs as a series of paradoxical disconnections between place, style, and community. Artists stemming from the South Texan core, like Flaco Jiménez or Steve Jordan, can afford to innovate and incorporate jazz or rock elements, while practitioners abroad, like the young Dutch accordionist Dwayne Verheyden, follow traditional generic conventions. The varied audiences relate to the genre with either exoticist, hipster, or working-class sensibilities. Its loving cultivation by Kenji Katsube, of Japan, in the 1990s, after discovering conjunto thanks to Flaco's collaboration with Ry Cooder and to "world music" programs, contrasts with its Mexican American, East Los Angeles rock reinterpretation by Los Lobos, with its translation into the marginalized Dutch Limburgish dialect, and with the Texan accordion virtuoso Mingo Saldívar's ambassadorship for the US Information Agency's Cold War multiculturalism in Africa and the Middle East. These examples are part of a long historical process: An original hybridization of German polka and Mexican twelve-string guitar in the nineteenth century created the genre; it evolved with variations until its mid-twentieth century standardized instrumentation, repertory, and sound; in the late twentieth century, Flaco and others incorporated elements from other US genres; and their innovations became canonic to newer (and current) performers.

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Conjunto is hence a constantly evolving music that *became* folkloric again thanks to international attention, as seen in the detailed analysis of the transmission and transformations of the classic song "Ay Te Dejo en San Antonio." This key title, which the book doesn't translate into English, exemplifies the linguistic density of bilingual and marginalized borderland cultures: The recording industry, popular speech, and internet sites alike perpetuate in the song's title the interjection *ay* (depending on context: "ouch," "oh," or "ah"), but without the exclamation sign, in what is in fact a mistranscription of the homophonous word *ahí* ("there," or an emphasis like "so" or "then"): "So I leave you in San Antonio." Bauer shows Flaco's celebrated collaboration with Bob Dylan or the Rolling Stones as both a recognition of South Texan Mexican identity and a way of hiding the "othering," the segregation, and the appropriation of Mexican music and labor by US mainstream social groups and markets. These insights invite us to reconsider borders, power relations, and cultural appropriation behind the migration of Latin American music genres in general.

A different kind of genre migration is the focus of *Decolonial Metal Music in Latin America*, by Nelson Varas Díaz, a Puerto Rican social community psychologist, lifelong metal fan, and documentary filmmaker who traveled Latin America in search of histories of metal in the region. This musical culture was traditionally marginalized in the (already marginal) metal scholarship, which is centered on the United States and United Kingdom. The introductory chapter presents a regional view, followed by nine nationally focused short essays based on interviews with artists and participants in the metal worlds of Puerto Rico, Peru, Chile, Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Guatemala, and Argentina. A plethora of stories, each thematizing a specific national sociopolitical reality (e.g., US colonialism in Puerto Rico, political violence in Peru and Chile, class oppression in Argentina), is featured in chapters that can be read autonomously. The attention to the actors' views and voices, and to the visual and poetic dimension of metal music, as well as its geographic ambition, make this a relevant book. Varas Díaz found a rhetoric of anticolonial valorization of oppressed peoples in the lyrics and imagery of all the bands discussed in his book, combined with an ambivalent relationship with the US and European bands, labels, and festivals that hegemonize the metal world. The complexity of Latin America's position in the metal world is captured in a photograph with the Mexican "pre-Hispanic metal" band Cemican on the Hellfest stage in Clisson, France, in 2019, brandishing the national Mexican flag to the camera in front of a crowd and combining pre-Hispanic and US metal clothing and makeup. In Mexico, bands like Leprosy (with their *death metal* in honor of the Zapatistas) and Acrania (with their *Latin metal*) represent just two examples of vernacular genre transformation. Multiply these innovations across all nine countries studied, and we get a sense of the cultural and political density of the region's metal.

Readers will be left wondering, however, about the basic chronology of metal music in the region and its sociological features: Who are the metal artists and their audiences? What makes them different from their peers in other geographies and from each other? Through anecdotes and vignettes we can guess that metal comes sometimes from the affluent youth with access to time and technology, others from the inorganically politicized sections of the middle classes, and finally from the precariously employed surplus working classes under neoliberalism and their collectivist ethos. But extensive comments on Mignolo or Quijano do not clarify these major points. A series of minor but upsetting errors in a self-described decolonial and peer-reviewed text undermine the book's claims: *queinista* instead of *quenista* to describe *quena* performers, repeated mentions of "fifteenth century" Spanish colonialism in Peru, where the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century, and references to the "Falklands Wars" in plural and using the British

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colonial rather than the Argentine (Malvinas) terminology. Together with unclear interview dates and missing original languages for song and album titles, these shortcomings remind us of the importance of editorial and methodological care when translating popular traditions into academic work.

Nevertheless, Varas Díaz's notable geographic reach and personal engagement with the subject allow him to uncover precious musical histories, such as experiences of metal adoption of Afro-Caribbean sounds by the Puerto Rican band Puya and of folklore songs by a host of bands throughout the region. Of twenty-five cases of metal adaptations of songs from folkloric traditions (although we don't know whether the list is exhaustive), nineteen are within the same nation, mostly in Chile and Argentina, and include the Incaist "El cóndor pasa" by the Peruvian band Flor de Loto. Within this varied archipelago of national metal cultures, six Chilean Nueva Canción songs by Violeta Parra, Quilapayún, Víctor Jara, and Inti-Illimani covered by Ecuadorian, Brazilian, and Puerto Rican bands indicate that the impulse of a Latin Americanist metal tradition is already there in the real world.

