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Popular Music

In an increasingly globalized world where popular culture transcends national and continental boundaries with relative ease, the catchall term “Latino music” is often used to classify a heterogeneous group of styles and artists that have become household names in the United States and Europe. The transnational popularity of such contemporary performers as Ricky Martin and Shakira has prompted renewed interest in the socio-cultural origins of their music, not least so that die-hard fans can learn more about the early careers of their idols.

Of all the musical forms associated with Latin America today, salsa is perhaps the most familiar to international listeners. In both the United States and Europe, salsa is often seen as quintessentially Latino music, but the term “salsa” is in fact generic and describes a range of dance rhythms found in Spanish America. Currently, salsa crosses continental as well as Latin American boundaries. It is used in a variety of commercials and television soundtracks in the United States and the United Kingdom, and it has become a big hit in the unlikely form of the Orchesta de la Luz, a Japanese salsa band whose members do not speak Spanish, who sing the lyrics phonetically, and who have played to great acclaim both nationally and internationally.

The penetration of the international market by Latin American artists and musical genres is not, however, solely the consequence of globalization. Nor is it a recent phenomenon. Throughout the twentieth century a variety of styles made the journey from Latin America to the United States and Europe. From Brazil, for example, Carmen Miranda took samba to the New York World’s Fair in 1939, then on to Broadway and subsequently to Hollywood. During the era of the Good Neighbor Policy, and particularly during World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration courted Latin American nations by encouraging the dissemination of their music north of the border. Miranda and other Latin American musicians performed stylized versions of the music of their homelands for a cosmopolitan audience. In that era of ostensibly reciprocal cultural exchange between the two continents, even Walt Disney’s cartoon feature films featured samba in their soundtracks. Likewise, in

the 1930s and 1940s, bolero traveled from Cuba and Mexico to the United States, where it was recorded by the likes of Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, and Frank Sinatra. Later, the 1960s saw the success of the Leonard Bernstein musical *West Side Story*, which raised the U.S. public's awareness of Latino culture and so paved the way for such diverse artists as Herb Alpert, Trini López, and Ritchie Valens.

Since then the ever-increasing dominance of transnational corporations within the record industry has intensified the global reach of Latin American rhythms. Within the United States the prodigious late twentieth-century growth of the Latino population, with its demand for cultural self-representation, has provided a vast market for music and musicians of Latin American origin. Within Latin America, musical styles move relatively unhindered across geographical borders, increasingly forming creative unions with new trends from abroad such as hip-hop and rap music. On a continent where song has often represented the primary vehicle for self-expression and even political dissent, popular music continues to innovate and stimulate.

—*Lisa Shaw*

See also: *Cultural Icons*: Latin Americans in Hollywood (Carmen Miranda)

Salsa

Salsa arose from music played by Latin immigrants in New York, beginning in the last half of the twentieth century. Whatever the precise origins of the term “salsa,” the music itself has its roots in the music played by Puerto Ricans in 1950s New York, spearheaded principally by Tito Puente and

Tito Rodríguez. Salsa drew from a variety of other musical styles, principally from jazz and Cuban *son*. The style spread rapidly and became popular across the whole of Latin America, especially in Venezuela, Panama, and Colombia.

There has been much written about the origins of the term “salsa,” but it is principally a commercial rather than a musicological creation. Although the term had occurred in isolated instances in songs—for instance, in Ignacio Piñero's 1928 song “Échale salsita” (“Put Sauce on It”) and in the name of the 1940s Cuban group Los Salseros, led by Cheo Marquetti—the widespread use of the term to denote a marketable musical style is generally attributed to the New York record company Fania, a major introducer of Latino sounds. Fania used the term as a catchall expression for the various Latino singers and groups on its books. Jerry Masucci, director of Fania Records, stated that “before the word salsa was coined, people who knew music used to say: son, guaracha, danzón, chachacha; but those who weren't musical experts found this hard to follow. In Fania we thought we needed a word as simple as ‘yes,’ ‘rock and roll’ or ‘country music,’ so we hit on ‘salsa’” (quoted in Calvo Ospina 1995, p. 75).

Following the early innovations by Puentes and Rodríguez, the U.S.-based Fania All-Stars, a group of Puerto Rican, U.S., Dominican, and Cuban musicians, was also instrumental in increasing the popularity of salsa. *Nuestra Cosa Latina (Our Latin Thing, 1971)*, a documentary film of a Fania All-Stars concert, boosted salsa's prominence. Among the figures in this group who have since gone on to become solo artists in their own right are Willie Colón and José Feliciano.

Reasons for the rise in salsa are varied, but the shape of the music itself is a significant factor. As José Matosantos argued, the developments in jazz from the 1950s onward were becoming increasingly technical and were therefore very difficult to dance to. Salsa emerged as a counterpart to jazz. It is an eclectic blend, in which the tumbadora, timbal, and bongo give the percussion section a Cuban flavor, and the brass section, heavy on the trumpets and trombones, shows clear influences of U.S. big-band musical styles. Thus, although some Cubans argue that salsa is merely a modern version of *son*, it in fact drew from a whole series of rhythms and is more an amalgam of styles than one particular style. Juan Carlos Quintero Herencia notes that salsa composers draw upon a variety of different types of music, including the cumbia, samba, bolero, and cha-cha-cha.

In Venezuela, some of the leading *salseros* (salsa composers and performers) include the group Federico y su Combo and José Luis Rodríguez, known as El Puma, a singer who came to the fore in the 1970s and is also famous for his boleros. One of the undisputed kings of contemporary Venezuelan salsa is Oscar D'Leon, whose 1999 album *El verdadero león* (*The Real Lion*) includes some of his best and most danceable salsa music.

Undeniably, however, it is Colombia that in recent years has become one of the hotbeds of salsa, with the city Cali declaring itself the unofficial “capital of salsa.” Leading figures of Colombia’s salsa boom include Joe Arroyo and Fruko. Fruko, who had originally made his name with cumbia, performed in the 1970s with his group Los Tesos, described by some as the first real Colombian salsa group. Fruko and Los

Tesos developed some of the salsa sounds that were to make his name in this style; Fruko’s salsa tends to give precedence to the voice of the lead singer, who is frequently backed by piano and a minimal instrumental setup. The album *Tesura* (the title is a play on the group’s name, Los Tesos) launched his career in Colombia, and a concert at Madison Square Garden in 1976 spread Fruko’s name internationally. Particularly outstanding of Fruko’s recent work is *¡Esto sí es salsa de verdad!* (*This Really Is Salsa!* 1999), which provides an example of the clean, crisp sound that has made Fruko so popular.

At the same time, another key figure was emerging in Colombian salsa. Joe Arroyo, who began his career with the Discos Fuentes record label, started to develop his own original style of salsa. Arroyo started out with Fruko but formed his own band in 1981, La Verdad, and then went on to record under his own name. Although stylistically similar to Fruko in some respects, Arroyo’s salsa has a more tropical sound and is often based around bass lines drawn from such traditional Colombian sounds as cumbia and vallenato. Arroyo is still very much a force today, and his prominence is further confirmed by his high profile in the media, illustrated by the use of one of his songs as the theme song of the popular 2002–2003 Colombian telenovela, *Siete veces amada* (*Seven Times Beloved*).

Another strand of salsa in Colombia is the big-band-style salsa, epitomized by bands such as Grupo Niche, founded in 1979, and Orchesta Guayacán. Grupo Niche’s song “Cali, pachanguero” (“Lively Cali”) has come to serve as an anthem for the city and for its status as one of the capitals—if not *the* capital—of contemporary

salsa. Orchesta Guayacán came onto the scene later than Grupo Niche but continues the big-band sound and has reworked a variety of musical rhythms, some Colombian, some transnational, into a salsa style. This reworking is best illustrated by their 1996 CD *Como en un baile (Like at a Dance)*, in which musical forms such as cumbia, vallenato, currulao, and paso doble, among others, are given a salsa-esque reworking.

—Claire Taylor

See also: *Popular Music:* Bolero; Cumbia; Samba; Vallenato; *Mass Media:* Telenovela

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Tango

The musical style tango and its accompanying dance emerged among the urban poor of Buenos Aires in the 1890s and enjoyed their heyday between 1917 and 1935, when they captured the imaginations of Europeans and North Americans and subsequently gained respectability and acceptance among the Argentine elite. The most renowned singer of tango from this golden age was Carlos Gardel (1890–1935), who took the tango to Paris and New York and who still enjoys mythical status inside and outside Argentina. With Gardel's death in a plane crash in 1935, tango entered a period of decline, but its fortunes were revived during the populist regime of Juan Perón (1946–1955). Since then, *tango nuevo* (new tango) has been closely associated with the name of Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992), who incorporated elements of jazz and classical music into the genre.

The population of Buenos Aires ballooned from 100,000 in 1880 to a million in 1910 because of internal migration from rural areas and large-scale immigration from Europe, particularly Italy. The underclass included Italian-speaking, Spanish-speaking, and Afro-American populations, who inhabited the city's slums. They created a hybrid way of speaking called lunfardo in defiance of the elite, who in response dismissed this "slang language" as that of the criminal fraternity. Among these lunfardo speakers was born a musical dance style that brought together an eclectic mix of traditions of music and movement. Musically, it took influences from the Spanish-Cuban habanera, the Spanish contradanza, the African music played by ex-slaves in Buenos Aires, and the vulgar dance and music of the city's sprawling

fringes, which were inhabited by rural migrants who brought with them their gaucho verse. The resulting folk dance style and the music associated with it were referred to using a variety of terms, including “milonga” and “tango.” In the late 1800s and early 1900s this style became increasingly popular, not least as a consequence of the income generated locally by prostitution, with which this music and dance was closely linked by way of its shared social contexts.

Tango was originally played on a guitar, but between 1900 and 1917 musicians began to perform it on the bandoneon, a type of accordion, which was more suited to the larger venues that by now were also presenting tango performances. The lyrics of these songs were initially a vehicle for denouncing the living conditions of the urban poor, but as the music and its creators migrated toward the city center these social themes were replaced by a more personal, emotional content. Thus, from 1917 to 1935 the lyrics of tango became more important, not least since they began to be recorded on gramophone records. They focused on loneliness, betrayal, and unrequited love as experienced by the male protagonist, who is always the victim within a failed love affair. Female singers rarely performed tangos, and when they did sing professionally they rarely made their reputations in cabaret clubs, unlike their male counterparts. Instead, female performers appeared in theatrical performances or on the radio, which became an important medium for the genre’s dissemination in the 1920s. Permeated with nostalgia for a disappearing way of life, this melancholy *tango-canción* (tango-song), as it was known, expressed the protagonist’s anxieties and apprehen-

sions. The macho, aggressive *compadrito* character, the peasant newly arrived in the city, who has much in common with the mythical *malandro* of Brazilian samba (the Brazilian equivalent of the zoot-suiter), disappeared from tango lyrics in this era, as did the references to prostitutes and violence. The *tango-canción* was forever associated with Gardel, who left Argentina in 1933 and popularized the tango among international audiences by starring in film musicals. However, after Gardel’s death, the *tango-canción* gave way to the *tango-danza* (tango-dance), which placed more emphasis on the music and the dance steps than on the lyrics. In the United States a sanitized tango dance was promoted, whereas in Europe the avant-garde intelligentsia were captivated by the music’s transgressive potency, and it was incorporated into the soundtrack of Luis Buñuel’s and Salvador Dalí’s surrealist film *Un chien andalou* (*An Andalusian Dog*, 1929).

With the untimely death of Carlos Gardel, tango entered a brief period of decline, largely due to the influx of foreign rhythms, such as the rumba and bolero. However, during the populist regime of Juan and Evita Perón this music experienced a surge in popularity and was transformed into a symbol of national identity. As was the case with samba in Brazil, the new media, chiefly the radio and the talking cinema in Argentina, brought tango into mass culture. Tango became caught up in the process of popular mobilization instigated by Perón, who sought to co-opt support for a capitalist path of development among the poor, and under his rule the cultural production of the lower classes, such as tango, was given increased exposure on a national stage. Since then

tango has moved in and out of favor. It was marginalized by the military junta between 1976 and 1983 but subsequently reemerged with renewed vigor both within Argentina and abroad. Tango's renaissance is largely attributable to Piazzolla, who began his musical career in the 1930s playing in tango bands in Argentina and went on to study classical music. He drew on his varied musical background to revolutionize tango, bringing symphony orchestras and the traditional bandoneon together in a highly controversial move. His international fame and popularity peaked in the 1980s, when he performed his avant-garde tango all over the world. Today tango clubs, or *milongas*, are thriving in both Buenos Aires and the Uruguayan capital, Montevideo, and the music continues to inspire contemporary artists, such as the transnational pop icon Shakira.

—Lisa Shaw

See also: *Popular Music:* Bolero; Samba; Transnational Pop Icons; *Cultural Icons:* Political Icons (Evita); Legends of Popular Music and Film (Carlos Gardel); Regional and Ethnic Types (The Gaucho in Argentina and Uruguay); *Language:* Lunfardo

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Samba

The samba, a Brazilian musical style and associated dance form, emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century in Rio de Janeiro and has become well known throughout the world because of its close association with the city's annual Carnival celebrations. The samba rhythm is Afro-Brazilian in origin and was the music of the Carnival celebrations of the poor blacks and mixed-race community of Brazil's then capital. Subsequently, thanks to the development of the radio and record industry in the 1920s and 1930s, samba was popularized among the white middle classes. The genre developed various offshoots, such as the slower, less rhythmic *samba-canção* (samba-song) with its melancholy lyrics (sometimes likened to U.S. blues), which predominated in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Samba went on to influence the bossa nova movement and the work of singer-songwriters such as Chico Buarque de Holanda in the late 1950s and beyond. Since then, many different varieties of samba have emerged, such as *samba-de-enredo* (theme-samba), which is played by the *escolas de samba* (samba schools, the large neighborhood organizations that perform in the Rio Carnival) and whose lyrics are based on the theme chosen for the celebrations in a given year. Samba has a 2/4 meter, an emphasis on the second beat, and a stanza-and-refrain structure.

