



REVIEW | Views from the South: A Latin American Music reader

Javier F. León and Helena Simonett Eds.

Urbana, Chicago and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2016

ISBN: 9780252081675 (PB)

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This volume is the result of a long-term project that began in 2006 with the impulse of Professor Michael Marcuzzi (the book is dedicated to his memory), and continued with the support of the Society for Ethnomusicology and the efforts of editors Javier F. León and Helena Simonett. At the same time, this publication is the natural consequence of the growing interest of the international academic community in the music of Latin American countries, and in non-Anglophone literature on popular music. This is also evident in the work of academic journals such as *Music, Sound and the Moving Image* and *IASPM Journal* which in the last decade have been increasingly including English translations of key articles published in other languages. Thus, this book gathers publications from journals (for example, *Latin American Music Review*; *Revista Musical Chilena*; *Revista Transcultural de Música*) and books (such as *Ao encontro da palavra cantada: Lugares del decir*; *Músicas africanas o indígenas no Brasil*).

This edited collection is a central resource both for those who wish to survey the current state of Latin American music and for those who are interested in the research of particular repertoires and in ongoing debates on Latin American popular music. It gathers together seventeen articles published in Spanish and Portuguese in the last twenty-five years. This volume is not a compilation of historical and foundational texts, but rather a selection of works that "speak to contemporary

research issues and concerns within the region" (ix); all are pieces that have contributed to the development of this field of study and that approach some of the key debates discussed in the last decades. Significantly enough, some of the authors in this volume are leading research projects on popular music in Latin America from different institutions, and most of them are members of the Latin American branch of IASPM (created in 1997, and with nearly 350 associates).

However, this reader is not only a compilation of articles. The editors explicitly consider this book to be an opportunity to set out the development of popular music research in Latin American countries. This aim is considered through a lengthy but comprehensive introduction of seventy pages, offering an overview on this issue, from the pioneering work of Mario de Andrade (1928), Carlos Vega (1941), Carlos Chávez (1937), and Fernando Ortiz (1952), among others, to the present day. It is not only a chronological review, but approaches methodological perspectives and historiographic restraints in different periods, considering the diverse national contexts in such a heterogeneous area. The detailed narration of the creation of research institutions and publications, the illustrative development of streams such as the study of diaspora in the 1930s, the strong 'Pan-Americanism' in the post-war era (1950s), and the expansion of cultural studies since the 1980s, enrich this accurate and insightful overview. The introduction concludes by approaching the current heterogeneous panorama in a field that is dealing with the same issues and debates that prevail in the international context.

The book is structured in three parts, each of them introduced by a brief frame that outlines the general arguments of the section establishing links among the different topics, addressing the key ideas of each part, and successfully arguing the selection of the articles. The varied nature of the texts makes a summary of the key points difficult; some articles approach general issues and others focus on particular topics (such as genres, scenes, and repertoires). However, one question is interwoven throughout the contents of the book and remains a central consideration of popular music scholarship in Latin America: the omnipresent influence of ethnomusicology. Thus, in Latin American countries, this field of study has continuously established connections with folklore, both in the application of methodologies and in the analysis of repertoires and scenes. This might seem strange in the Anglophone context, where popular and traditional music are well delimited fields, but it is something normal and routine in Spanish-speaking countries where both traditional and popular music are closely related and, significantly, the term *música popular* is used for both repertoires (Jordán & Smith 2011).

This issue is well explained in the first part of the book. The articles by Raúl Romero and Carlos Miñana focus on the evolution of this field of study, pointing out some of the main perspectives and areas of research. The latter, originally published in 2000, anticipates a "still nascent" (106) interdisciplinary perspective related to cultural studies led by Néstor García Canclini and Jesús Martín Barbero,

as well as new trends in anthropology by Ana M^a Ochoa. Juan Pablo González, in turn, approaches a comprehensive review of the field paying attention to issues in terminology and to the main areas of study in the field, and concludes that, "popular musicology opens the path to a critical and interpretative approach that leaves behind the empirical positivism of traditional musicology" (138).

Three further articles illustrate different ways of revisiting topics and historical assumptions on genres and repertoires. Julio Mendívil aims to debunk myths and collective memory on charango through an archaeological discourse analysis; Alejandro Vera focuses on how Chilean music historiography from the 19th century contributed to reinforcing national identity, distorting the music activity in the colonial period. And, continuing with the necessary revision of historiography, Carolina Santamaría explores the racial "purification" of bambuco in Andean Colombia during the first half of the 20th century. All of them are case studies, but illustrate different ways of approaching repertoires and issues that are recurrent in Latin American popular music.

The second part is dedicated to the study of music genres as "central organizing categories" (215) of Latin American popular music. In fact, those that are approached in this section are connected to the development of music practices in different Latin American countries. Rubén López Cano highlights the Havana-New York connections in the definition of mambo, whereas Íñigo Sánchez Fuarros explains Cuban timba as an "appropriation from the inside", an adoption of rumba features in the 1990s. Carlos Sandroni approaches the relevance of composers from Estácio de Sá during the 1920s in the evolution of samba. The resignification of repertoires in the 1960s is central both in the analysis of Violeta Parra in Chilean song by Rodrigo Torres and in the study of the aesthetics of *Nuevo cancionero* in Argentina by Claudio Díaz. This part ends with a free verse: the article "Gender and Brazilian Popular Music" by Rodrigo Cantos & María Ignéz Cruz surveys the growing presence of women in bands.

The final part of the book attempts to assess the role of music in the articulation of identities, the construction of national repertoires and the negotiations in establishing canonical and marginal genres and dances along history. The five articles in this part focus on the struggle to the colonial structures, the configuration of ethno-nationalistic streams and the idealized cultural legacy of pre-Columbian societies linked to discourses of Indianism and nativism. The first two articles focus on particular indigenous communities: one on the celebration of The Chicomexochitl in Mexico (Gonzalo Camacho), and the other on the adaptation of Mapuche identity to the urban context of Santiago de Chile (Jorge Martínez). The other three reflect on some of the key issues in the research of indigenous music: Angela Lühning urges the development of a participatory ethnomusicology in the study of Brazilian music with an aim to achieve a better understanding between the ethnic groups and the academic and non-academic worlds (385). María Alonso stresses the need of an applied ethnomusicology for a critical history of indigenous

music studies in Mexico that deconstructs romantic ideas on indigenous communities. And José Jorge de Carvalho approaches the interconnections between cultural heritage and entertainment industry, a relevant debate for music, especially since the establishment of the category "intangible heritage" by the UNESCO in 2003.

The variety of repertoires, contexts and periods that are approached in the volume facilitates the discussion of many other issues related to, for example, methodology, functions and uses of music, formal parameters, political and economic restraints. The scope is wide, and this is one of the strengths of this volume. However, at the same time, this is its main weakness, since there are periods and issues that are not approached in depth. The book also reinforces the idea of Latin America as a feasible region and as a whole, highlighting cultural and historical links among repertoires and practices; but it also stresses the cultural heterogeneity of Latin American music, focussing on the particular characteristics of music expressions and practices in each community. This, it seems, is part of the paradoxes inherent in the production of edited readers. Nevertheless, this book fulfils the aims of the editors and it is an essential reading for those interested in the study of Latin American popular music.

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