The final book under review brings together some of the themes of the previous ones while addressing with sophistication and clear prose major historical and anthropological questions of hemispheric scale. In *Indigenous Audibilities: Music, Heritages, and Collections in the Americas*, the ethnomusicologist Amanda Minks illuminates the very idea of "the Americas" from the perspective of the individuals who created over the central decades of the twentieth century several systems of knowledge and sound recording that turned Indigenous voices into institutional collections. Those in turn became national and transnational archives where a conflictive elaboration of national identities and hemispheric imagination took place and whose effects continue to be felt today. The focus is on collections of oral histories and recordings by the Works Progress Administration in the US internal "Indian borderlands" under Roosevelt's New Deal, by the Inter-American Indian Institute, founded in Mexico City in 1940, and by *letrados*, musicologists, and folklorists in Nicaragua and Chile.

In Nicaragua, a national *acervo* was initially built on literary essays, transcriptions, and recordings primarily from Pacific coast, "authentically Nicaraguan," mestizo (Indigenous-Spanish) communities—valorized as national heritage while Caribbean coast Afro-Indigenous peoples were marginalized as "primitive"—by elite *letrados*. This aural heritage was transformed through revolutionary movements and Indigenous activism from the 1970s onward into increasingly community-controlled cultural documentation, even if full ethnic inclusion remains constrained. The mestizo poet Pablo Antonio Cuadra expressed the subjective investment many of these characters endured by tying the personal, the national, the historical, and the multiethnic identity searches in his multiple institutional, publishing, and creative projects. In Chile, a multigenerational galaxy of Chilean, American, and Argentine artists and institution builders like Carlos Isamitt, Domingo Santa Cruz, Filomena Salas, Charles Seeger, Isabel Artez, and Violeta Parra entertained varied relationships with Mapuche people and language and with official policies. They all got bodily and subjectively invested, from the 1920s to the 1970s, in collecting, archiving, studying, performing, and disseminating Indigenous music via national, inter-American, and European institutions but also among native communities.

While specific songs aren't analyzed in detail, biographies are, and the multifaceted role in Mexico of the American Henrietta Yurchenco (1916–2007) as recording pioneer, broadcaster, institutional broker, and public intellectual, is particularly effective in the book's arguments about the shift from orality to the more encompassing concept of aurality, and the view of the archive as coproduced and future oriented. This is thus a history of the ideologies and techniques deployed for listening to who we are (a "we" determined by an assumed common heritage or patrimony) and creating the sonic and archival structures to sustain such listening temporally and socially. Ideologies and techniques were transnationally part of nation-building projects by individuals playing

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artistic, technological, institutional, and political roles. Except for the P'urhépecha singer Don Pedro, no indigenous performers appear individually named in Minks's narrative. The book and its sources highlight instead unnamed singers, elders, and musicians as essential contributors. The violent foundations of the Americas since 1492 reverberate both in this erasure and in the collective nature of Indigenous histories and sounds retrieved and curated by collectors and institution builders. At the same time, these countless specific histories and sounds obsessively and selectively recorded and annotated throughout the Americas, and the precious moments of indigenous enjoyment of them—and many others that happened and could happen thanks to these collections—suggest that the aural uses of these archives are unpredictable. One of the main conclusions of *Indigenous Audibilities* is that "critiques of the 'colonial archive' have helped to raise awareness about the power structures shaping collections, *but an overly generalized approach* limits recognition of the multiple voices and actors that have coproduced archives" (188, my emphasis).

Three common features stand out from this sample of a multidisciplinary field. First, the books suggest that it is often limiting to study twentieth- and twenty-first-century Latin American music without considering the influence of US actors and spaces. Second, except for Sandroni's book (originally written in 2001, when the nation was the dominant methodological framework in Latin Americanist scholarship), and only to a certain extent for Ortiz's essays translated by Moore, these books deal with connections across national spaces, not by lumping together a Latin American "otherness," but by carefully examining specific contexts and individual mediations. They are aware of the imperial, racializing, and capitalist rationales of musical practices, but they are also focused on the popular agency, listening, and cultural transmission inherent to those practices as well. Finally, these works deal with both the visible face of globalization, that of commercial success and institutional consecration, and the hidden one, made of unpublished texts, forgotten actors, and appropriated sounds—like Minks's "intimate stories of Indigenous collections" (30) waiting to be recovered.

These shared features point to a current shift in the larger historical dynamic. Latin America's musical practices—even the most local and nationalist ones—were shaped by successive waves of globalization from colonial times through the twenty-first century: Iberian, Franco-English, and later US-led processes. We've entered a new phase of globalization, marked by uncertainty, war, and multipolar (dis)order. East Asia's rise as the center of the world's economic growth challenges the map where scholars (including music scholars) used to locate Latin America. New patterns of economic and musical exchanges (with their material, political, and cultural dimensions) across world regions are thus modifying the place of Latin America's music in the world and reshaping how we see its past. Hence, the three features mentioned before—US influence, transnational connections, and the visible and the hidden faces of globalization—are being altered in the new context. Additional challenges to musical scholarship (and research and education in general) come from increased ideological pressures and rapid technological change, such as institutional defunding, digital access issues, and artificial intelligence tools. This ongoing structural transformation echoes past ones where state and corporate investments, as well as notation, acoustic recording, and other technologies discussed in these eight books, also transformed musical practices and their cultural understanding. Looking ahead, the eight books offer valuable tools for studying key themes in an expanding multidisciplinary field: Latin American music's infrastructure—its platforms, markets, and archives—along with its ideological projects, ethnic imagination, and changing patterns of musical migration, commerce, and taste.

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