The samba rhythm is widely believed to have descended from the batuque, a percussive accompaniment to the circle dance of the same name, performed by African slaves on Brazil's colonial plantations. The term "samba" is thought to have originated in present-day Angola, where the Kimbundu word *semba* referred to a batuque

dance step. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, although slaves continued to participate in the *batuque*, free blacks developed a musical accompaniment to the dance played on the *viola*, a type of Portuguese guitar. Some experts argue that the true musical forefather of samba was the *lundu*, a music and dance form performed by slaves in the eighteenth century that had a religious significance and that was performed to bring good luck. With the abolition of slavery in 1888, many former slaves and their offspring settled in Rio de Janeiro, then the capital, and by the second decade of the twentieth century an Afro-Brazilian community existed near the port and the city center. Samba emerged within this community in the home of an Afro-Brazilian woman, Hilária Batista de Almeida, better known as Tia (Aunt) Ciata, a priestess of the Afro-Brazilian religion *Candomblé*. She hosted gatherings at her home, near the central Praça Onze square, where clandestine religious ceremonies were held and music was performed. Her home was a meeting place for a heterogeneous group of popular musicians and enthusiasts, both black and white, some semiliterate, others well educated, who brought together a wide range of musical styles, both homegrown and imported. It was from one such gathering that the first officially designated samba, “Pelo Telefone” (“On the Telephone”), emerged in 1916. The song was credited to the Afro-Brazilian Ernesto dos Santos, better known by his nickname, Donga, but in all likelihood it was a collective creation.

In the 1920s samba was associated with Rio’s black and mixed-race inhabitants, who had been driven out of the center of the city as part of a savage urbanization program and who now inhabited the hillside shanty-

towns or *morros* (hills). The lyrics of the percussion-based *samba-de-morro* (shantytown samba) that they created centered on their marginal lifestyle and celebrated the local antihero, or *malandro*, who turned his back on manual labor—still closely linked to the exploitation of slavery—in favor of a lifestyle of womanizing, gambling, and carousing. This brand of samba, which in its almost purely percussive form was also referred to as *samba-de-batucada* (percussion-samba), and those who created it were marginalized by the authorities, unlike the more respectable type of samba that evolved directly from “Pelo Telefone” and its more eclectic mix of creators. Under President Getúlio Vargas (1930–1945) *sambistas* (samba composers and performers) were forced to abandon the figure of the *malandro* hustler and to espouse the work ethic of the political regime, which imposed censorship restrictions and actively co-opted popular musicians. As a consequence, a new variety of samba, known as the *samba-exaltação* (samba-exaltation), emerged in the late 1930s; its lyrics were highly patriotic, praising the beauty and riches of Brazil. A classic example is the samba “Aquarela do Brasil” (“Watercolor of Brazil”), written in 1939 by the white, middle-class songwriter Ari Barroso (1903–1964). Barroso was one of a group of white *sambistas* who emerged in the late 1920s and 1930s, together with the acclaimed lyricist Noel Rosa (1910–1937), whose careers were fueled by the development of the gramophone record, the radio, and the talking cinema.

Affairs of the heart had provided the exclusively male *sambistas* with an enduring source of inspiration for their lyrics since the 1920s, and this new generation of talented middle-class composers developed

the sentimental, plaintive *samba-canção* by combining this theme with an emphasis on melody rather than rhythm, adding more complex harmonies to the increasingly sophisticated lyrics. This variety of samba popularized the genre among the middle class and dominated Brazilian music until the advent of bossa nova in the late 1950s.

Samba, specifically *samba-de-enredo*, is the music that accompanies the Rio Carnival processions today. The parades by the *escolas de samba* dance along to the *bateria*, that is, the drum-and-percussion section, which consists of *surdos* (bass drums), *caixas* (rattles), *tamborins* (small drums hit with sticks), *cuícas* (friction drums), *reco-reco*s (scrapers), and *agogôs* (double bells). High-register plaintive harmonies are added by the *cavaquinho* (a kind of ukulele), and the *puxador* (lead singer) provides the melody.

Today musicians like Paulinho da Viola defend samba in its traditional form, following in the footsteps of the *sambistas* of the Estácio de Sá district of Rio, such as Ismael Silva, who created the first *escola de samba*, called *Deixa Falar* (Let Them Speak), in 1928. Although Paulinho da Viola does not accept samba mixed with other types of popular music, recent years have witnessed the emergence of various hybrids, such as *sambalongo*, heavily influenced by Brazilian soul music, and *samba-reggae*.

—Lisa Shaw

See also: *Popular Music: Bossa Nova; Popular Religion and Festivals: Candomblé; Popular Festivals (Carnival in Brazil)*

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Bossa Nova

Bossa nova, an internationally acclaimed Brazilian musical style, emerged in the mid-1950s in the upscale district of Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro. It was epitomized by Antônio Carlos (Tom) Jobim's and Vinícius de Moraes's hit song "Garota de Ipanema" ("The Girl from Ipanema"). Bossa nova took much of its inspiration from samba, but some examples of the genre also show influences from North American jazz. This new sound was taken far beyond the boundaries of the city of Rio thanks to multinational record companies and television, and it was particularly popular in the United States as a consequence of collaborations between Brazilian musicians and such musicians as the North American saxophonist Stan Getz, the jazz musician Charlie Byrd, and singer Frank Sinatra.

Bossa nova (literally, "new style/fashion") essentially slowed down and simplified the samba rhythm while incorporating unusual, rich harmonies and syncopations. It grew out of the improvised jam sessions held at small nightclubs in Copacabana and in the homes of young musicians and intellectuals in Rio de Janeiro's sophisticated, beachfront Southern Zone in the middle to late 1950s. Because of its creators' social origins, bossa nova is often referred to as the samba of the middle classes. Critics have also attributed the intimate, soft, con-



Tom Jobim sits at his piano and plays the flute in his home studio in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, February 1985. (Stephanie Maze/Corbis)

trolled nature of this musical style to the enclosed physical spaces in which it emerged, namely, the bijou apartments of the modern high-rise blocks that lined Rio's most famous beaches. The singer Nara Leão, who played hostess at her apartment in Copacabana to gatherings that centered on musical improvisation, is often referred to as the muse of the movement, and she went on to record many of her friends' songs. Another key player in the creation and popularization of bossa nova was the guitarist João Gilberto, who hailed from Brazil's northeastern state of Bahia and whose wife, Astrud, recorded the original version of "The Girl from Ipanema." It was with the release of Gilberto's album *Chega de saudade (No More Longing)* in 1959 that bossa nova fever began in Brazil. The

release in the same year of Marcel Camus's award-winning film *Orfeu Negro (Black Orpheus)*, whose soundtrack included compositions in this "new style" by Jobim and Moraes, popularized bossa nova among an international audience. This was the first large-scale global exposure for Brazilian music. First performed in 1962, the archetypal bossa nova "The Girl from Ipanema" is the most internationally well known of Brazilian songs, and it has been rerecorded many times in Portuguese and in English.

Bossa nova emerged during a period of economic development and optimism in Brazil, during the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek (1956–1961), who promised "fifty years' progress in five." The vitality and confidence of this era were symbolized



João Gilberto on guitar and Stan Getz on saxophone, playing at the Rockefeller Center, 1972. (Bettmann/Corbis)

by the building of a new, futuristic capital city, Brasília, inaugurated in 1960, largely as a result of Kubitschek's personal crusade. The lyrics of bossa nova clearly reflect the spirit of these times. Key examples of the style, such as Jobim's and Moraes's "Chega de saudade" ("No More Longing," 1958) and Jobim's "Corcovado" (1960), are love songs that evoke the care-

free mood of middle-class youth in urban Brazil. "Corcovado," which celebrates music making itself, and "The Girl from Ipanema" both explicitly allude to the beauty of Rio de Janeiro, creating a romanticized vision of life. For this reason, bossa nova's lyrics have often been dismissed as bland and superficial, lacking in meaning and emotional depth. Nonetheless, other

examples of the style display a self-conscious and even ironic dimension. João Gilberto's "Bim Bom" (1958), for example, with its seemingly nonsensical lyrics, can be interpreted as a parody of the meaningless, trite lyrics of the *samba-canção* of the early to middle 1950s. Similarly, two other well-known examples of bossa nova center on clever interplays of lyrics and melody. The lyrics of Tom Jobim's and Newton Mendonça's "Desafinado" ("Off-Key," 1958) refer to a romantic relationship that has gone "off key" or "out of tune," a theme that is mirrored in the musical accompaniment. Recorded by Gilberto in his characteristic whispering style, "Desafinado" was an ironic riposte to critics who disparagingly wrote that bossa nova was "music for off-key singers." The song became a playful yet defiant anthem for this nascent musical style. In the same vein, Jobim's and Mendonça's "Samba de uma nota só" ("One Note Samba") is entirely self-referential, and as the lyrics explain, the melody deliberately repeats a single note, ironically taking to extremes bossa nova's tendency to repeat a single melodic motif in different registers. Some critics have also argued that bossa nova cannot be simply dismissed as apolitical, since as the badge of the new, white, affluent, city-dwelling generation it represented a determination to break with an atmosphere of populist sentimentality that had been deliberately engendered by Brazil's political leaders over the previous two decades.

Many of the most famous songs of bossa nova have been overcommercialized outside Brazil, and in the form of recordings that emphasize the repetitive, almost monotonous nature of their melodies, they are used widely in Europe and North America to provide "easy listening," "Muzak," or

"light music" for settings such as airport lounges and shopping centers. However, in Brazil bossa nova has not suffered the same fate, and it continues to be closely associated with a minimalist vocal delivery, usually by a solo voice, delicately accompanied by a simple guitar or piano and light percussion. Bossa nova enjoyed its heyday between 1958 and 1964, but this musical style had a profound impact on jazz and international music, and it also influenced the subsequent generation of Brazilian songwriters.

—Lisa Shaw

See also: *Popular Music*: Samba

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Mariachi, Ranchera, Norteña, Tex-Mex

These four closely related styles of music lie at the heart of popular music from Mexico and the border region with the United States. Although they do not represent the totality of Mexican popular music, they are of great importance to the contemporary Mexican popular music scene, and the first three styles have come to signify essential "Mexicanness" both to Mexicans and Chicanos themselves and to the rest of the world.



The Mariachi Del Rio performs at the Fiesta Nopalitos in Carrizo Springs, Texas, c. 1990. (David Seawell/Corbis)

Mariachi music had its heyday in the first half of the twentieth century. Its popularity was due to its prominent use in the movies of the golden age of Mexican filmmaking. It achieved worldwide fame at this point, but it has since been replaced in the public's favor by Tex-Mex and remains popular in Mexico and around the United States–Mexico border only. Scholars do not agree on the exact origins of mariachi music or of its name. Some trace it to the original contact between the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica and the Spanish conquistadors (claiming that “mariachi” is an indigenous word for musician or possibly for the tree from which mariachi guitars are made); others trace it to mid-nineteenth-century Franco-Mexican contact (claiming that “mariachi” is a corruption of the French word *mariage* and refers to the music typi-

cally played at weddings); still others suggest that the name stems from a popular festival in honor of a virgin known as María H. (pronounced mah-ree-ah-chay) at which musicians played this type of music. None of the theories is completely convincing.

Mariachi music is based on the Mexican *son*, a musical form born of the fusion of Spanish, indigenous Mesoamerican, and (to a lesser extent) African cultures in the eighteenth century. (Note that the Mexican *son* is not the same as the Cuban *son*, although they have similar origins.) Mariachi music originated in the state of Jalisco, but it became popular throughout Mexico in the first half of the nineteenth century because its hybrid origins helped give different social groups a sense of belonging to a fledgling national community. Since the end of the nineteenth century it has

branched out from its repertoire of *sones* to include waltzes and polkas as well as boleros (romantic ballads). The themes of the songs are extremely varied, ranging from love and betrayal to politics, revolutionary heroes, and even nonsense verse. There is a standard repertoire of mariachi songs—including such numbers as “Cielito lindo” (“Little Angel”) and “Jalisco”—that all Mexicans recognize, but many mariachi musicians know up to 1,500 different songs and are able to improvise others for their clients (for a fee).

What makes mariachi music identifiable as such despite such a broad repertoire is partly the musical instruments used, partly the form of delivery of the songs, and partly the musicians’ style of dress. The traditional instruments were the harp, violins, and several types of Mexican guitar, including the vihuela (a small guitar similar to a lute) and the guitarrón (a small double bass). These guitars gave the music its traditional sound. In more recent years, owing to the popularity of jazz and Cuban music, the harp has been abandoned and trumpets have been added. The style of delivery is also important: the songs are sung with a nasal voice and in a dispassionate manner. Finally, all mariachi band members wear *charro* clothing (the dress of the Mexican cowboy): ankle boots, a wide-brimmed sombrero, tight pants with lots of shiny buttons down the sides, and a fitted, decorated jacket.

In general, mariachi bands were exclusively male. Nevertheless, there have been exceptional all-women bands, such as Mariachi Las Coronelas (Mariachi Band the Colonels’ Wives) of the 1940s. All-women bands have been more prevalent in the southwestern United States, where there have been several since the 1970s. Further-

more, in the 1980s Linda Ronstadt promoted new international interest in mariachi music with her album *Canciones de mi padre* (*My Father’s Songs*). Mexican superstar, heartthrob, and transnational pop icon Juan Gabriel has also helped revitalize the tradition, both in Mexico and abroad, by blending mariachi music with soft rock and symphony orchestras.

Ranchera, from *la canción ranchera* (music from the ranches), is a derivative of mariachi music, and its singers are still identifiable by their *charro* costumes. Increasing urbanization in Mexico in the first decades of the twentieth century provoked a strong sense of nostalgia for rural idylls, hence the reference in the music’s name to the countryside. The style of delivery tends to be much more melodramatic than that of traditional mariachi music, and the repertoire is almost exclusively made up of boleros. Although many film stars, such as Pedro Infante and Jorge Negrete, are remembered for their renditions of this kind of music, the most famous exponent of ranchera songs was singer-songwriter José Alfredo Jiménez. The style has also been adopted by a pantheon of female divas, including Lucha Reyes, Eugenia León, and Lola Beltrán. In recent years, in the songs of Alejandro Fernández, it has accommodated the influence of rock music. Furthermore, Lebanese-Mexican singer Astrid Hadad has given it a subversive review in her reworking of Lucha Reyes’s repertoire, and Chicana singer Lila Downs has increased its inherent hybridity, blending it with indigenous music from the state of Oaxaca and also with *norteña*.

Whereas mariachi and ranchera music originate from the Mexican *son*, *norteña*, from *música norteña* (music from the North), has its roots in nineteenth-century

corridos. These were epic ballads from northern Mexico that usually recounted stories of conflict between Mexicans and Anglos and that were hence important in the creation of a sense of popular Mexican national identity through resistance to Anglo imperialism. The *corridos* had their heyday in the 1920s, when they were reinvested with meaning by the events of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). The button accordion and such dances as the waltz and the polka, all introduced to Mexico from eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century, give *norteña* its typical sound and rhythm. Like mariachi, *norteña* music often has a deadpan style of delivery and a nasal style of singing. Despite the reference to regionalism in the music's name, *norteña* is popular throughout Mexico; there are whole TV channels and radio stations dedicated to it. Its popularity is still due to the theme of resistance of *el pueblo* (the common people) in the lyrics. The group Los Tigres del Norte (Tigers of the North) has become superstars in both Mexico and the United States, modernizing *norteña* with the introduction of saxophones and cumbia rhythms. Their success provoked a music boom in the 1990s known as *banda*, which combines *norteña* music with the brass band music typical of village fiestas all over Mexico.

Tex-Mex conjunto is the name given to *norteña* music north of the U.S.-Mexican border. It is indigenous to the region, since the southwestern United States formed part of Mexico until 1848, and it is also continually refreshed by contact with contemporary forms of Mexican popular music. Although it has distinctive characteristics that distinguish it from *norteña* and mariachi, it is primarily dance music that combines the repertoire of *ranchera* with the wider one of *boleros* and sets them to a

polka tempo. The dance itself is often called the *quebradita* (break a leg). The dominant instrument is the accordion, and the style of delivery is generally less nasal than that of mariachi or *norteña*. In the early twentieth century, Tex-Mex was a disreputable, working-class form of entertainment; today the songs of people such as Lydia Mendoza and Chelo Silva are popular with all classes and with both Chicano and Anglo sectors of society. It has become the consummate expression of Texan identity. Furthermore, Tex-Mex has recently gained worldwide popularity through such figures as Flaco Jiménez and his work with major Anglo artists, and it has even started to exert its influence over Mexican popular music itself. Since the late 1950s, *Tejano*, a pop-oriented urban form of Tex-Mex, has evolved. The singer Selena is most renowned for her contribution to this style. The group Los Lobos has also gained an international following for their blend of Tex-Mex and rock music.

—Thea Pitman

See also: *Popular Music*: Bolero; Cumbia; Transnational Pop Icons; *Popular Theater and Performance*: Circus and Cabaret (Astrid Hadad); *Cultural Icons*: Legends of Popular Music and Film (Pedro Infante); *Popular Cinema*: Melodrama

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Cumbia

Panama was the original birthplace of what was to become cumbia music, but by the time Colombia and Panama separated at Panama's independence in 1903, cumbia had already become a Colombian national music. Cumbia is traditionally led by the accordion (and as such has certain links with vallenato) and was originally a type of folk music. It started as a slow dance that was practiced by the slaves and the indigenous Indians of Colombia's northern coastal region.

The cumbia still being played today stems from songs that appeared during the independence struggles in Colombia in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, when the group Los Gaiteros de San Jacinto played an early version of cumbia. Relying mostly on drums and traditional indigenous flutes made from bamboo or sugarcane, these cumbia songs frequently expressed the distress of the African slaves. Modern-day cumbia is characterized by its earthy lyrics, which use a rich colloquial language and frequent double entendres. The themes are often culturally specific, referring to Colombian customs and the concerns of everyday life in Colombia.

Some of the earlier versions of what can be termed "modern" cumbia arose in the 1950s. One song from that period, "La pollera colorá" ("The Colored Skirt"), sung at the time by Los Trovadores de Baru, a group from Cartagena, has become the unofficial national anthem of Colombia and has spawned a long list of adaptations since its first recording. Other groups and singers from this period include Los Cumbiamberos de Pacheco, who rely mostly on the accordion, and Los Guacharacas, who derive their name from the key instrument they play, the guacharaca (see the section on vallenato for more information on this instrument). Key players, whose influence is still felt in cumbia music today, were the group Los Corraleros de Majagual, originally formed in 1961. A number of its members have gone on to have solo careers. One such is Julio Estrada, better known as Fruko, who is generally considered to be one of Colombia's leading talents in the modern blend of cumbia with salsa rhythms.

In 1977 Fruko took the lead of the group La Sonora Dinamita. The Discos Fuentes record company had originally created a cumbia band called La Sonora Dinamita to perform música tropical, a combination of salsa and cumbia. The original group had split up in 1963, but their re-forming under Fruko led to a string of hits, including "Del montón" ("An Ordinary Girl"), one of their most popular songs. La Sonora Dinamita's skill lay in fusing the traditional cumbia music with a more popular sound. They gained popularity first throughout Colombia, then in Mexico, and finally across Latin America as a whole. A major innovation in 1981 was the introduction of a female vocalist, Mélida Yará Yanguma, better known as La India Meliyará, whose strong voice gave a new edge to La Sonora's sound.

La Sonora Dinamita still performs some of the most popular cumbias, including classics such as “Mi cucu” (a Colombian version of the song “My Toot Toot”), “Amor de mis amores” (“Love of My Loves”), “Escándalo” (“Scandal”), and “A mover la colita” (“Move Your Bum”), as well as new songs, with a notably contemporary and at times sarcastic twist, such as “La cumbia del Viagra” (“Viagra Cumbia”). The album *Éxitos tropicosos* (*Tropical Hits*, 1998) provides a good roundup of some of these hits, including “Mi cucu,” “Mete y saca” (“In and Out”), and “Que te la pongo” (“I’ll Put It on You”), and the compilation *32 Cañonazos* (*32 Greatest Hits*, 2002) combines both classic cumbias such as “Del montón,” “Mi cucu,” and “Amor de mis amores” with new ones such as “Cumbia del sida” (“AIDS Cumbia”). Nevertheless, although La Sonora Dinamita still performs and produces records today, the actual makeup of the group is unclear, and what was once a clearly defined ensemble has now fragmented into a variety of groups performing at different locations.

Even though the cumbia scene is dominated by La Sonora Dinamita in its various formations and offshoots, there are hundreds of cumbia bands in Colombia today. Many of these gain an audience at the annual Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de La Candelaria, held at the end of January and the beginning of February in Cartagena. A key feature of the celebration is the performance of cumbia. In addition to these performances, which may include smaller ensembles, cumbia has been incorporated into the big-band style of Colombian music, a leading exponent being the Orquesta Los Tupamaros, whose compilation *20 años* (*20 Years*, 1996) includes “Los amores de Petrona” (“Petrona’s Loves”), and the

Orquesta Guayacán. Moreover, cumbia has been given a further boost in recent years by its reworking into new and eclectic forms, most notably tecnocumbia and cumbia villera.

—Claire Taylor

See also: *Popular Music*: Salsa; Tecnocumbia; Vallenato

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Bolero

Bolero is a balladic style of music, romantic in theme and slow in tempo, usually in 2/4 time. Whereas salsa and merengue are the current preferences for dance music in much of Latin America, the bolero remains the favorite romantic music for listening. The bolero’s official golden age was the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, but it is still a flourishing musical genre today.

The bolero has its roots in an old Spanish dance, and it first emerged as a Latin American musical form in the nineteenth century. However, although its original sources were Hispanic, the bolero that has developed in Latin America is a cultural hybrid, with influences from African rhythms

and inspiration from twentieth-century jazz. Most experts date the appearance of bolero to the late nineteenth century, most often to between 1885 and 1898. Geographically, the bolero song originated in Cuba and then spread rapidly around the Caribbean area, taking root in the surrounding islands and Mexico.

The heyday of Mexican bolero began in the 1930s with such key *bolerista* groups as Los Hermanos Martínez Gil and Trío Tarácuri, but soloists were increasingly coming to the fore. Perhaps the person who had the greatest impact on the development of the bolero was the now legendary Agustín Lara (1901–1970), whose sentimental boleros became popular in the dance halls of Mexico. The popularity of boleros from the 1930s onward led to the spread of this genre outside Latin America, with boleros being taken up by a variety of U.S. singers, including Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, and Frank Sinatra. Perhaps the most famous of all boleros is “Bésame mucho” (“Kiss Me a Lot,” 1941), composed by the Mexican Consuelo Velásquez, who was only sixteen at the time. This song has since been recorded by a wide range of singers (not all of them Latin American), including leading female exponents of bolero such as Mexico’s Toña la Negra and Puerto Rico’s Ruth Fernández and more recently Luis Miguel on his *Vivo* (*Live*, 2000) album. However, “Bésame mucho” arguably enjoyed its greatest worldwide recognition in the version by the Beatles, recorded in 1962, which appeared on their album *Beatles Live at the Star Club in Hamburg* (1962).

Although the bolero has altered over time in terms of its rhythms and influences—to encompass, among others, varieties such as the bolero son, bolero

moruno, bolero mambo, bolero beguine, bolero feeling, and bolero ranchera—one constant is the theme of its lyrics: love and its associated seductions, secret meetings, forbidden passions, and lovers’ quarrels.

The bolero has enjoyed a renaissance in recent years. The most striking of its current performers is the young Luis Miguel, who has gained popularity throughout Latin America and Spain and who has recorded a variety of boleros of yesteryear. Miguel’s recent album, *Mis boleros favoritos* (*My Favorite Boleros*, 2002), includes his versions of such now classic boleros as “Perfidia” (“Treachery,” originally by Alberto Domínguez) and “Solamente una vez” (“Only Once,” by Agustín Lara). Other key figures in the revival of the bolero include the Venezuelan José Luis Rodríguez, better known as El Puma, who has brought out several albums of boleros and whose recent double CD entitled *Inolvidable* (*Unforgettable*, 1997–1999) reworks the songs of Los Panchos, one of the classic trios performing bolero music.

The Mexican transnational pop icon Juan Gabriel is another prominent figure to have continued the bolero tradition. Gabriel has brought out albums that include a variety of boleros such as “Frente a frente” (“Face to Face”) and “No me vuelvo a enamorar” (“I Won’t Fall in Love Again”). Similarly, figures such as the Puerto Rican José Feliciano have performed in the bolero genre, with the Grammy-nominated album *Señor bolero* (*Mr. Bolero*, 1998) including some of Feliciano’s best work in this genre. Contemporary revivals of the bolero are dominated by male singers, but some female vocalists stand out, such as the Puerto Rican Lucecita Benítez, who has incorporated the bolero genre into albums such as *Mujer sin*

tiempo (*Timeless Woman*, 1983). Even the recent phenomenon of the Buena Vista Social Club has engaged in the renaissance of the bolero, with Ibrahím Ferrer recently recording boleros.

—*Claire Taylor*

See also: *Popular Music:* Mariachi, Ranchera, Norteña, Tex-Mex; Merengue; Salsa; Transnational Pop Icons

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Mambo

Mambo is based on an Afro-Cuban rhythm and is most frequently associated with the Cuban musician Dámaso Pérez Prado. The mambo came about as a development of the danzón, adding the conga drum to the charanga ensemble, which characteristically features a wooden Creole flute, piano, bass, violins, güiro (a type of scraper made from a hollowed-out gourd), and timbales (a set of drums). This music was first called *danzón de nuevo ritmo* (danzón of the new rhythm) and later came to be known as mambo.

Although there is no single inventor of this style, its early origins are usually associated with the musician Orestes “Macho” López, whose 1938 tune “Mambo” is seen by many as the earliest example of this type of music. However, the most prominent name in the history of mambo has to

be the Cuban musician Dámaso Pérez Prado, who, from the 1940s onward, adopted the term “mambo” and recorded several songs of this style with his band. Pérez Prado, whose range as a musician stretched from pianist and organist to bandleader, arranger, and composer, is largely credited with popularizing the mambo musical form. He developed the mambo formula for his band with a brass and saxophone lineup, essentially uniting big, jazz-band sound with Latin rhythms. In 1948 he settled in Mexico, where he recorded several songs, many of them with fellow Cuban Benny Moré. After establishing himself in Mexico, he began to gain international fame in the mid-1950s as the mambo fad spread across the United States, fueled by the U.S. Latino population. Notably, his “Cereza Rosa” (1951), sung in English in 1955 as “Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White,” was a key crossover hit. It stayed at number one for ten weeks in the United States and for two weeks in the United Kingdom.

Aside from Pérez Prado, the three most important bands in the U.S. Latino community were Machito y sus Afro-Cubanos and the bands of Tito Puente and Tito Rodríguez. Tito Puente, one of the kings of mambo, famous above all for his hit song “Oye como va” (“Hear How It Goes”), has produced many albums of mambo over the years. Other leading players, such as Celia Cruz, have also sung mambo and have created fruitful crosscurrents between mambo and salsa.

The mambo craze proper was diminishing by the 1960s, but in recent years interest in mambo has resurfaced, partly owing to a variety of media crossovers. Oscar Hijuelos’s novel *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (1989) won the Pulitzer Prize



Tito Puente drumming at Monterey Jazz Festival, Monterey, California. (Craig Lovell/Corbis)

in 1990 and was subsequently made into the film *Mambo Kings* (1992), a U.S.-French production directed by Arne Glimcher and starring, among others, Antonio Banderas. The film, about two Cuban brothers attempting to make their way on the New York music scene, was full of examples of mambo music and brought mambo back to the attention of U.S. audiences. It also featured appearances by some of the real-life mambo stars, such as Celia Cruz and Tito Puente, and the success of both novel and film revived interest in the mambo.

In addition to novels and feature films, mambo has come to the fore in the shape of rerecordings and commercial uses. Pérez Prado's 1949 hit "Mambo Number 5," one of his several numbered mambos, rose to fame again in 1999 owing to the cover

version (a performance or recording of a work previously done by another performer) by the German-born Lou Bega, whose version was a number one hit in the United Kingdom and Germany and appears on his album *A Little Bit of Mambo*. Similarly, Pérez Prado's hit song "Guaglione" (1958) was revived for use in a Guinness commercial in 1994, leading to the song reaching the U.K. top ten in 1995.

—Claire Taylor

See also: *Popular Music*: Danzón; Salsa

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Merengue

Merengue originated in the Dominican Republic in the mid-nineteenth century and is arguably that country's most popular dance music. It has since spread throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Thanks to a group of Dominican and Puerto Rican DJs working in New York, it has recently fused with house music to give rise to the music known as merenhouse.

The origins of the term “merengue” are obscure, although it is generally accepted that merengue as a musical genre derived from principally two distinct sources: the French minuet of the nineteenth century and the music of African slaves. The slaves of the Dominican Republic took up the dance from their colonial rulers but added new rhythms to it, including an upbeat. Thus, although early merengue had European origins, it soon acquired an Afro-Caribbean flavor and, indeed, remains an example of musical syncretism today.

The typical merengue ensemble consists of the guitar, the güiro (a type of scraper made from a hollowed-out gourd), the tambora (a two-headed drum), and the marimba. Although merengue is still performed by such traditional ensembles, variations on merengue—from the growing influence of big-band-style arrangements throughout the twentieth century to more recent house and hip-hop reworkings—have brought about changes in the makeup of merengue bands.

A key figure in the development of merengue is the Dominican-born musician Juan de Dios, who changed his name to the

more marketable and U.S.-friendly Johnny Ventura—itself symbolic of his commercial skills. In the 1960s, Ventura heralded the emergence of a new style of merengue, transforming some of the now traditional big-band setups into smaller ensembles with fewer saxophones and horns. Key to this was Ventura's own weekly television show, *The Combo Show*, which featured merengue in a much more vibrant setting, complete with dance steps, and which launched the career of many other merengue greats. Among other innovations, Ventura sped up merengue, incorporated elements from rock and roll, and employed a much more aggressive marketing style, able to compete with U.S. imports.

By the 1970s, it was the turn of Wilfrido Vargas, trumpeter, composer, singer, and bandleader, to transform merengue. Vargas's 1978 album *Punto y aparte* (*Full Stop*) represented a defining moment in the development of this musical style. Vargas initiated a series of crossovers with other sounds, including elements from Haitian bands, from cumbia, and from vallenato, and introduced synthesizers in some of his later work.

By the 1980s merengue was gaining ground as the Dominican recording industry became stronger, and a new style of merengue evolved. Partly owing to the increased immigration of Dominicans to the United States and partly because of the relative simplicity of its two-step rhythm—an easier dance step than salsa—merengue grew in popularity, and for many Latino dancers it became the preferred dance style.

Perhaps the most significant figure in the contemporary merengue scene is Juan Luis Guerra. Guerra, educated both in Dominican music schools and in the United States, represents the internationalization of

merengue, as well as other musical forms. On his return to Santo Domingo from the United States, Guerra formed the vocal quartet 4.40, reputedly named after the A 440. In the 1980s, Guerra developed a softer, slower, more poetic version of the merengue, exemplified by his 1987 hit “Ojalá que llueva café” (“Let It Rain Coffee”). This song, originally written for a television commercial for coffee, was adopted by coffee growers around the country and became their unofficial anthem. Guerra’s skill lies in transforming merengue to include jazz and African influences while maintaining a Dominican focus in terms of lyrics.

Guerra is joined by the group Rikarena, made up of fellow Dominicans, on the contemporary merengue scene. Rikarena’s albums, such as *Sin medir distancia* (*Measureless Distance*, 1997) and *Rikarena . . . con tó* (*Rikarena . . . with Everything*, 1998), are examples of the fast, danceable merengue that has become their trademark.

In addition to the Dominican brand of merengue, groups from other Latin American countries have sprung up in recent years. One long-standing player on the merengue scene is Jossie Esteban, who in 1979 founded the group Jossie Esteban y la Patrulla 15. Based in Puerto Rico, Esteban’s group has continued to have a string of hits, with the CD *Hot, hot merengue* (1992) being of particular interest, especially for its reworking of the classic bolero “Perfidia” (“Treachery”) into a merengue rhythm. Even more recent is the Puerto Rican group La Makina, whose best work includes *Para el bailador* (*For the Dancer*, 1999). Similarly, singer Elvis Crespo—born in New York but of Puerto Rican origin—has had a string of merengue hits, including his chart-topping single “Suavemente”

(“Softly”). This song and the album of the same name to which it belongs are examples of some of the best combinations of merengue with a rock-pop sound.

A further development in the genesis of merengue, and one that will doubtless continue, is the emerging work of a group of new producers and DJs who are generating musical hybrids of merengue and house music. Such so-called merenhouse style is best exemplified by bands such as Proyecto Uno, a group founded in 1988, made up of two Dominicans and two Puerto Ricans, and based in New York. Proyecto Uno’s albums include *In Da House* (1994), which remained on the charts for months, and their recent *Pura gozadera* (*Pure Pleasure*, 2002).

—Claire Taylor

See also: *Popular Music:* Bolero; Cumbia; Salsa; Vallenato

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Vallenato

The musical form known as vallenato originated on the Caribbean coast of Colombia. More than most other popular musical forms in contemporary Latin America, vallenato maintains a close relationship with its particular geographical region of origin. Indeed, the term itself, “vallenato,” comes

from *valle* (valley), referring to the northern coastal region of Valledupar, and *nato* (born): as its name makes clear, this is music that was born in Valledupar.

Traditionally, the music is played on three main instruments: the guacharaca, the accordion, and the caja drum. The guacharaca, the original instrument of the trio, is a wooden instrument with ridges; sound is produced by scraping the surface with a hard instrument. The name “guacharaca” derives from a tropical forest bird whose cry the instrument is supposed to imitate. The next in the trio is the three-row button accordion, which nowadays has come to be the defining feature of vallenato. Legend has it that the accordion was brought to Colombia by German sailors in the nineteenth century. The final instrument, the caja, is a small, high-pitched, single-headed drum. Vallenato’s musical trio represents the triple heritage of Colombia’s northern region and the syncretism of this music: the guacharaca, of indigenous origin; the accordion, of European origin; and the caja, of African origin.

Vallenato in its early days was a type of folk music, one that was fundamentally a part of oral culture. Vallenato is part of oral culture in both its composition and its performance: vallenato songs have been preserved and transmitted in oral form, and some of the key masters of vallenato were unable to read written music. The oral quality of vallenato songs is closely linked to their original motivations. Vallenato is, principally, a storytelling device. It sprang up as a type of informal “news service” that passed on news in a pretechnological environment.

The orality of this music can be seen in several ways in the songs themselves: the abundance of proper names, for instance,

is indicative of the fact that many of these songs described the deeds of local people or addressed them directly. An example is a classic vallenato composed by the now legendary Rafael Escalona, “Miguel Canales” (1944), which functions not only as a piece of music but as a way to convey a message from the composer, Escalona, to his friend, the eponymous Miguel. Another example is “Testamento” (“Testament,” 1948), which Escalona composed to one of his girlfriends and which includes not only the personal story of the composer but also a description of a journey through Valledupar.

Orality also affects the structure of this music. Typically vallenato songs have repeated refrains at the beginning and at the end of each verse, which aids in the singing of the songs from memory rather than from sheet music. In addition to these refrains, which are individual to each song, vallenato has a “signature” feature: *ayombe* (from *ay hombre*, “hey man” in Spanish) is usually shouted at the beginning or end of a song or during a musical interlude between verses.

In recent years, these more traditional versions of vallenato have constantly been rerecorded. Their most outstanding performer is Jorge Oñate, whose style of singing maintains some of the oral and folkloric inflections. Oñate’s album *Lo mejor de los mejores* (*The Best of the Best*, 1994) is, as the name suggests, a collection of some of the classic vallenato songs, including several by Escalona and by other leading exponents of the genre, such as Carlos Huertas. Another similar exponent of this “classic” vallenato style is the duo Los Hermanos Zuleta, a partnership between brothers Tomás Alfonso Zuleta and Emiliano Alcides Zuleta, with Tomás Al-

fonso, better known as Poncho, as the lead singer and Emiliano as the accordionist.

In addition, a variety of singers from the 1970s onward have played and composed more modern vallenato works. The most significant of these include Binomio de Oro, which originally started out in the mid-1970s as a duo, with Rafael Orozco and Israel Romero as singer and accordionist, respectively. However, after the death of Orozco in June 1992, the group became known as Binomio de Oro de América, with Jean Carlos Centeno replacing Orozco as lead singer. Some of Binomio's best work can be found on the albums *Clase Aparte (No Comparison)*, (1980) and *Festival Vallenato* (1982). *A su gusto (To Your Taste)*, (1996) provides a good example of the sound of the "new" Binomio lineup.

In addition to the large-group style of Binomio, there are a number of solo singers. The best is probably Diómedez Díaz, who began his musical career in the 1970s. Díaz has collaborated briefly with Cocha Molina and has teamed up over the years principally with three expert accordionists: Nicolás "Colacho" Mendoza, Juan Humberto Rois, and, most recently, Iván Zuleta, nephew of the aforementioned Zuleta brothers. The 1989 album *Grandes éxitos de Diómedez Díaz (Greatest Hits of Diómedez Díaz)* brings together some of Díaz's best work with a variety of accordionists, including the outstanding songs "Camino largo" ("The Long Path"), "Todo es para ti" ("Everything Is for You"), and "Cantando" ("Singing"), the last composed by Díaz himself. Of his later work with Zuleta, the 1995 album *Un canto celestial (A Heavenly Song)* stands out. It was produced shortly after the death of Díaz's previous accordionist, Rois, and the title song is dedicated to Rois's memory.

More recent groups include Los Chiches Vallenatos, founded around 1987, which specializes in what can be termed *vallenato romántico* (romantic vallenato). The group's 1994 album *Grandes éxitos de los Chiches Vallenatos (Greatest Hits of the Chiches Vallenatos)*, produced by the ubiquitous Discos Fuentes record company, provides a compilation of some of its best work. Another key group in this strain of vallenato romántico is Los Diablitos, which began in the 1980s, led by the accordionist Omar Geles and singer Miguel Morales, although Morales later withdrew from the group and was replaced first by Jesús Manuel Estrada and finally by Alexander Manga. Examples of some of their best music include the early album *Diabluras vallenatas (Vallenato Mischief)*, c. 1998) with the Geles-Morales lineup.

From the late 1980s and into the 1990s vallenato took a new route, developing a more modern, "pop" sound. The outstanding figure in this transformation is the singer and actor Carlos Vives, whose career was greatly aided by his performance in Caracol's 1991 telenovela *Escalona*, based on the life of Rafael Escalona. Vives brought out two albums derived from the soap opera, *Escalona, un canto a la vida (Escalona, a Song to Life)*, (1994), and *Clásicos de la provincia (Classics of the Province)*, (1994), which were generally faithful renderings of Escalona's originals, but he then swiftly went on to composing and singing his own work, amalgamating the vallenato style with other rhythms and bringing in a strong presence of other instruments, such as the electric guitar. Some of the best of Vives's original work includes his recent album *Déjame entrar (Let Me In)*, (2000), which illustrates this fusion of vallenato elements with sounds and

styles from rock and pop. Although vallenato purists may deny that Vives's latest compositions fall into the vallenato category at all, what cannot be denied is the force and originality of these works.

—*Claire Taylor*

See also: *Mass Media:* Telenovela

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Tropicália

Tropicália, also sometimes referred to as tropicalismo, emerged at the end of the 1960s in Brazil, as part of a wider movement in the arts. Its creation was led by two singer-songwriters from the northeastern state of Bahia, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, and although the style was short-lived, it had a profound impact on attitudes and cultural production. The emergence of this musical style was heralded by Veloso's performance of his song "Alegria, Alegria" ("Joy, Joy") at a televised music festival in 1967. Tropicália coalesced as a movement in 1968, during a period of intense political and cultural upheaval that coincided with the hardening of Brazil's

military dictatorship. Veloso's and Gil's irreverent performances had alarmed the military authorities, even though their critique of contemporary Brazil in song lyrics had for the most part evaded the censors. In December 1968 the regime placed them under house arrest, and they subsequently went into exile in London. Thus, by 1969 Tropicália, as a coherent musical movement, had ended, although both Veloso and Gil have gone on to enjoy widespread artistic and commercial success in their own right.

Veloso's performance of "Alegria, alegria" on the TV Record television station in 1967 met with the outrage of the general public, which considered his groundbreaking use of the electric guitar in this rock song as a sign that Brazilian popular music had sold out to North American and European styles. From then on, Tropicália became a fusion of Brazilian and foreign influences, taking much of its inspiration from the modernist poetry of Oswald de Andrade, who in the 1920s had advocated that Brazil devour and combine both homegrown cultural forms and those imported from abroad in order to create something new and representative of Brazilian socio-cultural reality. Thus, the tropicalist musicians took their lead from contemporary European and North American artists, such as the Beatles and Bob Dylan.

In 1965 Veloso and Gil had moved from their home state of Bahia to São Paulo. There they teamed up with other popular musicians, such as Gal Costa, Júlio Medaglia, Torquato Neto, Tom Zé, José Carlos Capinan, and the rock group Os Mutantes (The Mutants). The so-called *grupo baiano* (Bahian group), consisting of Veloso, Gil, Costa, and Zé, developed a dynamic artistic relationship with the leaders

of the avant-garde music scene in the city. The tropicalists' contact with rampant modernity and pervasive consumerism in the industrialized metropolis of São Paulo clearly molded their musical output. In May 1968 the core members of the group collaborated in the recording of the concept album *Tropicália, ou panis et circensis* (*Tropicalia, or Bread and Circuses*), the movement's musical manifesto, which also featured Nara Leão, the "muse" of bossa nova and Brazilian protest music, who had adhered to the tropicalist cause. The back of this album cover featured a film script written by Veloso, which opened with a chorus of international celebrities singing "Brazil is the country of the future," a tongue-in-cheek allusion to the exaggeratedly patriotic *samba-exaltação*, which Veloso undermines by simultaneously commenting that "this genre is out of fashion." This album was seen as Brazil's answer to the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967).

The name "Tropicália" was taken from the title of a piece of installation art created in 1967 by the experimental artist Hélio Oiticica, and it reflected the movement's deliberate invocation of stereotypical images of Brazil as a tropical paradise. The tropicalist musicians, however, subverted these clichéd images of the nation by alluding in their songs to the political violence and social misery under the military dictatorship in the late 1960s. Tropicália's two manifesto songs were "Tropicália," by Veloso, and "Geléia Geral" ("General Jelly"), by Gil and Neto, whose highly intelligent and ironic lyrics characterized the movement as a whole. "Tropicália" was a powerful allegory of the Brazilian nation in the aftermath of the 1964 military coup, and "General Jelly,"

which combined traditional folkloric music from the northern state of Maranhão with rock music played on electric instruments, mixed hackneyed images of Brazil, such as allusions to samba and mixed-race beauties, with references to the modern capitalist world. The main themes of tropicalist songs included urban migration, mass culture, third world marginality, and political violence, and the songwriters celebrated the kitsch aspects of Brazilian culture. The tropicalists delighted in cultural hybridity, mixing elements of high and low culture, the traditional and the modern, the national and the international. Thus, they made an important contribution to dismantling the barriers between erudite and popular music. Their songs articulated a critique of Brazilian modernity and challenged dominant representations of national culture. Tom Zé's first solo album of 1968, for example, can be interpreted as a satirical chronicle of his first impressions of the city of São Paulo, particularly its voracious capitalist culture. The tropicalists were not, however, protest musicians, and they were not considered to be radicals or leftists. It was Veloso's and Gil's visibility and notoriety, rather than any subversive message in their songs, that prompted their house arrest on 27 December 1968 and their subsequent voluntary exile in London, where they spent the next two and a half years.

Although their departure signaled the end of the movement, the shock waves of Tropicália have been felt in Brazil and beyond to this day. The North American musician Beck, for example, was inspired by the work of Os Mutantes to release an album in 1998 entitled *Mutations*, which included a track called "Tropicália."

—Lisa Shaw

See also: *Popular Music*: Bossa Nova; Brazilian Protest Music; Samba; *Sport and Leisure*: Consumerism (Brazil); *Visual Arts and Architecture*: Art (Hélio Oiticica)

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Andean Rock and Popular Music

Popular music in the Andean countries (for the purposes of this volume, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru) is inescapably influenced by the legacy of the Spanish conquest: in the highlands, an influx of mainly European musical forms combined with those of indigenous origin. Traditional Andean wind instruments such as the quena (a bamboo flute held vertically) remain but are now played alongside European instruments. Chief among these is the guitar, though violin, harp, and even saxophone have found their way into groups playing *mestizo* (culturally and ethnically mixed) forms of Andean music. In the latter half of the twentieth century, as a result of urban migration and of greater tolerance of indigenous culture on the part of urban whites and *mestizos*, Andean music has begun to fuse with rock and other global styles.

The European influx gave rise to various new hybrid musical idioms. The most prominent *mestizo* Andean song form by

far has been the huayno (to use the most common term, though it is often called wayñu in Bolivia and sanjuanito in Ecuador). Huayno adapts native tonal structures and the pentatonic scale to a European format, allowing the incorporation of indigenous oral storytelling strategies, whether the song is in Quechua or Spanish (or, as is often the case, both at once). The form became more widely accepted as a result of the early twentieth-century *indigenista* movement in Cusco, which set out to rehabilitate native culture in the definition of a national identity. The most famous example of the genre is probably “El condor pasa” (“The Condor Passes”), derived from a classical piece by Daniel Alomías Robles in the Huánuco area of the central Peruvian highlands. The song has been covered (reperformed or rerecorded by other artists) and adapted countless times, most famously by Paul Simon in the 1970s. This very adaptability, as well as the expressive range of the form, may explain why huayno is still alive and important today. Andean “folklore” thrives in differing degrees of authenticity. For instance, artists like Ñanda Mañachi (Show Me the Way) from Ecuador have remained true to their indigenous roots, and the Bolivian band Los Kjarkas specializes in romantic ballads sung in the huayno style.

During the massive urban migration of the second half of the twentieth century, Andean music underwent a transformation. This was particularly true of Peru, due to the high degree of urban migrations and the consequent transformation of the music as it came into contact with rock, pop, and Peruvian tropicalismo.

The result was the style known as chicha (the term comes from the name of a popu-

lar maize-based drink), which is not simply a form of music but also a broad cultural expression belonging to displaced Andean peoples in their attempt to come to terms with city life. Chicha music uses melodic and structural patterns similar to those of the huayno, but its lineup of electric or amplified instruments (mostly guitar and drums) is designed to reach large audiences at open-air concerts and dances. Chicha's popularity among the urban migrants of Lima and other large coastal cities drew the contempt of middle-class Peruvians, who were ever eager to hear the latest rock and pop from the United States and the United Kingdom.

More recently Peru has witnessed the upsurge of tecnocumbia, which has largely superseded chicha as the musical expression of the urban migrant and has become a new target for the scorn of Lima sophisticates. Tecnocumbia bands—such as the successful Skándalo (misspelt Spanish for “scandal”), which was followed by Joven Sensación (Young Sensation) and several others—speak for a younger generation already established in the city and with no memories of the Andes. Hence, Andean tecnocumbia songs no longer have nostalgic lyrics of yearning for an abandoned rural idyll; rather, they express a will to address urban reality.

The Andean tradition has nonetheless been maintained, though in unavoidably altered form, among indigenous communities. At the same time, certain rock groups have shown an interest in indigenous culture and even in producing music in the native languages. Among these are the Peruvian rocker Miki González, who was particularly prominent in the 1980s, and an Andean group singing in Quechua, Uchpa (Ash). In Bolivia the rock band Octavia has used tapes or live

performance of traditional native songs and built compositions around them.

An almost unique phenomenon in Andean music has been the career of Bolivian singer Luzmila Carpio, whose period of exile in Paris resulted in her becoming well known and respected as a musical ambassador for her people. Carpio still lives in France, although she is a regular visitor to her home in the province of Norte Potosí. On albums like *Warmi (Woman)*, (1998) she contributes songs aimed at raising political consciousness and levels of education. Carpio has been taken up by one of the World Music labels in the United Kingdom, a move that has not noticeably compromised her authenticity. Other Andean artists belonging to this phenomenon, in recent years, are the Bolivians Jenny Cárdenas and Emma Junaro.

Andean musical forms also found their way into the nueva canción political song movement, most notably in Chile and Argentina during the periods of military dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s.

—Keith Richards

See also: *Popular Music: Contemporary Urban Music: (Tecnocumbia); Nueva Canción*

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Danzón

By today's standards, danzón is a rather old-fashioned, slow form of Latin ballroom

dancing. Nevertheless, it is still very popular in its country of origin, Cuba, as well as in its adopted home, Mexico. It is based on a French courtly dance, the contredanse, and was taken to Cuba by Haitians fleeing revolution in their own country in the late eighteenth century. The contredanse then blended with traditional Cuban dance forms to create the danza and, by the late nineteenth century, the danzón. Danzón bands were originally known as *charangas francesas* (French orchestras)—a reference to the type of European instruments used and possibly also to the French women who ran the high-class brothels in Havana where the music was popular at the turn of the century. Nowadays they are simply known as charangas. *Charangas francesas* usually comprised a small rhythm section, a larger string section, and a wooden flute. It is this lack of emphasis on percussion and the addition of the flute that gives danzón its distinctive sweet, elegant, European sound. Nevertheless, syncretized rhythms and the use of some percussion instruments did betray some Afro-Cuban influence. Increasingly since the 1950s, other instruments, such as the piano or the conga drums, have been incorporated into the orchestras, and a vocal element, often a bolero (a romantic ballad), has been added to the music. There has also been evidence of influence from the more fully Afro-Cuban musical form, the *son*, and danzón is clearly one of the many roots of contemporary salsa music. Nevertheless, danzón still exists in its own right as a recognizable traditional form of dance.

The dance itself is characterized by modesty and reserve. The music of the danzón is split into a melody and a *paseo* (stroll). During the melody the pairs of dancers follow a strict, limited pattern of steps, maintaining

an upright posture and holding each other at a distance. The woman is also required to avert her gaze from her partner out of modesty. During the *paseo*, as the name suggests, the couples either stroll arm in arm about the dance floor, greeting the other dancers, or stand still and talk together.

In Cuba the danzón became popular with both the working classes and the bourgeoisie, and from the 1870s to the 1930s it was considered the country's national dance. Indeed, in its heyday danzón was so popular that its influence reached as far as Mexico, primarily the Gulf Coast region (Veracruz) and Mexico City. In Mexico the dance remains a predominantly working-class leisure activity, although it has been given a recent boost in popularity on a national and international level by María Novaro's 1991 film *Danzón*.

—Thea Pitman

See also: *Popular Music*: Bolero; Salsa

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Nueva Canción

Nueva canción (new song) was a movement rather than a single musical style. It

spread throughout Latin America between the 1950s and 1970s, and its aim was to express opposition to military dictatorships and foreign, particularly U.S., hegemony in the region. Like many such forms of cultural expression it found a catalyst in the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and in the general atmosphere of resistance to authority in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere, and it drew inspiration from earlier anti-imperialist movements, such as that of Sandino in 1930s Nicaragua. In musical terms *nueva canción*, which usually featured acoustic instruments (mainly guitar, percussion instruments, and occasionally wind instruments), drew upon a variety of sources that depended largely upon local or national popular cultures. There were also strong foreign influences: the U.S. protest song movement, singer-songwriters in Europe, and some strands of rock music. Most of the musicians who survived this violent era found themselves in exile, and the importance in this movement of that exile cannot be underestimated, since it led the tone and content of many of the songs to lean toward expressions of nostalgia and alienation.

One of the countries most closely associated with *nueva canción* is Chile, where the outstanding exponents were Violeta Parra (1917–1967) and Víctor Jara (1932–1973). Both became almost synonymous with the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende in the early 1970s, but their individual styles were different. Parra's strange, otherworldly voice and quasi-mystical lyric style were seldom overtly polemical, stressing instead the human spirit with its need for unity and potential for the celebration of life. Her most famous song, "Gracias a la vida" ("Thanks to Life"), became a *nueva*

canción anthem despite the complete absence of social or political allusions. On the other hand, Jara's style was considerably more straightforward, rooted in folk tradition and emphasizing solidarity and political awareness with a talent for vivid metaphors that, in songs like "El arado" ("The Plough"), reached both unschooled and sophisticated audiences without descending into the facile or sentimental. After Jara's brutal murder at the hands of Augusto Pinochet's forces during the 1973 coup (Parra had already died by that time), it was left to exiled artists like the Andean folk group Inti-Illimani (the name invokes respectively the Inca sun god and Bolivia's highest mountain) to maintain opposition to the military regime.

Andean folk music also found its way into the political song movement in Argentina, where antiestablishment figures like Mercedes Sosa and Atahualpa Yupanqui (1908–1992) were able to adapt and reclaim folk traditions that had long been synonymous with rural conservatism. Sosa's potent voice covered (reperformed or rerecorded music by another performer) songs by artists as diverse as Charly García and Bola de Nieve (real name Ignacio Jacinto Villa, 1911–1971), memorably captured in *Mercedes Sosa en Argentina*, a live concert album marking her return from exile in 1983. The singer-songwriter Yupanqui, who, significantly, borrowed the name of the Inca lord executed by the Spanish conquistadors, was known mainly as an exponent of folklore, but it seems clear that his songs of hardship and persecution alluded largely to his own experiences as a political fugitive. The controlled anger with which he wrote and performed was expressed through stark, often ironic imagery that, despite many years spent abroad, constantly drew

upon musical traditions of the Argentine interior. Songs like “Preguntitas sobre Dios” (“Little Questions about God”) also showcase his mastery of local guitar styles and their adaptation to his brooding sensibility.

In Buenos Aires and Montevideo, with their inevitable and understandable use of European cultural models, the musical sources for *nueva canción* were found in diverse places: Spanish ballads, the Italian and French folk revivals, and British rock. The Argentine León Gieco’s “Sólo le pido a Dios” (“I Just Pray to God”), which despite its title is rhetorically secular, became another *nueva canción* anthem. Gieco, who in the 1990s turned to making rock albums, distinguished himself through a terse yet impassioned vocal and lyrical style. The Uruguayan Daniel Viglietti, meanwhile, was widely admired for his whimsical political songs, sensitive cover versions of the works of other songwriters, and musical settings of poetry, graced with a powerful yet tender vocal delivery. The legendary rock composer and performer Charly García can also be attributed with some contribution to *nueva canción* in the form of songs such as “Dinosaurios” (“Dinosaurs”), a thinly veiled prophecy on the fate of the Argentine military junta that was allowed to escape censorship.

Another politically traumatized region in which *nueva canción* emerged as a voice of dissent was Central America, where the Nicaraguan brothers Carlos and Luis Enrique Mejía Godoy became its leading lights. Their opposition to the regime of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua was conducted from Costa Rica.

It is hardly surprising that the spirit of *nueva canción* was most strongly and confidently expressed in Cuba. Unmolested by political or military authority, the Nueva

Trova Cubana (New Cuban Troupe) was a loose grouping of artists eager to voice the island’s revolutionary zeal and exuberance. The very name of the group hinted at a break with the past, and such singers as Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés indeed dispensed with many elements of a Cuban musical heritage that was seen as outmoded and redolent of a past, steeped in inequality, racism, and ignorance, when Cuban nightclubs, brothels, and casinos were patronized by North American visitors. Ironically perhaps, the rehabilitation of *son*, cha-cha-cha, rumba, and other such genres began under Rodríguez’s tenure as minister of culture in the mid-1990s. Nevertheless, the popularity of “Silvio y Pablo” (as they are invariably known in tandem), though past its 1980s heyday, remains high. The two men, despite their close association as figureheads, have quite distinct styles. Rodríguez constructs highly intricate melodic patterns with poetically audacious, optimistic lyrics accompanied by his virtuoso guitar playing. Among his most famous and popular albums are *Días y flores* (*Days and Flowers*, 1975) and *Unicornio* (*Unicorn*, 1985). He intersperses his more experimental songs, with their abstruse and whimsical imagery, with politically confrontational songs. Likewise, Milanés has always exercised a certain social responsibility in his craft despite his more wistful reflections on love, loss, and social responsibility.

The legacy of *nueva canción* is, to date, more ideological than musical; it can be seen primarily in Latin American rock music, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s. Explicit political content is unusual, but even some of those artists who refrain from even coded social comment often display their leanings through their actions or

choice of material. One example is the Argentine band Divididos (Divided), with their blues-rock adaptations of songs like Atahualpa Yupanqui's "El arriero" ("The Muleteer"). Among other rock singers and composers whose sentiments and lyrics inherit something of *nueva canción* is singer-composer Fito Páez, who in 1990 made an unequivocal political statement with the album *Tercer mundo* (*Third World*), a musical travelogue based on his own experiences in Latin America. In 1994 Páez gave a concert in Havana at the invitation of Silvio Rodríguez. In 1997 Páez and several of the artists mentioned above, plus Mexican bands Café Tacuba, El Tri, and Maldita Vecindad (Damned Neighborhood); Paralamas do Sucesso (Mudguards of Success) from Brazil; and Los Tres (The Three of Them) from Chile, participated in the benefit album *Chiapas*, whose proceeds went to the Zapatismo movement in southern Mexico.

—Keith Richards

See also: *Popular Music*: Contemporary Urban Music (Rock Music); *Popular Social Movements and Politics*: Zapatismo

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Brazilian Protest Music

Although protest music in Brazil did not constitute a movement as such, as it did in

other Latin American countries under dictatorships, during the days of repression there emerged a number of singer-songwriters who both inspired a politically committed generation at the time and influenced the shape of popular music for future generations. The most significant of these singer-songwriters were Geraldo Vandré and Chico Buarque.

Geraldo Vandré (Geraldo Pedrosa de Araújo Dias) was born in 1935 in Paraíba in northeastern Brazil. His musical style has been defined as a mixture of bossa nova and the folkloric traditions of his native region. His songs, often interpreted by other performers, proved very successful at the televised music festivals of the mid-1960s, vehicles that revealed a wealth of songwriting talent. These music competitions eventually came to an end toward the close of the 1960s because many of the popular competitors had been forced into exile and because material was increasingly being censored. Geraldo Vandré became famous at the festivals for his fiery protest songs, especially "Prá não dizer que não falei de flores" ("So as Not to Say I Didn't Speak of Flowers"), also known simply as "Caminhando" ("Walking"). The song took second place at a festival in 1968 and was subsequently banned for ten years by the military government for its lyrics, which were deemed offensive to the armed forces, and for its capacity to provoke subversion, particularly among students. "Caminhando" quickly became a favorite anthem among political protesters during demonstrations, particularly during the difficult years of severe censorship and imprisonment of political adversaries (1968–1976). As a result of the song's prohibition, Vandré left Brazil for his own safety in 1969.

Another singer-songwriter to find fame on the music festival circuit was Chico Buarque (Francisco Buarque de Holanda), who has enjoyed a considerably longer professional life than Geraldo Vandré. Buarque did not write traditional protest songs as such; he wrote gentle sambas with very clever and often intricate lyrics that gradually, with the hardening of the Brazilian military regime in the late 1960s, came to challenge the political status quo. Eventually Buarque, like Vandré and the Tropicália musicians Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, was forced to leave the country for fear of persecution. On his return in 1970, his songs were heavily censored (for example, only one song in three released by him in 1971 was approved). In songs such as “Construção” (“Construction”) from 1971, Buarque’s lyrics are so imaginative and deceptively simple that they are frequently included in poetry anthologies. “Construção” depicts the alienation and death of a faceless construction worker, representative of the hundreds and thousands of migrant workers who came to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the 1960s and 1970s to work, in the most precarious of conditions, in the construction industry. The song thus criticizes the developmentalist policies of the military government, which showed little concern for the vast majority of Brazilians who experienced little or nothing of the supposed prosperity of the times. Occasionally, the censors were temporarily fooled by Buarque’s intelligent and powerful lyrics, such as those contained in the ostensible love song “Apesar de você” (“In Spite of You”), whose refrain begins “In spite of you tomorrow will be another day”—a clear indictment of the military regime. The song was later banned. In 1973 he wrote with Gilberto Gil

the song “Cálice” (“Chalice”), further expressing the bitterness felt toward the repressive government of the day. (In Portuguese the word *cálice*, in addition to meaning “chalice,” is a homophone of the command *cale-se*, meaning “shut up,” and thus acts as a comment on the silencing of dissent under the military dictatorship.) The first time Buarque and Gil attempted to perform this song, they were “shut up” by the authorities, who invaded the stage and turned off their microphones. The song was subsequently banned, and it then became, rather like Vandré’s “Caminhando,” an anthem against the dictatorship. Buarque had such difficulty with the censors that he released material under a pseudonym, Julinho de Adelaide. One such was the song “Acorda Amor” (“Wake Up, Love”), in which the singer, fearing for his safety at home one night, tells his partner to call a thief for help (“chame ladrão”), echoing a widely held belief at the time that the real criminals in society were the police. By 1984, with the end of the military regime in sight, Buarque’s lyrics became more positive, as witnessed in the samba “Vai Passar,” with its double meaning of “it’s on its way past” (a reference to a Carnival parade mentioned in the song) and “it will soon be over” (a reference to the dictatorship). Buarque also wrote musicals and later, in the 1990s, best-selling novels. He continues to write songs and perform before live audiences, and his popularity shows no sign of waning.

—*Stephanie Dennison*

See also: *Popular Music*: Bossa Nova; Samba; Tropicália

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Contemporary Urban Music

Brazilian Rap and Hip-Hop

Among the most successful and politically committed urban music crazes to hit Brazil in the last ten years are rap and hip-hop, inspired by North American rap (“rhythm and poetry”) music, which emerged in black ghettos of the United States in the 1980s. The most successful rap band in Brazil is Racionais MCs (The Rational MCs), one of many bands to appear since the late 1980s in the *periferia*, or poor suburbs that surround Brazil’s megacity, São Paulo. In the late 1980s break dancers, DJs, graffiti artists, and rappers would meet at the Largo de São Bento and Rua 24 de Maio in the center of São Paulo on weekends, where Brazilian rap’s distinctive sound (often incorporating roots, samba, and reggae) and lyrics began to be developed. In the 1990s, those interested in the hip-hop scene began to meet in the suburbs in “posses.” There are around 30,000 of these posses in existence today. They were organized in 1989 into a movement with the founding of the Movimento Hip Hop Organizado (Organized Hip Hop Movement, MH2O). The movement’s manifesto demanded “*poder para o povo preto*” (power for the black people), so although in the United States such posses are often syn-

onymous with gangland violence, they are much more politically motivated in São Paulo. For example, posses would often hold discussion groups on racism, police violence, and black history, and these themes in turn would inform rap music’s lyrics.

The first album by the Racionais MCs was released in 1992, entitled *Holocausto Urbano (Urban Holocaust)*. Between 1992 and 1997 they gradually built up a following, both within the poor neighborhoods of the suburbs of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and among Brazil’s middle-class youth. Their fourth album, *Sobrevivendo no inferno (Surviving in Hell)*, 1997 is Brazil’s most successful rap album to date: it sold over one million copies and was widely pirated. Like many other rap acts, such as O Rappa from the Baixada Fluminense (poor suburbs of Rio de Janeiro), the Racionais MCs express an antialcohol or antidrug attitude in their music, seeing drugs as destructive of their communities. An exception to this is the aptly named band Planet Hemp, whose sole reason for existence seems to be to rap about the virtues of cannabis. Both Racionais MCs and O Rappa sponsor charity projects, and in a conscious effort to “keep it real,” many rappers tend to avoid big media vehicles and multinational music corporations. Most are signed to independent music labels, many of which are owned by rap performers themselves. The Racionais MCs own their own music label (Cosa Nostra). The Poder Para o Povo Preto (Power for Black People) enterprise (partly owned by K. L. Jay, the Racionais DJ) comprises a record label, two black music shops, and an Afro-hairdresser in São Paulo.

Not all Brazilian rap groups and performers are black or of mixed race. For exam-



Brazilian singers Afro-X (left) and Dexter, who together form the rap music duo 509-E, pause inside their uncharacteristically large cell in the Carandirú penal complex, where the two are inmates of Latin America's biggest prison, 21 June 2000. (Reuters/Corbis)

ple, Yuka, the front man of O Rappa, is white. In most cases white stars such as Yuka are also from the poor suburbs and can therefore relate to the common themes of rap music, such as the struggle for respect for their impoverished communities and the attempt to combat the proliferation of arms and police violence there. (Yuka was hit by a police bullet in 2002.) It is interesting, however, that O Rappa's Website complains about economic rather than racial segregation in Brazil. Another successful white rapper, in this case from a privileged background, is Gabriel o Pensador (Gabriel the Thinker—real name Gabriel Contino, born 1974), the white son of a successful television presenter, who represents the pop side to rap music in Brazil.

At the other end of the spectrum of acceptability are a number of popular rap acts that either met in prison or are still incarcerated, for example, 509-E and Detentos do Rap (both from Carandirú prison in São Paulo) and Escadinha, with a prison connection in Rio de Janeiro (Bangú). Needless to say, despite the politically motivated and socially aware lyrics and attitude of the hip-hop movement in general in Brazil, particularly when compared with hip-hop acts in the United States, rappers and their audience have been and continue to be the victims of scorn, suspicion, victimization, and even violence at the hands of the press and the police.

—Stephanie Dennison

See also: *Popular Music: Samba*

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Mexican Rap and Hip-Hop

Just as Mexican popular music has had an impact on the music scene in the United States with Tex-Mex and Tejano, such U.S.-born musical styles as rock, rap, and hip-hop have also influenced the development of new hybrid forms south of the border. The key factor that facilitates this cultural exchange is the existence of the Chicano (and more broadly Latino) community, which is conversant in both Anglo and Latin American cultural traditions and which eclectically blends elements from both in its own music.

Rap and hip-hop music in the United States is traditionally associated with black street culture and with urban youth in general. "Rap" refers to the performance of rhythmic, slang-inflected monologues supported by some musical backing; hip-hop is a slightly more danceable variant, frequently associated with the rise of break dancing in the 1980s. Although rap has generally been promoted as a black musical phenomenon, the 1980s also saw the devel-

opment of Latino rap in the United States, as urban Latino youths quickly absorbed the musical styles of their black neighbors. Rock Steady Crew, The Terror Squad, Big Pun, and Fat Joe are some of the most successful of these Latino (often specifically Nuyorican) rap acts on the East Coast. On the West Coast, Latino (and more specifically Chicano) acts such as Mellow Man Ace and Kid Frost also became very popular in the late 1980s. In the 1990s the boom continued, with new Chicano rap acts such as Aztec Tribe, Darkroom Familia, and South Park Mexican. Shortly thereafter, full-fledged Mexican rap groups began to emerge, such as Control Machete (Machete Control), from Monterrey, and Molotov, from Mexico City. Inevitably, these Mexican rap groups have continued to blend U.S. rap with elements of Mexican popular music and to combine U.S. English slang with Mexican Spanish slang in a heady Chicano-inflected Spanglish. They have also produced lyrics that speak directly to Mexican youth about their own social and political situation. Control Machete, founded in 1995, is most accurately classified as hip-hop, blended with the distinctive sounds of traditional Mexican guitar harmonies and the rhythms of *danzón*, for example. One of their best-known tracks, "Danzón," combines the traditional music of *danzón* and a rap about the current state of the Mexican nation; a line in the chorus is taken from the work of popular black Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén. In general, Control Machete's lyrics are aggressively anti-imperialist and pro-*raza* (race, the common term that Mexicans and Chicanos use to indicate their ethnicity).

Molotov, founded in 1996 (not to be confused with New York City-based punk band Molotov Cocktail), produces a potent



Rapper Fat Joe (center) and the Terror Squad perform during the VH1 Hip Hop Honors show, 3 October 2004, in New York City. (Scott Gries/Getty Images)

mix of rap, hip-hop, and the already hybrid form that is Mexican rock. The group has stirred up a substantial amount of controversy, both for the political views expressed in its songs' lyrics, which rage against Mexican media conglomerates such as Televisa, and for the rather puerile, sexist, and homophobic nature of much of their material. The group claims that the humor it brings to its work should liberate it from the latter criticism.

Both Molotov and Control Machete have been immensely popular in Mexico, contributing songs to the soundtracks of a number of highly successful recent Mexican films, such as *Amores perros* (*Love's a Bitch*, 2000, with music by Control Machete) and *Y tu mamá también* (*And Your Mother Too*, 2001, with music by Molotov). Molotov also provided the title and title

track for Fernando Sariñana's blockbuster film *Todo el poder* (*All the Power*, 1999). These best-selling Mexican rap and hip-hop bands have also garnered a substantial following in the United States; cultural exchange at the U.S.-Mexican border continues to flow in both directions. Molotov and Control Machete have both toured the United States and Europe, and Molotov has toured with bands such as REM and Metallica. A number of critics consider that the fusion of Latin American musical styles with rap and hip-hop seen in the work of these two groups is the way forward for popular music in general.

—Thea Pitman

See also: *Popular Music:* Mariachi, Ranchera, Norteña, Tex-Mex; *Language:* Chicano Spanish; *Popular Cinema:* The Mexican Film

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Mangue Beat

Mangue beat is a new Brazilian musical form that appeared in the 1990s in the northeastern cities of Recife and Olinda. It was popularized by the talented Chico Science, who died in a car crash in 1996. Science (Francisco de Assis França, 1966–1996), brought up in the suburbs of Olinda, an old colonial town adjoining Recife, began experimenting with black music in the 1980s in a variety of bands, mixing 1960s rock with soul, funk, and hip-hop sounds. He took on the moniker "Chico Science" in order to sell himself as the "King of Musical Alchemy." In 1991 he made contact with a Bloco Afro (Afro-Brazilian) Carnival club called Lamento Negro (Black Lament) from the suburbs of Olinda. The club's regional percussion was mixed with Chico Science's black music, and a new band was formed: Nação Zumbi (Zumbi Nation). This new style of music was dubbed mangue (in a reference to the swampy land that surrounds Recife, where many people

live in slums). Mangue beat has a hard, aggressive sound that cleverly blends heavy rock with northeastern folkloric music, including maracatu (an Afro-Brazilian slow processional dance form associated with Carnival in Recife) and embolada (an improvisational musical form with tongue-twisting lyrics, often with a set refrain and using alliterative words that are difficult to pronounce). The band's debut album, *De lama ao caos* (*From Mud to Chaos*), was released in 1994 to critical acclaim. Chico Science's second and final album, *Afro-ciberdélia* (1996), was influenced by ambient music, rap, funk, and psychedelic guitar as well as by the familiar rhythms of rock and maracatu and by northeastern baião (accordion-based folk music, popularized in the 1940s by Luiz Gonzaga and back in fashion with Brazil's urban middle class). The band's songs were used, to dramatic effect, in the 1997 film set in the backlands of the Northeast, *Baile perfumado* (*Perfumed Ball*). Despite Chico Science's untimely death, Nação Zumbi continues to produce music in its native state of Pernambuco, along with other mangue beat bands such as Fred Zero Quatro (Fred Zero Four).

—Stephanie Dennison

See also: *Popular Music:* Contemporary Urban Music: (Brazilian Rap and Hip-Hop); *Popular Cinema:* Youth Movies, Cinema, and Music; *Popular Religion and Festivals:* Popular Festivals (Carnival in Brazil)

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Rock Music

Although rock music is a musical style and broader cultural phenomenon born in the United States and practiced extensively in the English-speaking world, its influence can be felt throughout Latin America. In the first instance, in the 1950s and early 1960s, Anglo rock music, known either as *rocanrol* or *música rock*, became popular in its own right in the region. Subsequently, local English-language covers (a performance or recording of a work previously done by another performer) of Anglo rock songs were produced, followed by versions of these same songs in literal and then in much freer translations. Gathering impetus from the early 1970s onward, local musicians have chosen to blend elements of Anglo rock music, such as the electric guitar and the accentuated 4/4 beat, with elements taken from Latin American popular music (the immediately identifiable sounds of particular percussion instruments and the rhythms and harmonies of *danzón* or *cumbia*, for example). This music has come to be known throughout the Spanish-speaking world as *rock en español* (rock in Spanish).

Because this kind of rock music is able to blend elements of both Anglo and Latin American cultural traditions and thus to express, in both the music and the lyrics, a particular national cultural identity, it has also been called *rock nacional* (national rock music). The conduit for cultural influence has been the existence of the Latino (often Chicano) communities in the United States, which have themselves frequently blended U.S. rock music with elements of their cultures of origin to produce such key crossover figures and acts as Ritchie Valens, Santana, Jerry García (of the Grateful Dead) and Los Lobos.

Throughout its short history, rock music has been associated with youth culture and the urban environment, particularly with the more marginalized, such as the urban poor and the *chavos banda* (gangs). Rock music has sought to express the point of view of this group and has been key in the formation of an urban youth counterculture in such countries as Mexico and Argentina. It has had a difficult relationship with the establishment in both countries. In the first instance, the influence of Anglo-American music was seen by the establishment as a betrayal of local cultural values, even when songs were sung in Spanish. Nevertheless, at key moments both Mexico and Argentina have endorsed *rock en español* as a national cultural product, producing a complex relationship of both rejection and acceptance between the state and its organs of media diffusion, on the one hand, and the bands and artists themselves, on the other.

In Mexico, rock music with a substantial emphasis on Anglo culture and on hedonism became a notable middle-class youth phenomenon in the 1960s. The adherents of this trend were known as *jipitecas* (Mexican hippies). In contrast to the *jipitecas* were the more politically radical, and consequently less rock-oriented, participants in the student movement. These two opposing currents in Mexican youth culture eventually converged into the movement known as La Onda (The Wave), which was born as a result of the Mexican government's repression of all forms of youth culture, seen most clearly in the 1968 massacre of hundreds of young people at Tlatelolco Square in Mexico City. La Onda, although frequently condemned by critics for merely translating U.S. counterculture to a Mexican setting, sponsored the gradual change

from Anglo rock to more socially aware Mexican *rock nacional* or *guacarock* (a humorous reference to the combination of the Mexican dip guacamole and rock).

Even though the Mexican government did its best to discourage the imperialist threat to national culture that was Anglo rock music and hippy culture, it was no less censorious of the growth of Mexican rock music proper, and after permitting the staging of the Avándaro rock concert in 1971 (the Mexican Woodstock) in order to gauge the strength of the countercultural movement, it clamped down even more heavily on manifestations of youth culture in the aftermath. Mexican rock music thus retreated to the working-class neighborhoods of the big cities, to the *hoyos fonquis* (the underground clubs), until guacarock was reborn in the 1980s, stimulated by the spontaneous mobilization of large sectors of the urban working classes after the devastating 1985 Mexico City earthquake. Groups and acts that date from this early period in Mexican rock are Rockdrigo, Botellita de Jerez, and Three Souls in My Mind (this last band is almost a national institution in present-day Mexico and is known affectionately as El Tri).

In recent years the massive and conservative media conglomerate Televisa, which has strong allegiances to the Mexican government, has tried to manipulate the popular appeal of rock music by sponsoring certain pop-rock bands and singers such as Los Timbirichi, Alejandra Guzmán, and transnational pop icons Thalía and Gloria Trevi. Nevertheless, some groups—such as Caifanes, Café Tacuba, Maldita Vecindad, Los de Abajo, and Plastilina Mosh—have managed to achieve massive success via such routes yet retain their countercultural edge. Evident, too, in the work of these groups is the radical blend

of cultural influences: Caifanes had a big hit in the 1980s with “La negra Tomasa,” a rock version of a traditional cumbia. Maldita Vecindad is known for blending mambo, danzón, ska, rap, and rhythm and blues within any one song. Most recently the combination of rap and hip-hop with Mexican *rock nacional* has become popular in the work of the band Molotov.

Argentine rock music has come to occupy the same (urban) space and to perform a social function (that of creating a sense of solidarity among the marginalized sectors of society) similar to that of Argentina’s most identifiable popular musical form, the tango, in the first half of the twentieth century. It is no surprise, then, that the first key figure in Argentine rock music went by the name of Tanguito. Tanguito was a marginal, ephemeral figure who started translating Anglo rock songs into Spanish (and composing a few of his own) in the late 1960s. Under the military dictatorship (1976–1985), all forms of community and mass gatherings were repressed, and Argentine youth was specifically targeted for repression because it was considered innately subversive. Thus, rock music was censored and concerts were banned. Nevertheless, the rock magazine *Expreso imaginario* (*The Imaginary Express*) managed to keep up publication during the worst years of repression, and this helped rock music to survive and indeed to flourish as the vehicle for the expression of countercultural values and specific opposition to the regime.

During the Falklands/Malvinas War (1982), however, the Argentine government banned the dissemination of English-language music and hence favored Argentine *rock nacional* despite its oppositional stance. Although many musicians cautiously benefited from this increased dissemination

of their work, their audiences were attentive to the relationship between artist and authority, and those thought to have compromised their integrity in this way were accused of being *transa* (sellouts). It is also for this reason that so many Argentine rock bands broke up once they started to achieve mass appeal, and the most important Argentine rock musicians are best identified by name rather than by the many bands in which they played. Key figures here are Charly García, León Gieco, and Luis Alberto Spinetta. The kind of rock favored by these musicians was progressive rock, with strong links to U.S. folk music (Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, and so on) and to protest songs in general. The resultant music was rarely danceable and was appreciated more for its lyrics than for its upbeat tempo. Argentine rock music has continued to blend cultural currents, exploring its relationship with the tango (see, for example, García's albums *Tango*, 1985, and *Tango 4*, 1991) and with Argentina's other forms of popular music (see Gieco's work with Argentinean folk musicians on *De Ushuaia a La Quiaca*, *From Ushuaia to La Quiaca*, 1985).

Rock music has continued to be an important forum for youth culture in Argentina in the years since the end of the dictatorship. Many of the older artists, such as García, Spinetta, Fito Páez, and groups such as Virus and Patricio Rey y sus Redonditos de Ricota (Patricio Rey and His Chubby Friends from Ricota), have continued to produce interesting work. As have Mexican rock groups, other Argentine rock groups, such as Soda Stéreo and Los Enanitos Verdes (The Little Green Dwarves), have achieved mass appeal and international dissemination by media conglomerates; their reputations within the world of rock culture have subsequently suffered.

Newcomers to the rock scene who have achieved critical acclaim include rappers Illya Kuryaki and The Valderramas.

In Brazil, *rock nacional* coexists comfortably alongside so-called Música Popular Brasileira (MPB, Brazilian Popular Music), foreign rock music (especially from the United States, Britain, and Ireland), and other popular forms such as hip-hop and samba-reggae. By far the most successful rock band to come out of Latin America was the Brazilian (but Phoenix, Arizona-based) "death metal" group Sepultura (Grave), which enjoyed considerable international success in the late 1980s and 1990s. Despite singing in English and thus identifying strongly with their international fan base, Sepultura's music was concerned with Brazilian history and culture. For example, the 1996 album *Roots*, with its Afro-Brazilian percussion, dealt with the decimation of Brazil's Amerindian populations and the horrors of the slave trade. The band's founder, Max Cavalera, left in 1997 to form Soulfly, a band with musical aspirations similar to those of Sepultura, which also delves into Brazilian themes and rhythms.

—Thea Pitman and
Stephanie Dennison

See also: *Popular Music*: Contemporary Urban Music (Mexican Rap and Hip-Hop); Cumbia; Danzón; Mambo; Nueva Canción; Tango; Transnational Pop Icons

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Tecnocumbia

"Tecnocumbia" refers to recent reworkings of the cumbia genre that combine this traditionally Colombian folk music, which expresses local and national themes, with other musical forms from countries such as Argentina and Peru to give rise to a variety of musical hybrids.

Young Argentinean groups such as Los Pibes Chorros (The Thieving Lads) and Yerba Brava (The Wild Weed) have adapted traditional formats, transforming the often romantic content of cumbia into a social protest and description of harsh reality. This new style of cumbia, known variously as cumbia gangsta, hard cumbia, or cumbia

villera (slum cumbia), arose in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. It reworks both the content and style of traditional cumbia. In terms of content, the lyrics are peppered with street slang and focus on social issues, often dealt with in uncompromising terms. The changes to the style and sound of the music have come about through combining the cumbia rhythm with elements from reggae, rap, and hip-hop, among others. Such bands have gained fans in Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Modern urban versions of cumbia have also been developed extensively in Peru and have come to form what is now classified as tecnocumbia. This music draws on a variety of influences, including Tex-Mex music, the rhythms of Brazilian music (especially that of Manaus), Bolivian *saya*, *merengue*, and the so-called *música chicha*, itself a hybrid of Colombian cumbia and Andean music. This music mixes the more traditional sounds of Peruvian cumbia with synthesizers and keyboards, which have come to play a major role in the music. Tecnocumbia, which arose in the mid-1990s, is popular both in Lima and in the provinces, and its foremost exponent is Rosa Guerra Morales, or Rossy War, as she is better known. War has been called the "Queen of Tecnocumbia," and her first album, *Como la flor* (*Like a Flower*, 1995), brought her hits with the songs "Te acuerdas de mí" ("You Remember Me") and the title song "Como la flor." War is one of Peru's best-selling singers, and her music has also gained popularity outside Peru. She has played across much of Latin America, including Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela.

—*Claire Taylor*

See also: *Popular Music*: Contemporary Urban Music (Mexican Rap and Hip-Hop);

Cumbia; Mariachi, Ranchera, Norteña,
Tex-Mex; Merengue

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Transnational Pop Icons

A number of contemporary Latin American singers and musicians have become household names outside their countries of origin, often even outside their cultural and linguistic borders. In some cases artists have adapted traditional musical styles, such as by smoothing stylistic raw edges, censoring content in order to become acceptable abroad, or incorporating musical styles already globally popular into new fusions. The linguistic aspect is also crucial, and several artists have recorded in English and other languages so as to penetrate wider markets.

Mexican-U.S. border culture has been very important in the emergence of transnational pop icons. The most prominent exponents of Tex-Mex music, the Mexican accordionist Flaco Jiménez and North American guitarist Ry Cooder, have in turn inspired other artists to experiment with new forms of cultural fusion, with ex-Talking Heads veteran David Byrne and Chicano rock band Los Lobos among those also dabbling in the genre. However, the most prominent artist springing from the U.S. Latino community, at least in terms of record sales, is surely Texas-born Selena (1971–1995), whose album *Amor prohibido* (*Forbidden Love*) achieved quadruple platinum in 1994. Selena helped Tejano

music spread beyond the cultural and ethnic confines of the southeastern U.S. Latino community and rendered it marketable on a world scale. Selena is remarkable not only for her huge success and the near-deification that followed her murder in 1994 but also for bringing U.S. Latino culture into Mexico on a scale previously unimaginable and for breaking down the suspicion and scorn with which U.S.-based artists were often seen south of the border. Another crossover artist, Cuban-born Gloria Estefan, represents another U.S. Latino community. Her band, Miami Sound Machine, which came to prominence in the late 1970s, attracted Anglo audiences by tempering its original raw salsa with a romantic element. She has remained successful, recording in Spanish, Portuguese, and English with an eye to satisfying the full spectrum of her fan base without overly compromising her musical roots.

Cooder and Byrne, always with an eye to the World Music market, have separately explored Latin America's musical heritage. Some of the results have been collaborations, such as Cooder's foray into Cuba and his famous "rediscovery" of survivors from the pre-revolutionary nightclub scene. Wim Wenders's documentary *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999) famously records the musical and personal interactions between classic exponents of bolero, *son*, guaracha, and other Cuban genres, on the one hand, and their intrepid "savior," Cooder, on the other. This film's massive success relaunched the careers of such artists as Compay Segundo, Rubén González, Omara Portuondo, and Ibrahim Ferrer. Meanwhile, Byrne has produced numerous albums in collaboration with Latin American artists, most notably *Naked* (1988) and *Rei Momo* (1989), as



Cuban group Buena Vista Social Club (right to left): Amadito Valdés, Barbarito López, Ibrahim Ferrer, Eliades Ochoa, Omara Portuondo, Guajiro Maribal, Pio Leyva, and Cachaito López, during a press conference in Mexico City on 20 May 2002. (Henry Romero/Reuters/Corbis)

well as many compilations of music from Brazil, Cuba, and Peru.

A Peruvian artist who has benefited from exposure to an international audience is the singer Susana Baca, whose music follows the traditions of her African heritage. The coastal Afro-Peruvian *landó* song form, which draws upon both African and Spanish traditions, was made socially acceptable by the efforts of white singer Chabuca Granda in the 1960s and was subsequently popularized by such artists as Eva Ayllón, Andrés Soto, and Tania Libertad. Baca, who acted as Granda's personal assistant for some years, is notable for continuing these traditions while making careful innovations based on contact with Latin American and other musical forms. Her 2001 album *Es-píritu vivo (Live Spirit)*, recorded in New York, brings in a number of influences previously unseen in her work, including mate-

rial by Caetano Veloso, Björk, and Cuban percussionist Mongo Santamaría.

An altogether more overtly commercial artist is Thalía, who made her name in telenovelas in her native Mexico but has since become a successful pop singer who commands the affection of a wide audience. Cheerfully deploying her sexuality and benefiting from a slick publicity machine, Thalía is nonetheless a respected and genuinely popular professional who has made a name across not only Latin America and the United States but also in Europe. Despite her recent moves toward crossover, she is seen as an essentially Mexican artist. Other Mexican stars having enjoyed similar success include Luis Miguel (born in Puerto Rico of an Italian mother and Spanish father), whose career has spanned more than two decades, during which he has moved from pop to



Peruvian singer Susana Baca performs during the OFF-Fest four-day music festival held in the Macedonian capital Skopje, 6 June 2004. (Robert Atanasovski/AFT/Getty Images)

boleros. The romantic image associated with this artist's good looks and impassioned delivery has been crucial to his enduring prominence and to his winning a string of international awards. Mexican singer-songwriter Juan Gabriel has also achieved international fame, without the childhood advantages Luis Miguel's show business upbringing brought him. Indeed, Juan Gabriel's troubled early life in Michoacán and Ciudad Juárez is legendary and has ultimately enhanced his image as an artist who, being the product of a disadvantaged background and true to his roots, embodies all senses of the word "popular."

A singer-songwriter who blends traditional forms with entirely modern sensibili-

ties is Lila Downs. Her music proclaims her manifold cultural heritage, not just a Mexican-U.S. double heritage but a combination of her mother's indigenous roots and those of her white North American father. Her work reflects a life shared among rural Oaxaca (one of the Mexican states in which native culture is strongest), California, Mexico City, and Wisconsin. Downs is able to sing in Mixtec, Nahuatl, and Zapotec as well as in Spanish and English, and she does so as a declaration of pride and cultural affirmation. Her use of rural native dress invites comparisons with Frida Kahlo, comparisons that were strengthened by her appearance in the film *Frida* (2002). Of her two albums to date, *Árbol de la vida*



Singer Lila Downs participates in the American Civil Liberties Union's Freedom Concert at Avery Fisher Hall, 4 October 2004, in New York City. (Matthew Peyton/Getty Images)

(*Tree of Life*, 1999) is closer to indigenous tradition; *La línea* (*The Border*, 2001) is a collection of songs taken from all the above-mentioned traditions to make up a powerful statement on the problems of the Mexican-U.S. border.

The Puerto Rican singer Ricky Martin is credited with bringing Latin pop into the mainstream. Enrique Morales IV (known as Kiki to his close friends) was born in 1971 in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico. From an early age he took an interest in performing, trying out for Menudo, a kid-die-pop band based in Puerto Rico, and



Ricky Martin arrives at the premiere of *Cold Mountain* in Los Angeles, California, 7 December 2003. (Frank Trapper/Corbis)

eventually being offered a place in the group two years later. Menudo went on to dominate the teen music market all over Latin America, including Brazil (where it released records in Portuguese and inadvertently caused riots at its live shows), as well as the Latino music market in the United States. After five years with the band, Ricky tried and failed to launch a solo career in New York. He then moved to Mexico, where he took part in musicals and telenovelas and secured a record deal with Sony. He released a self-titled album in 1992, followed by *Me amarás* (*You Will Love Me*, 1993), *A medio vivir* (*Half Alive*, 1995), and *Vuelve* (*Come Back*, 1998). His Spanish-language album sales reached a staggering thirty million. Meanwhile, he

tried his luck again in 1994 in the United States, taking a role in the daytime soap opera *General Hospital* and singing on Broadway. By the release of his fourth album (*Vuelve*) in 1998, he was beginning to get noticed beyond the Latin American and Latino market (the single “Maria,” for example, was a big summer hit in clubs in the United States and in the holiday resorts of Europe). Also taken from that album was “The Cup of Life,” the signature tune to the 1998 football (soccer) World Cup finals held in France. As with most Latino singing stars, it was not until Ricky released his first English-language album (*Ricky Martin*) in 1999 and gave an electrifying performance at the 1999 Grammy Awards (his live shows are always dazzling affairs) that he broke into the U.S. market (his album went straight to number one on the Billboard Charts). He was on the cover of *Time* magazine in the same week that his album was released. Ricky Martin is six feet two inches tall, lean and chisel-jawed, with pale skin and blond-highlighted hair. On stage he is known for his sexy gyrating hips, but in fact he sticks to a very limited range of dance moves. His music is a straightforward blend of U.S. pop and non-specific Latin American rhythms, with the odd reference in Spanish thrown into the chorus (see, for example, the single “Livin’ La Vida Loca,” which made him a household name). His looks, moves, and songs thus offer a familiar, easily absorbed, and safe version of Latin American culture for Anglos in the United States and for middle-of-the-road music listeners elsewhere (Ricky has a huge following in Russia, for example). Ricky followed up the success of *Ricky Martin* with a second English-language album, *Sound Loaded* (2000), which included the hit single “She Bangs” and a

duet performed with another singer of Latin American origin, Cristina Aguilera, entitled “Nobody Wants to Be Lonely.”

Despite his high-profile on-off relationship with Mexican TV presenter Rebecca de Alba, the international press has delighted in debating Ricky’s sexuality. Like pre-outed George Michael, Ricky refuses to be drawn on the subject. Keeping his fans guessing has helped ensure a large following of both teenage girls and gay men. He has not been quite so successful at avoiding controversy in other areas of his life, however. He was sued by his former manager in 2004 and was said to have alienated his one-time songwriter-producer Robi Draco Rosa by his participation in the opening ceremony of George W. Bush’s presidential inauguration, which Rosa felt was a betrayal of what every Puerto Rican should stand for. He did, however, turn down the chance to star alongside Jennifer Lopez in a remake of *West Side Story*, fearing the film would promote negative stereotypes of Puerto Ricans.

The diminutive Colombian singer-songwriter Shakira (Shakira Isabel Mebarak Ripoll) is one of the most successful Latin American artists on the international stage in recent years. Born in 1977 in Barranquilla, an industrial city with a population of one million located on the Caribbean coast, to a Colombian mother and Lebanese father, her meteoric rise to fame outside of Colombia (she has been a superstar there since she was a teenager) coincided with a boom in interest in all things Latino in the U.S. entertainment industry. Like Ricky Martin, her musical style can be described as a mixture of Latin rhythms and stadium rock, but unlike Ricky, she has been able to garner a certain credibility with the international music press by writing her own material; playing



Colombian pop star Shakira performs at El Campin stadium in Bogota, 12 March 2003. Shakira sang songs from her English-language album *Laundry Service* for the first time in Colombia. (Daniel Munoz/Reuters/Corbis)

guitar, harmonica, and drums; and occasionally voicing controversial views, such as her antiwar stance during her U.S. and British tour of 2003. According to good friend, Boom writer, and fellow Colombian Gabriel García Márquez, her success is partly due to the fact that she is hardworking, very determined, and completely focused on her musical career. She had not even started secondary school when a record company signed her in her native Colombia, and she released her first album in 1990. Like Ricky Martin, before making it really big in the music industry, she made an incursion into the world of the telenovela, starring in 1992 in the Colombian production *El Oasis* (*The Oasis*).

Shakira moved to Miami, the mecca for all Latino performers seeking transnational

success, in the mid-1990s. There she made contact with Gloria and Emilio Estefan. Gloria would be a significant influence on Shakira's songwriting from then on. Her fourth album, *Donde están los ladrones?* (*Where Are the Thieves?*, 1998), sold well in Latin America and in the Latino market in North America. The musical influences on the album are heavy rock, mariachi, and Lebanese music. After the album's success and on the eve of the launch of her international career, Shakira dyed her hair blonde and began to use thick eyeliner, eliciting the inevitable comparisons to other young starlets such as Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera (and alienating some of her home-grown fans). Her first album in English, *Laundry Service*, was recorded on a farm in Uruguay and released in 2001. It sold two

million copies in the United States alone. The first single from the album, “Whenever, Wherever,” went to number one in many countries. The song featured Andean pan-pipes and a pop-rock chorus, and the accompanying video included some obligatory belly dancing to remind fans of her Middle Eastern roots. On *Laundry Service*, the singer notably toned down the strident quality of her voice, which had until then sounded like a cross between ululating and the mock-Irish warbling of Dolores O’Riordan of The Cranberries.

As Shakira’s international career was being carefully forged, she was conducting a very high-profile relationship with Antonio De La Rua, the lawyer son of ex-Argentine president Fernando De La Rua (the single “Underneath Your Clothes” from *Laundry Service* was written about her famous boyfriend). The jet-set Latin American couple faced considerable criticism for their flashy lifestyle after the economic crash in Argentina in 2001.

—Keith Richards and
Stephanie Dennison

See also: *Popular Music:* Bolero; Mariachi, Ranchera, Norteña, Tex-Mex; Salsa; *Popular Literature:* The Boom; *Mass Media:* Telenovela; *Popular Cinema:* Youth Movies,

Cinema, and Music; *Visual Arts and Architecture:* Art (Frida Kahlo)

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3

Popular Social Movements and Politics

Popular movements in Latin America in the late twentieth century have generally been a response to two major phenomena: first, the wave of military dictatorships that overtook the region between the 1960s and 1970s, and second, the imposition of neoliberal economic policies from the mid-1980s to the present. Numerous other contributory factors and consequences have accompanied these phenomena, of course, such as the inroads made by foreign economic interests after most of the region achieved independence from Spanish rule in the 1820s. The emergence of vigorous indigenous movements in several countries must also be taken into account, as must the increasing role in the political process, both formal and otherwise, of women.

Spanish rule had ended in continental Latin America by the third decade of the nineteenth century. (The last colony to become independent, nominally at least, was Cuba in 1898.) The region then came under the influence of mostly British economic concerns. Argentine beef was one main British interest, and railways were built to bring the supply to the port of Buenos Aires, from which tinned meats were sent to the United Kingdom. The British exploited nitrates from the Pacific coast of Bolivia (a coastline later taken by Chile) and guano from the Peruvian coast for fertilizer. European governments and companies coveted oil deposits across the region, as did the new emerging power of the United States. For although the British hand could be seen behind such conflicts as the War of the Pacific (1879–1883), in which Bolivia and Peru both lost territory to Chile, and the Chaco War (1932–1935), in which Paraguay took over most of the oil deposits of southeastern Bolivia, Latin America's northern neighbor was to become far more influential in the twentieth century, taking a leading role in developing fruit-growing enterprises in the Caribbean region and moving aggressively into resources of raw materials elsewhere.

The legacy of Latin America's colonial past, and its correlate, its neo-colonial and neoliberal present, is a social reality still bereft of the institu-